

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

BOOK 1

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April 1, 1875

The Faith of Abraham

Abraham was directed of God to go up to Mount Moriah, and there offer up his son as a burnt offering. There the Lord tested Abraham by a most fearful trial. In taking Hagar for his wife he showed distrust in the promises of God. If he had patiently waited for the promise to be fulfilled in God's own time and manner, and had not sought to make a providence himself, he would not have been subjected to this the closest test that was ever required of man.

This command of God was calculated to stir his soul to its depths. He was one hundred and twenty years old when this terrible and startling command came to him, in a vision of the night. He was to travel three days' journey, and would have ample time for reflection. Fifty years previous, at the divine command, he had left father and mother, relatives and friends, and had become a pilgrim and a stranger in a land not his own. He had obeyed the command of God to send away his son Ishmael to wander in the wilderness. His soul was bowed down with grief at this separation, and his faith was sorely tried, yet he submitted because God required it.

But now a trial was before him which caused all his other afflictions to appear insignificant. The words of the command were sufficient to harrow up his soul and give him the deepest pain. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Over and over again did the burdened soul say, Oh! my son, my son, would to God my life would be accepted in the place of thine; then should my light not go out in darkness. Abraham arose before day, and as he looked up to the starry heavens, he called to mind the promise which God made to

him fifty years before. "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." And now the same voice had commanded him to slay this only son, through whom this promise was to be fulfilled.

Abraham was tempted to believe that after all this might be a delusion. Stricken with grief, he bowed before God, and prayed as never before for a confirmation of this strange command, for greater light if he must perform this terrible duty. He remembered the angels sent to tell him of God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and those who bore to him the promise that he should have this same son Isaac. He walked forth where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again and receive some special direction from them; but he gained no light, darkness seemed to close about him, day was approaching, and he must be on his journey before light.

He first passed to the couch upon which Isaac slept in peaceful innocence; he was the joy of his heart, the comfort of his old age. Abraham's lips quivered, he turned quickly away, and looked upon the couch where Sarah was quietly sleeping. He knew that Isaac was her pride, that her heart was intertwined with his. Should he awake Sarah, that she might look upon her son for the last time? Should he tell her the requirement of God? He knew that he himself had strength of faith, and confidence in God; he did not know the strength of Sarah's faith; but he did know the strength of her love for Isaac.

He passed from one sleeper to the other, undecided in regard to the wisest course to pursue. He finally awakened Isaac softly, informing him that he was commanded of God to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain, and that he must accompany him. He called his servants, and made every necessary preparation for his long journey. If he could unburden his mind to Sarah, and they together bear the suffering and responsibility, it might bring him some relief; but he decided that this would not do; for her heart was

bound up in her son, and she might hinder him. He went forth on his journey, with Satan by his side to suggest unbelief and impossibility.

While walking by the side of Isaac, he could not engage in conversation as usual, for a deep sorrow was concealed in his own breast. The night approaches, the longest day Abraham ever experienced has come to a close. He saw his loved son Isaac and the servants locked in slumber, but he could not sleep. He spent the night in prayer. He would pray, still hoping that some heavenly messenger would appear to tell him that it is enough, that he may return to Sarah, with Isaac unharmed. The stars seem to shine forth more beautiful than ever before, reminding him of the promise, As the number of the stars, so shall thy seed be.

No new light dawned upon the tortured soul of Abraham. A heavy pressure was upon him, but he staggered not at the promise. He reasoned not that his posterity, which would be as the stars, must now come through Ishmael, for God had plainly stated that through Isaac should the promise be fulfilled. Then again was that voice ringing in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That terrible command which would leave him childless can scarcely be realized. He rises early to continue his toilsome journey. Satan whispers his doubts, but Abraham resists his suggestions.

All day he had hopes of meeting an angel coming to bless and comfort him, or perhaps to revoke the command of God, but no messenger of mercy appeared. Satan suggested that he must be deceived, for God had said, "Thou shalt not kill," and that it was not like God to require what he had forbidden. The second long day comes to a close, another sleepless night is spent in humiliation and prayer, and the journey of the third day is commenced. Abraham lifts his eyes to the mountains, and upon one he beholds the promised sign. He looks earnestly, and lo, a bright cloud hovered over the top of Mount Moriah. Now he knows it is all a terrible certainty, and no

delusion.

He was yet a great distance from the mountain, but he removed the burden from the shoulders of his servants and bade them remain behind; while he placed the wood upon the shoulders of his son, and himself took the knife and fire. Abraham braced himself for his sad work which he must perform. He did not murmur against God, for Isaac had been given to him unexpectedly. He had received him with gratitude and great joy, and though he was the son of his old age, the son of his love, he yet believed that the same power that gave him Isaac, could raise him again even from the ashes of the burnt sacrifice. He strengthens his soul by the evidences he has had of the goodness and faithfulness of God. Had not God, who had graciously given Isaac to him perfect right to recall the gift, and demand him back?

Isaac had been a comfort, a sunbeam, a blessing to Abraham in his old age, and although this gift of God seemed so precious, so dear to him, yet he was now commanded to give it back to God. The words of God's command showed that he fully realized the pain which Abraham must feel in obeying his requirement, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Abraham wanted no witnesses. It was enough that God could look on and not only see the full consecration of his darling Isaac, but read the heart and fully understand how severely he felt the test. He wished no one but God to witness this parting scene between father and son.

Abraham knew not how Isaac would receive the command of God. As they drew near the mountain, "Isaac spake to Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" These endearing words, "My Father," pierced his affectionate heart, and again he thought, Oh! that I, in my old age, might die instead of Isaac. Still reluctant to open before his son the true purpose of his errand, Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

Isaac assisted his Father in building the altar. Together they placed on the wood, and the last work preparatory to the sacrifice is done. With quivering lips and trembling voice, Abraham revealed to his son the message that God had sent him. In obedience to God's command, he had taken the journey. Everything was ready. Isaac was the victim, the lamb to be slain. Had Isaac chosen to resist his father's command, he could have done so, for he was grown to manhood; but he had been so thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of God that he had perfect faith in his promises and requirements.

Abraham assured his son that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would rather give his own life than to deprive him of life. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. He told Isaac that God had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured his son that God's promise, that "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead. He told Isaac that he had hoped that the Messiah would spring from him. In this he was disappointed, and then, that his darling son must die by his own hand, increased his grief a hundred-fold.

Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. He considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but his Creator had specified him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as a sacrifice; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that God loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice.

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were

spoken by father and son, the last affectionate, filial, and parental tears were shed, the last embrace was given, and the father had pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, which was to take the life of Isaac, when suddenly his arm is stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

God estimated Abraham's obedience and unswerving faith, and gave him the name of "Father of the faithful." The example of Abraham is recorded in sacred history for the benefit of his believing children. This great act of faith teaches the lesson of implicit confidence in God, perfect obedience to his requirements, and a complete surrender to the divine will. In the example of Abraham we are taught that nothing we possess is [too] precious to give to God.

All that we have is the Lord's. Our money, our time, talents and ourselves, all belong to him. He has lent them to us, to test and prove us, and to develop what is in our hearts. If we selfishly claim as our own the favors

God has graciously intrusted to us, we shall meet with great loss, for we rob God, and in robbing him, we rob ourselves of heavenly blessings, and the benediction Christ will give the faithful and obedient: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

How many now who profess to be Christians would yield up to God their beloved Isaac? Our dearest treasure belongs to God. A solemn duty rests upon Christian parents to so educate and mould the minds of their children that they will ever have a high respect and exalted reverence for God and everything sacred and holy. Such will feel that God's claims must first be regarded, that nothing is too precious to sacrifice for him. Such will, like Abraham, exemplify their faith by their works.

How many now who profess to believe God, and pass for Christians, will not obey his voice when he calls upon them to deny self, and yield to him their darling treasures. They will hesitate, and cling to earthly things. Their affections are upon the world and the things of the world, and some of these very ones will have the most to say about how much they have sacrificed to obey the truth. Isaac felt that it was a privilege to yield his life as a sacrifice to God. If God could accept him, he felt that he was honored.

Human judgment may look upon the command given to Abraham as severe, too great for human strength to bear. Abraham's strength was from God. He looked not at the things which are seen with mortal vision, but at the things which are eternal. God required no more of Abraham than he had, in divine compassion and infinite love, given to man. He gave his only begotten Son to die, that guilty man might live. Abraham's offering of Isaac was especially designed of God to prefigure the sacrifice of his Son.

Every step that Abraham advanced toward Mount Moriah, the Lord went with him. All the agony and grief that Abraham endured during the

three days of his dark and fearful trial, were imposed upon him to give us a lesson in perfect faith and obedience, and that we might better comprehend how real was the great self-denial and infinite sacrifice of the Father in giving his only Son to die a shameful death for the guilty race. No trial, no suffering or test, could be brought to bear upon Abraham, which would cause such mental anguish, such torture of soul, as that of obeying God in offering up his son.

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The meagre conception that many have of the worth of the soul, and the sacrifice of God's dear Son for sinful man, is shown by their works. Should God speak to them as he did to Abraham, Sacrifice your possessions, your temporal benefits that I have lent you to advance my cause, they would look in astonishment, thinking God did not mean just what he said. Their riches are as dear to them as their children, their worldly treasure is their Isaac. To honor God with their substance, they think, is a requirement altogether too great, and they cannot believe that God means it. What have this class sacrificed for God?

Men will show all the faith they have. If God should speak to them and command them to go and offer one of their beloved children, they would think God a hard master. Yet he has done more than this for them. No such command will come to test and prove them. God knew to whom he spake, when he gave the command to true and faithful Abraham. Abraham knew

that it was God who had commanded, and that his promises were infallible. Had God commanded him to offer his gold, his silver, his flocks, or even his own life, he would have done so cheerfully. He would have felt that he was but yielding back to God that which belonged to him.

But there are many who know not what self-denial, or sacrifice, or devotion to God, is. They never can have extended and elevated views of the infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God to save a ruined world, until they surrender all to God. If God should speak to them in a command, as he did to Abraham, they would not be enough acquainted with his voice to understand that he did really require something of them, to show their love, and the genuineness of their faith.

The claims of God upon our love, affection, and possessions, our talents, and ourselves, are correspondingly great as was the infinite sacrifice made in giving his Son to die for sinful man. Those who really appreciate the work of the atonement, those who have a high sense of the sacrifice Christ has made to exalt them to his throne, will count it a special honor to be partakers with Christ in his self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering, that they may be co-workers with him in saving souls.

There are many who profess the truth, who do not love God half so well as they love the world. God is testing and proving them. Their love of the world and of riches darkens their minds, perverts their judgment, and hardens their hearts. God has, to some of them at least, revealed his will, and called for a surrender of their Isaac to him. But they refuse to obey, and let golden opportunities pass. Precious time is bearing into eternity a record of duties unfulfilled and of positive neglect.

Nothing we have is of true value until it is surrendered to God. The talent of means devoted to the cause and work of God, is of tenfold more value, than if selfishly retained for the gratification of our own pleasure. The

faith of the devoted martyrs was like that of Abraham, it was genuine. they valued the precious truth, and in their turn, although despised of men, hunted from place to place, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented, were valued of God. There was no place for them upon the earth, but of them, says the apostle, the world was not worthy. Those who clung to precious truth in face of prison, torture, and death, had faith that few now living possess.

Many have chosen a life of ease. They have exalted their earthly interests above the spiritual and eternal. They neglect to learn the hard lesson of self-denial, and of surrendering all to God. They do not count anything interesting, save that which is learned without much effort, and without involving any sacrifice of temporal enjoyment; and it is forgotten as soon as learned, because it cost them nothing.

The deepest poverty, with God's blessing, is better than houses and lands, and any amount of earthly treasure, without it. God's blessing places value on everything we possess; but if we have the whole world without his blessing we are indeed as poor as the beggar, for we can take nothing with us into the next world.

Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour, should have Abrahamic faith, a faith that is valued because it has cost them something, a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that he is not to be trifled with. He means what he says, and he requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will he let his light shine around about us, and we shall be all light in the Lord.

April 29, 1875

Proper Education

God prepared for Adam and Eve a beautiful garden. He provided for them everything their wants required. He planted for them trees of every variety, bearing fruit. With a liberal hand he surrounded them with his bounties--the trees for usefulness and beauty, and the lovely flowers which sprung up spontaneously, and flourished in rich profusion around them, were to know nothing of decay. Adam and Eve were rich indeed. They possessed beautiful Eden. Adam was monarch in this beautiful domain. None can question the fact that Adam was rich. But God knew that Adam could not be happy unless he had employment. Therefore he gave him something to do. He was to dress the garden.

The Creator of man never designed that he should be idle. The Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It was the law of nature, therefore the law of God, that brain, nerve, and muscle should be in active motion. Young gentlemen and ladies that refuse to labor because they are not compelled to, and because it is not fashionable, are not guided and controlled by enlightened reason. Those who shun manual labor, cannot have physical stamina. In order for the young to enjoy perfect health and perfect happiness, every organ and function must be in perfect operation as God designed they should be. If all the organs act their natural part, life, health, and happiness, will be the result. Too little exercise and staying in-doors too much, will bring on feebleness and disease of some one or more of the organs. It is sinful to impair or weaken one of the powers God has given us. The Creator designed that we should have perfect bodies, that we might preserve them in health, and render to him the offering of a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God.

Exercise in useful labor will be carrying out the original plan of God, when he bade Adam and Eve to dress the garden. Life is precious, and should be preserved intelligently by regarding the laws of our being.

Fashionable idlers, who have plenty of leisure, fail to attain happiness. They have been educated to regard honest labor as only fit for the poor, while it would degrade the wealthy. They rob the brain and nervous system, by fashionable indolence, of a supply of animal energy that keeps the machinery of the body in healthful activity.

In order for the brain to have clearness and strength of thought, retentive memory and mental power, the muscles of the body should have exercise a portion of each day.

Adam was in glorious Eden. He was perfectly developed, and then set to work by his Maker that by exercise all his muscles should preserve their elasticity. Many young men and ladies are too proud, or too lazy, to engage in useful labor in the house or in the garden.

The world is full of women with but little vitality and less common sense. Society is in great need of healthful, sensible young women who are not afraid to work and soil their hands. God gave them hands to employ in useful labor. God did not give us the wonderful human machinery of the body to become paralyzed by inaction. The living machinery God designed should be in daily activity, and in this activity or motion of the machinery is its preserving power. Manual labor quickens the circulation of the blood. The more active the circulation the more free will be the blood from obstructions and impurities. The blood nourishes the body. The health of the body depends upon the healthful circulation of the blood. If work is performed without the heart being in it, it is simply drudgery, and the benefit which should result from the exercise is not gained.

Toiling mothers who have given their children the advantages of education, and have brought them up without disciplining them to self-denial and physical labor, and have given them liberty to follow their own pleasure, will not receive much happiness and comfort from these children. In my travels I have seen that those women who entered upon married life wholly unprepared for domestic duties were not happy. They did not receive the training and the education in their youth that fitted them for the responsible position they had by most solemn covenant agreed to fill. The parents had made a great mistake. When children, they were excused from exertion in order "to enrich the mind." They could play an instrument of music, but were not educated to take responsibility. They enjoyed burying their minds in novels, but had no love to keep their houses in order. They were as incompetent for the responsible position of mothers as a girl of fifteen years. Economy of means they knew nothing of, and yet these are the mothers that are bringing up children to take their place upon the stage of action, to act their part in the drama of life. The characters of youth should not be spoiled by over-fond mothers. Parents should consider that as they neglect to thoroughly educate their daughters in domestic labors and economy, they are giving characters to them which will make their future married lives miserable. There will be disappointed husbands and neglected children, because of inefficient wives and mothers.

July 22, 1875

Our Camp-Meeting in Wisconsin

June 18, I spoke to the people from the third and fourth chapters of Malachi, reading from the 13th verse of the third chapter to the 3d verse of the fourth chapter. I had freedom in speaking, and all listened with deep interest. And moistened eyes showed that many hearts were touched.

My husband spoke in the afternoon upon the sacredness of the work for the present time, the importance of all who labor in the cause of God taking broader views of the work, and following in his opening providence. He was very free, and his words made a marked impression upon the congregation.

After he closed his remarks I was requested to speak more especially for the benefit of the Danes present. I improved one hour, Bro. Matteson interpreting. I spoke of the missionary work that should be done by those of different languages who embraced the truth, in carrying the message of mercy and of warning to those of their nation. I mentioned the work in other countries, that there were Sabbath-keepers scattered all through Europe, that our publications were finding access to large numbers of the different nations, and that, as the result they were being led to search their Bibles, and there find the truth which is to us so precious.

While relating the wonderful work of God in bringing the light of truth to those of other nations, our American brethren present, as well as those of other tongues, were deeply interested, and I felt my own soul blessed.

In the evening, Bro. Smith spoke to a large congregation with clearness and freedom. All listened with great interest to his discourse.

June 19, at half-past five in the morning, the people assembled under the large tent for prayer and conference meeting. Several prayers were offered and many interesting testimonies borne.

One aged sister, with light and peace expressed in her countenance, spoke of the gratitude she felt in her heart for the privilege of attending the camp-meeting, and that her heart was so deeply affected while sister White was dwelling upon the work of the Lord in the earth that it seemed more than her feeble frame could well endure. She expressed her desire to be among those who were doing the work of God, to whom he would finally say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Another sister said she felt reproved by the Spirit of the Lord, that she had followed him at too great a distance, but would come nearer to God. Another expressed her desire that the truth should have a sanctifying influence upon her affections and will, that she might give a better example to the world.

A young Danish brother expressed his desire for a new conversion to God, adding that he did not want to say more of the truth than he lived out. Another brother said he had just started out to obey the commandments of God, that he could find no other way of getting into Heaven than by willing obedience to all of God's commandments.

Many of the lonely ones have come, some a long distance, to attend this meeting and are anxious to express their gratitude for the privilege. One sister said she had not had the privilege of meeting with the people of God since the camp-meeting one year ago, that the paper and her Bible were all the preaching she had had.

A Mr. C., who is dwelling upon modern holiness, wanted a discourse given to those hungering after righteousness. My husband spoke on that

point, as to what constituted Bible sanctification, stating that those who claimed to be enjoying sanctification while living in opposition to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, had the spurious article. He quoted the words of the apostle in defining "sin" as the "transgression of the law." And the words of Paul, "I had not known sin but by the law." And those of the beloved disciple, "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." Here is the only genuine Bible sanctification. The sinner is required to exercise repentance toward God for the transgression of his law, and faith in Jesus Christ, the sinner's advocate.

Another testimony was borne, then my husband made some remarks in reference to the meeting. He stated that he had been thinking ever since he had started out to attend the camp-meetings, if there could not be some way devised, that, as soon as the brethren and sisters came to the meeting, they would become workers, all going to work at the first of the meeting. He stated that this was not the time nor place to consume precious moments in repeating the same testimonies over and over again, that there were men and women who felt burdened, from whom we wished to hear, those who felt the burden for souls out of Christ.

He stated that a yearly gathering cost much time and expense, farmers had come at great sacrifice, some had brought their unconverted children, hoping that their hearts would be touched, that there was great need of individual effort in the family tents, that too much precious time should not be spent in singing hymns that were not appropriate for the occasion, and that did not really give expression to the feelings. He exhorted all to settle into the work. He stated that he would not bind the feelings of any soul, would not mould their testimonies, but wanted the golden moments spent to the very best account, that all upon this important occasion should feel the

necessity of watchfulness and prayer.

He further remarked in regard to that valueless, bogus sanctification which leaves the Father and his law out of the question. He stated that when our hearts kindle up as we read the claims of the law of God in his word, when we can pray with the psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," we are in a position to claim the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour, and may fully rely upon the prayer of Christ to his Father for the sanctification which comes through the belief of the truth.

At nine A.M., we again assembled in the large tent for prayer and conference meeting. The tent was well filled. The meeting commenced by singing the hymn:

"Just as I am--without one plea, But that thy blood was shed for me, And that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

My husband followed with remarks appropriate to the hymn. He stated that all may come just as they are, without one plea, cleaving in faith to Jesus, believing that he is not only able to, but does, forgive sin and save to the uttermost all who come unto him. And that those who exalt Christ must have a high estimate of the law of God.

Many excellent testimonies were borne with expressions of earnest desires to settle into the work, to live out the truth, and be sanctified by it.

Sabbath forenoon my husband gave a discourse, and Bro. Matteson spoke in the afternoon. At four o'clock, P. M., we assembled for prayer and conference meeting. I felt deeply for those who were backslidden from God, and for those poor souls out of Christ. And from the fullness of my heart I spoke to those present. We then invited all to come forward who had

backslidden, and those who wished to accept of Christ who had never made a profession of religion. There was a general move, over one hundred came forward, several for the first time. Opportunity was given for those who desired, to express their feelings. Many spoke with deep feeling. The convicting Spirit of the Lord was in our midst. Confessions were made with a spirit of contrition. We then sung:

"Just as I am--without one plea,"

I improved a few moments in speaking to those who had come forward. Another verse was then sung:

"Just as I am--and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot, To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot. O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

A sister arose and with deep feeling said, just as I am, O Lord, I come, I come. A boy arose, wept, but could not speak his feelings. This was a testimony, even more powerful than words.

The meeting continued with intense interest for nearly three hours. Our ministering brethren then united in praying for those who had separated themselves from the congregation by coming forward to seek the Lord.

In the evening Bro. Smith spoke to a large and attentive audience. His subject was the United States in Prophecy.

Sunday morning we again met under the tent for prayer and conference meeting. At the commencement of the meeting several prayers were offered, and were followed by interesting testimonies.

In the forenoon my husband presented the reasons of our faith. In the afternoon I spoke upon the subject of God in nature, and the duties of

mothers to their children. In the evening Bro. Smith spoke upon the mark of the beast. I regret that all our brethren did not have the benefit of Bro. Smith's discourses on doctrinal subjects. It is important that they become well acquainted with the reasons of our faith. Those who are detained from these meetings miss a great privilege. And those who come to our camp-meetings, and are engaged in business sessions while discourses are being given at the stand, lose opportunities which would be of the greatest benefit to them.

Tuesday morning we were awakened early by some taking down their tents and preparing to leave the ground. At quarter past six we assembled at the stand. My husband and myself each spoke about fifteen minutes. Bro. Decker was then ordained. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon us. It was a very solemn season, tears mingled with gladness of heart. And with this meeting, marked with the special blessing of God, closed our good camp-meeting.

August 5, 1875

Free-will Offerings

After the children of Israel had left Egypt, when there was but a step back from freedom to slavery, God commanded the tabernacle to be built from their scanty means. Their own tents were small, but they did not plead to enlarge their own tabernacles. God's house must first be built. God gave them the design he wished them to follow in building the tabernacle. They needed no urging. Gifts and free-will offerings came in abundance. Their ornaments and jewelry were taken from their person and cast into the treasury, to be used to beautify and enrich the house for God. Materials of gold, silver, brass, and ornamental work, were gladly given, each soul being anxious to have an interest in the tabernacle which was being erected for God. More than a million of dollars was expended in erecting that tabernacle. Moses did not need to urge the people, but he had to proclaim to them that they had enough, and their cheerful, willing labors and offerings must cease, for they could not appropriate all that they had already brought.

There are hearts now that are as free, willing, and anxious, to aid in the advancement of the work of God as were the children of Israel. Only let them be assured that there is a work to be done, and that God calls for their means and their hearty co-operation, and they will need no urging.

When we can have even a small comprehension of what Jesus has done for us, we shall feel our responsibility to do all that we can for Christ. The life of Jesus was spent in devising plans for our welfare. While we were enemies to God, he pitied us, and came from the courts of Heaven to suffer, the just for the unjust. He died, and rose again from the grave, to show his followers the way of life from the dead. He now stands before his Father as our great High Priest and our advocate, pleading our cause, and presenting

our feeble progress with infinite grace before his Father. He forgives our transgressions, and by imputing unto us his righteousness, he links us to the Infinite. In the heavenly courts our Saviour stands and extends to the world the gracious invitation, Come, ye weary, ye poor, ye hungry; come, ye burdened, ye heavy-laden, sin-sick souls, come. And whosoever will, let him come and partake of the waters of life freely.

Can we be too earnest, and self-sacrificing in our efforts to set the truth before the world? Shall we plead for ease and for the pleasures of this life, to enjoy our pleasant homes and the society of family and friends, and let others do the work which must be done in warning the world? Shall we plead as did the ungrateful ones to whom Christ extended the invitation to come to supper, I pray thee have me excused? Or shall we gird on the armor with cheerfulness, hope, and faith, and like valiant soldiers, be willing to engage in the thickest of the fight, war the good warfare, share the glorious victory, and receive the eternal reward?

August 5, 1875

The Mother's First Duties

Cleanliness, neatness, and order, are indispensable to the proper management of the household. But when the mother makes these the all-important duties of her life, and devotes herself to them, to the neglect of the physical development and the mental and moral training of her children, she makes a sad mistake. The Agriculturist speaks well upon this subject under the head of

Unprincipled Neatness

"'Cleanliness is next to godliness;' but let us never forget that godliness is the first thing to be sought, and after that cleanliness to any extent. If anybody supposes that I mean that you are to 'get converted' in the ordinary sense of that phrase, and then go on scrubbing and scouring with all your might, without any application of Christianity to these wash-board and dish-pan affairs, that person has not made my acquaintance. The 'fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace,' etc., and beyond all price; neatness is only a secondary matter.

"We are putting cleanliness above godliness if we brush and scour until our nerves are so wearied that good temper becomes almost a physical impossibility; or if we keep our friends in constant dread of making a speck of dirt upon our premises; or if we allow ourselves to be greatly put out by any disasters that happen to our carpets or tablecloths. It is hard to bear these things, if we have not abundant means and plenty of assistance; and I do not know of anything but a true philosophy believed in by the heart, as well as the intellect, that will help us through. Do we really desire to lead true lives, and to do our duty by our families? Then we must settle in our minds what

are the essentials to this end, and resolutely make other matters subordinate.

"It is neatness without principle that insists upon clean aprons and polished faces for the children more than upon gentle words and patient sympathy with their plans and pleasures, which concerns itself more about flies and dust than about family health and happiness. Bright windows and spotless paint and well-scoured floors are excellent things in their way; but if you can only secure them by a loss of all time and relish for reading and out-of-door recreation, have the nobleness to bear with some dirt and rags, rather than sacrifice the life for meat or the body for raiment. For the sake of all about you, as well as for your own sake, save your nerves from over-strain, and your intellectual life from starvation. But never sacrifice cleanliness to display. Those children are fortunate who are kept supplied with whole and clean clothing; but none of these things can begin to compare in value with a wise mother's love and care in respect to the formation of character and the development of a sound mind in a sound body. A husband has something to say 'thank you' for, whose buttons are never missing and whose dinner is always in good time and good order; but he deserves to miss the best gifts of this life who value these things above a wife's companionship and inspiration in all things most lovely and of good report."

I have seen a mother whose critical eye could discern anything imperfect in the matching of the wood-work of her house, and who was very particular to have her house-cleaning thoroughly done at the precise time she had set, and would carry it through frequently at the expense of physical and spiritual health, while her children were left to run in the street and obtain a street education. These children were growing up coarse, selfish, rude, and disobedient. The mother, although she had hired help, was so much engaged in household cares that she could not afford time to properly train her children. She let them come up with deformity of character, undisciplined, and untrained. We could but feel that the fine taste of the mother was not exercised in the right direction, or she would have seen the necessity of

moulding the minds and manners of her children, and educating them to have symmetrical characters and lovely tempers.

If the mother had let these things which she has allowed to claim her first attention come in secondarily, she would have regarded the physical, mental, and moral training of her children of almost infinite importance. Those who take upon themselves the responsibility of mothers should feel under the most solemn obligation to God and to their children, to so educate them that they will have amiable and affectionate dispositions, and that they will be pure in morals, refined in taste, and lovely in character.

The mother loves her children. This is right. She cannot help it. But this love is frequently misapplied; for it leads her to indulge her children to their injury.

For years I have looked upon these children with feelings of sadness, sometimes repeating to myself these words: "That which ye sow, ye shall also reap." These children have needed the influence of a calm, well-balanced mind. The mother's time could not be more profitably spent than in seeking heavenly wisdom, and in studying how to train her children for God. If she would succeed she should have a firm trust in God, and that cheerful, hopeful mind and peaceful temper which flows from pure religious principles. Every effort made in this direction will repay her tenfold.

If mothers neglect to properly educate their children, their neglect is reflected back upon them again, making their burdens and perplexities harder than they would have been if they had devoted time and patient care in training their children to obedience and submission. It will pay in the end for mothers to make the formation of the characters of their children their first and highest consideration, that the thorns may not take root and yield an abundant harvest. God calls upon mothers to become co-workers with him in the formation of the character of their children, instead of wasting their time

in needless labor to make display in their houses for the eyes of visitors, while their children are coming up with characters that are warped and deformed. They are not trained for usefulness, and their minds molded that they may have self-denial and self-control, having beautiful characters that angels can love. The inward adorning the ornament of a meek and quite spirit God values. In comparison with this, outward ornamentation is but little consequence.

Mothers have a sacred mission in directing and educating the minds of their children. They should not be so engrossed with the artificial and burdened with care that they cannot have time to educate their children from God's great book of nature, impressing their young minds with the beauties of opening buds and flowers. The lofty trees, the lovely birds caroling forth their happy songs to their Creator, speak to their senses of the goodness, mercy, and benevolence of God. Every leaf and flower with their varied tints, perfuming the air, teach them that God is love. All that is good and lovely and beautiful in this world speaks to them of the love of our Heavenly Father. The character of God they may discern in his created works. Parents should improve every opportunity to impress their children by connecting in their minds God with the things of nature, that they may look up through nature to nature's God. Lead your children to regard God as the Creator of all things, and to reverence and fear him who is exalted above the heavens, and to love him because he first loved them. The evidences of his love they have on every hand, speaking to them through the glories of nature. Your temporal matters may be neglected rather than the heart wants and culture of the minds of your children.

August 12, 1875

From Meeting to Meeting

The following letter from sister White was written while traveling from one meeting to another. On the cars, and in the depots, wherever she could find opportunity, she has penned a few lines which we are pleased to present to the readers of the Signs. W. C. W.

Our third camp-meeting is closed. We have been well cared for at these meetings. A small tent was furnished for our use, and our meals were prepared by kind friends, on the camp-ground. After the meetings were closed Bro. Chase took us to his home where we shared his hospitality taking a nights rest and a New England breakfast before starting on our way to the next meeting. On the way to Bro. Chase's, we passed through Monroe, where we labored seventeen years ago with Bro. Sperry. He has long since closed his labors, to rest till the voice of Jesus shall call the righteous from their graves to a glorious, immortal life. We work on, still waiting for Christ's appearing.

On Tuesday night we were awakened by a fearful storm. The lightning flashes followed in such quick succession as to make one blaze of light. The thunder, peal after peal, seemed to shake the earth. In the morning the heavens presented the appearance of burnished brass. This and another severe thunder storm the next night did great damage, shattering the forest trees, damaging houses, and in several cases injuring the sleeping inmates. The railroad was washed away in several places so delaying us that we did not reach the Minnesota Camp-ground till Friday.

It is painful to witness, as we pass from place to place, the reckless, frivolous conduct of many of the youth. The Bible attaches the greatest

importance to moral rectitude. The books of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs, the Apostles, and the teachings of our Saviour, present the idea that every one is to be tried by his principles; not by his profession, his faith, or his appearance; for although of fine appearance, he may have hidden sins. The heart must be renewed; the tree must be made good or good fruit will not appear. "Marvel not" said Christ to Nicodemus, "that I said unto you, ye must be born again." A new moral taste has to be created before man will love to obey the law of God.

How much I have thought upon the popular revivals. There are a great many modern inventions to remedy the evils existing in society, but we have seen very little enduring good result from them. Advantage is taken of the impulses of the moment, to induce men to profess to leave a sinful life. Reformation in life is needed, but the reformation made under excitement will seldom outlast the excitement in which it originated. Conversions made by moving the feelings by the relation of anecdotes and sensational stories, do not bear the impress of Heaven. Heart work is needed. The sinner needs to have a clearly defined understanding of what sin is, and that he must repent of sin, which is the transgression of the law of God. When this is understood the seed is sown for a true and thorough conversion.

We have examples of men of debased morals who have been brought before the law of God, the true mirror: in it they have seen the defects of their character, and when pointed to the atoning blood of a crucified Redeemer, they accepted it as their only hope, they were truly converted. From this time their life was changed; they have not a sensational religion.

David sinned, he transgressed the law of God. A prophet of God was sent to reprove him, and convict him of his error. He did not sing affecting songs, nor tell touching anecdotes, but he brought before David an illustration of his own course, in a figure, and let him pass sentence upon himself, then he said, "Thou art the man." David repented and found pardon

through Christ. And thus it must be with the sinner now, he must realize the enormity of his sin, before he can exercise true repentance and experience a thorough conversion.

August 19, 1875

Mothers and their Daughters

Some mothers are at fault in releasing their daughters from toil and care. By so doing they encourage them in indolence. The excuse these mothers sometimes plead is, "My daughters are not strong." But they take the sure course to make them weak and inefficient. Well-directed labor is just what they require to make them strong, vigorous, cheerful, happy, and courageous to meet the various trials with which this life is beset.

Mothers, labor will not injure your daughters so much as indolence will. Do they feel weary at the close of their day's duties? A night's rest will refresh and invigorate them, and in the morning they will be prepared to engage again in useful labor.

Many mothers are too ready to shield their delicate, ease-loving, pleasure-seeking, daughters from care and responsibility, as though they feared that a little care would injure them. These mothers make a sad mistake. In lifting responsibilities from their daughters, they make them inefficient for useful labor, and render them useless so far as practical life is concerned.

Their education has a tendency to make them thoughtless of others. They are frivolous, and, perhaps, vain. Their minds are occupied with themselves. Their own amusements and selfish gratifications are their chief study. They become proud, unteachable, and unamiable. They fancy themselves delicate in health, when they have the powers within them, if called into exercise, to make useful, working women.

Indolence is a curse to them. They learn the fashionable, simpering, and

artificial lisping, so common with spoiled young ladies. Affectation is seen in almost every action. They are amused with themselves, and are thoughtless of others. They live upon the plenty which surrounds them in their parental homes, and depend upon the bounty given them of their parents. They lean upon parental strength, and fail to acquire the power of depending upon themselves. And those of this class are unprepared for the stern realities of life. They make no provision for the losses and disappointments of this inconstant life. They may be deprived of property and of parents. What then, will they lean upon? They have not acquired a principle of self-support, of noble independence and self reliance, and they droop through murmuring, disappointment, and discouragement. They may then regret the defects in their education, and blame their mothers for them. These are some of the many fruits of a mother's mistaken fondness.

Inactivity weakens the system. God made men and women to be active and useful. Nothing can increase the strength of the young like proper exercise of all the muscles in useful labor. But the indulgent mother frequently sacrifices her life in her misguided affection for her children. And are they, in any way, benefited by the great sacrifice of the precious strength of the mother? No; they are positively and permanently injured. They are taught to think and care only for themselves. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree inclines."

Especially is this the case with those daughters who are more directly under the influence of the mother. She should instruct her daughters not to yield to indispositions and slight ailments. If they complain of inability to labor, they should not be urged to eat. They should be taught that if they are unable to perform light labor, the system is not in a condition to take care of food. They should fast for one or two meals, and drink only pure, soft water. The loss of a meal or two will enable the overburdened system to overcome slight indispositions; and even graver difficulties may be overcome by this simple process.

It is very injurious for persons in full flesh to lie in bed, simply because they feel sick. Some, even while thus inactive, eat regularly. The physical, mental, and moral powers are enfeebled by indolence.

Mothers, if your daughters are surrounded with plenty, do not make this an excuse for neglecting to give them an education in the useful branches of household labor. Do not encourage them in indolence, or allow frivolous employment of their time. You should help your children to acquire a knowledge, that, if necessary, they could live by their own labor. You should teach them to be decided in following the calls of duty.

Young friends, learn to lean upon divine strength. All other, in comparison with this, is feebleness. Although you may feel weak, you may look to God by faith, for energy to make your efforts efficient. In the strength of your Redeemer, you can follow in the path of duty. You can stand in his strength self-reliant, with noble independence, working with diligence to develop good physical, mental, and moral strength. You can do this while you depend upon the grace of your Redeemer to aid you in your efforts. Follow in the path of duty, and you may be assured that the dangers, trials, toils, and conflicts, of life, will never intrude their dark shadows in the mansions Christ is preparing for the faithful.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."

December 9, 1875

Fashionable Life

A life of fashion takes from the simplicity and attractive beauties of nature. Our artificial habits deprive us from enjoying the natural, and unfit us for practical life. How can Christian mothers, in the education of their children, follow in the steps of the multitude, and bow at the shrine of fashion?

To live fashionably is an expensive, as well as thankless, life. Much time and means are squandered merely to create sensation in fashionable society, which the Master has intrusted to his professed people, with which to bless the needy, and to advance his cause. Garments are prepared with much labor and great expenditure of means, to beautify the person, and make the outward appearance beautiful; yet, notwithstanding all this artificial adornment, they poorly compare with the beauty of the simplest flower of nature.

The Redeemer of the world, in giving his lessons of trust to his disciples, points them to the lilies of the field, and says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The great amount of needless toil to make the outward appearance attractive by artificial decorations is frequently at the sacrifice of health. After all the preparations that variety and pride can suggest, those who thus adorn themselves cannot bear comparison, in all their costly array, to the simple, natural lily of the field.

I would impress upon Christian mothers the necessity of being awake to the fact that every act of their lives is telling upon the future of their children,

and is forming their characters to be swayed by the customs of society, or is giving them correct views of truth and right principles, as the basis of their actions. Many Christian mothers feel compelled, through false views, to fall into the customs of society, and the tide of fashion. With their mature experience they may be better able to withstand the current of fashionable life, and avoid its downward and vicious tendencies; but in adorning their houses, and in arraying their children according to the custom of fashionable society, they are giving examples to their children, and surrounding them with an influence, that is calculated to foster pride, vanity, and selfishness, and they are swept in with the current of fashion, drifting, drifting, away from true goodness and away from God.

How many precious hours are occupied by parents in the education of their children for fashionable miseries, for lives that are worse than lost. How much more profitable would be the lessons given to their children of the wonderful works of God in nature, seen in the simple, yet delicate, beautifully tinted flowers. Parents can teach their children that all the display and costly adornings cannot compare in beauty and glory to one of God's modest flowers. The minds of children should be led to see the hollowness of fashionable life.

Parents should overcome desires of living for appearance. They should rather devote time to make their children happy at their homes, that they may love the society of their parents; making them their confidants and advisers, and enjoying useful employment, acquiring a taste for the natural, rather than the artificial. We should imprint upon our children's minds that they are not their own, to go, and come, and dress, and act, as they please. They are God's property, purchased by the sacrifice of the life of Christ; and their life is not to be idled away in indolence, or in seeking their own pleasures. If they possess personal attractions, and rare natural abilities, greater care should be taken in their education, lest these endowments be turned to a curse, and are so used as to disqualify them for the sober realities of this life, and, through

flattery, and vanity, and love of display, unfit them for the better life.

Our children should be carefully instructed in regard to their own being, and the obligations, relations, and duties of life. They should be taught that their life is not to be wasted in vanity, folly, and pride; for God has given them life to be improved. They should teach them that they have a place to fill, a part to act, and an object to gain. They should educate them not to be carried, but to bear burdens, to deny self, and to practice self-control.

Mothers, the time devoted by many of you, with busied fingers and wearied eyes, diligently working in trimming, or in embroidering a skirt or dress, to attract admiration and envy by those who cannot have these extras, is poorly spent. In the end it will prove to you like the apples of Sodom, beautiful without, but ashes within. You are, in thus devoting time and means for display, teaching your children to love these things. "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines." As your sons and daughters become older, approaching manhood and womanhood, you mourn that their minds are frivolous, and absorbed in their pleasures, in fashionable dress, and outward display, while they have but little sense of their obligations to their parents, or to their God. They frequently have a positive disrelish for useful labor, or to lighten the burdens borne by their parents.

The seed that the parents have sown in the hearts of their children has sprung up, and is yielding an abundant harvest. The lessons they have taught their children are put into practical use. They are what their parents made them. They do not possess moral worth, or noble independence. They follow in the wake of fashion, and live to be petted, and flattered, and admired. Outward show is the ambition of their worse than useless lives.

Our children should be instructed that they may be intelligent in regard to their own physical organism. They can at an early age, by patient instruction, be made to understand that they should obey the laws of their

being, if they would be free from pain and disease. They should understand that their lives cannot be useful, if they are crippled by disease. Neither can they please God if they bring sickness upon themselves by the disregard of nature's laws.

Many professedly Christian parents follow the example of the multitude in their conformity to the world. Parents, you have taken the responsibility of bringing children into the world, without any voice of theirs, and you are responsible for the lives and souls of your children. They have the attractions of the world to fascinate and allure. You can educate them so as to fortify them against its corrupting influence. You can train them to bear life's responsibilities, and to realize their obligations to God, truth, and duty, and the bearing that their actions will have upon their future immortal life. Many needless things are made of the first importance, even by Christian parents, in the education of their children. A close investigation, enlightened by the Spirit of God, would reveal to these parents that a great share of the burdens and fatigue of life they suffer, God has not bound upon them; but they gather them upon themselves in doing the very things God has expressly forbidden them to do.

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Many professed Christian parents, in order to gratify their children, labor, and expend means, wear away their strength, and even sacrifice their lives, in order to have their children keep pace with fashion. As I have seen these parents worrying, and complaining of trials, and temptations, and darkness, and gloom, fretting their way through life, carrying their unnecessary load of care, I have been reminded of the words of Christ to the Pharisees, "Ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God."

There is a natural tendency with all to be sentimental, rather than

practical. In view of this fact, it is important that parents, in the education of their children, should direct and train their minds to love truth, duty, and self-denial, and to possess noble independence, to choose to be right, if the majority choose to be wrong. Our children who are receiving an education at school, should become intelligent in regard to their own bodies, the habitation God has given them, and bring their knowledge to bear upon their every-day life, that they may become intelligent in regard to the relation their eating, dressing, and walking, sustain to life, health, and happiness.

If they preserve to themselves sound constitutions and amiable tempers, they will possess true beauty that they can wear with a divine grace. And they will have no need to be adorned with artificials, for these are always expressive of an absence of the inward adorning of true moral worth. A beautiful character is of value in the sight of God. Such beauty will attract, but not mislead. Such charms are fast colors; they never fade.

Parents, here is a work before you. You may preserve your health by being less anxious for the outward, beautifying the person with artificial adornings, and devote your precious time to the adorning and beautifying of the mind. You may, in the fear of God, take up your neglected duty, and train your children to form characters for Heaven. The inspired apostle contrasts the inward adorning with the outward artificial display, and pronounces it not corruptible. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit he declares is of great price in the sight of God. If we are clearly told what God values, we shall be inexcusable if we continue to love display, to idolize our bodies, and to neglect to cultivate the inward adorning and perfect beautiful characters that God can approve.

January 6, 1876

Christian Temperance

We are living in an age of intemperance. Health and life are sacrificed, by very many, to gratify their appetite for hurtful indulgences. These last days are characterized by depreciated morals and physical debility, in consequence of these indulgences and the general unwillingness to engage in physical labor. Many are suffering today from inaction and wrong habits.

The majority of the youth of this generation are fond of amusements and afraid of work. They generally lack moral courage to deny appetite and respond to the claims of duty. They have but little self-control, and become excited and passionate on the slightest occasion. Idleness and plenty of money to spend in amusements, exciting pleasures, wines, liquors and tobacco, lay the foundation for disease and ruin. Manhood and virtue are sacrificed upon the altar of lust. Very many of every age and station in life are without principle or conscience, and with spend-thrift habits are rushing into all vices, and are corrupting society, until our world is becoming a second Sodom.

Gluttonous feasting and the indulgence of narcotics and stimulants, are carried to great lengths even by the Christian world. How many close their last precious hours of probationary time, in scenes of gaiety, feasting and amusement, where serious thoughts are not allowed to enter, where the spirit of Jesus would be unwelcome! Their last precious hours are passing while their minds are benumbed with tobacco and alcoholic liquors. There are not a few who pass directly from the dens of infamy to the sleep of death; they close their life-record among the associations of dissipation and vice. What will the awakening be at the resurrection of the unjust!

The eye of the Lord is open upon every scene of debasing amusement and profane dissipation. The words and deeds of the pleasure-lovers pass directly from these halls of vice to the Book of final records. What is the life of this class worth to the world, except as a beacon of warning to those who will be warned, not to live like these men, and die as the fool dieth. The apostle thus entreats, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

When we pursue a course of eating and drinking that lessens physical and mental vigor, or become the prey of habits that tend to the same results, we dishonor God, for we rob him of the service he claims from us. Those who acquire and indulge the unnatural appetite for tobacco, do this at the expense of health. They are destroying nervous energy, lessening vital force and sacrificing mental strength.

Those who profess to be the followers of Christ yet have this terrible sin at their door, cannot have a high appreciation of the atonement and an elevated estimate of eternal things. Minds that are clouded and partially paralyzed by narcotics, are easily overcome by temptation, and cannot enjoy communion with God.

Those who use tobacco can make but a poor plea to the liquor inebriate. Two-thirds of the drunkards in our land created an appetite for liquor by the use of tobacco. Those who claim that tobacco does not injure them, can be convinced of their mistake by depriving themselves of it for a few days; the trembling nerves, the giddy head, the irritability they feel, will prove to them that this sinful indulgence has bound them in slavery. It has overcome will power. They are in bondage to a vice that is fearful in its results.

The love of tobacco is a warring lust. Means are thereby squandered that would aid in the good work of clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and sending the truth to poor souls out of Christ. What a record will appear when the accounts of life are balanced in the book of God! It will then appear that vast sums of money have been expended for tobacco and alcoholic liquors! For what? To ensure health and prolong life? Oh, no! To aid in the perfection of Christian character and a fitness for the society of holy angels? Oh, no! But to minister to a depraved, unnatural appetite for that which poisons and kills not only the user but those to whom he transmits his legacy of disease and imbecility. God does not propose to work a miracle to preserve our health and strength which we are daily injuring by vice and habits of hurtful indulgence.

Food prepared with condiments and spices inflames the stomach, corrupts the blood and paves the way to stronger stimulants. It induces nervous debility, impatience and lack of self-control. Tobacco and the wine-cup follow.

We have seen that the victories gained by the "Temperance Crusade" are not often permanent. In those places where the excitement ran highest and apparently the most was accomplished in closing liquor saloons and reclaiming inebriates, after the lapse of a few months, intemperance prevailed to a greater extent than before the effort to suppress it was made.

The reason of this is evident. The work is not deep and thorough. The axe is not laid at the root of the tree. The roots of intemperance lie deeper than mere liquor drinking. In order to make the temperance movement a success, the work of reform must begin at our tables. Eating flesh-meat does not increase physical, mental, or moral health, but, on the contrary, frequently causes diseases of a very aggravating character. The use of highly seasoned meats creates an appetite for stronger stimulants such as tobacco and liquor.

The immediate results of meat-eating may be apparently to invigorate the system, but this is no reason for its being considered the best article of diet. The moderate use of brandy will have the same effect for the time being, but when its exciting influence is gone there follows a sense of languor and debility. Those who depend upon simple and nutritious food, that is comparatively unstimulating in its effects, can endure more labor in the course of months and years than the meat-eater or the liquor-drinker. They who work in the open air will feel less injury from the use of flesh-meats than those of sedentary habits, for sun and air are great helps to digestion, and do much to counteract the effect of wrong habits of eating and drinking.

All stimulants hurry the human machinery too fast, and although, for the time, activity and vigor may seem to be increased, in proportion to the irritating influence employed, there must be a reaction; a debility will follow corresponding in degree to the unnatural excitement that has been produced.

When this debility is felt, something to stimulate and tone up the system is again used to give immediate relief from disagreeable languor. Nature is gradually educated to rely upon this oft-repeated remedy, until her powers are enfeebled by being often aroused to unnatural action. All persons should become acquainted with the laws of their being. It should be an important subject of study, how to live, how to regulate labor, and how to eat and drink in reference to health.

The more simply and naturally we live the better shall we be able to resist epidemic and disease. If our habits are good and the system is not weakened by unnatural action, Nature will furnish all the stimulus that we require.

If men and women perseveringly live in accordance with the laws of life

and of health, they will realize the blessed results of an entire health reform. But many make a mistake at the very commencement of their reform. They go to extremes. They carry their ideas too far. Their views in regard to healthful diet are too narrow. They have the same articles of food upon their tables, with scarcely a variation, from week to week, and from month to month. They take no pains to prepare fruits and grains in an inviting as well as healthful manner, and, after this course has been rigidly followed for a while, they decide that they cannot follow out the principles of health reform, and go back to their former manner of living.

Those who set out from impulse and pursue a radical course for a time and then go back, do great injury to the cause. Many make too great and sudden changes in their diet. As the light of health reform comes to them, conscience is aroused in regard to their eating and drinking, and in their effort to change their habits of living they do not preserve a safe medium, but go to an extreme at once. They reduce the quantity and quality of their food. This abstemiousness reduces their strength, and really injures their health. They finally conclude that they cannot live the health reform. The real facts in the case are, they never did carry out its principles. Health reform as we understand it, does not consist in an impoverished diet. The table should be well provided with fruits and grains prepared in such a manner that they are not only nutritious but inviting.

Some get the idea that to adopt the health reform is to subsist upon the very cheapest food prepared with the least labor. This is not true. It is a libel on the principles of health reform. The human system must have nourishment, and all cannot relish the same dishes. So when the table is spread with the same article of food, prepared in the same way, meal after meal and day after day, some members of the family may be well satisfied and enjoying their food very much, while others may be only able to eat sparingly of one dish and the wants of the system will not be met; for it is a fact that some persons cannot relish, or be nourished by articles of food

which others enjoy and thrive upon. But every person may do much towards educating the taste and appetite to relish plain and healthful food, such as graham bread and oat-meal gruel, and various vegetables, even if they are at first distasteful to them.

The rule which some recommend, is to eat whenever there is a sense of hunger, and to eat until satisfied. This course will lead to disease and numerous evils. Appetite at the present day is not generally natural, therefore is not a correct index to the wants of the system. It has been pampered and misdirected until it has become morbid and can no longer be a safe guide. Nature has been abused, her efforts crippled by wrong habits and indulgence in sinful luxuries, until taste and appetite are alike perverted. It is unnatural to have a craving for flesh-meats. It was not thus in the beginning. The appetite for meat has been made and educated by man. Our Creator has furnished us, in vegetables, grain, and fruits, all the elements of nutrition necessary to health and strength. Flesh-meats composed no part of the food of Adam and Eve before their fall. If fruits, vegetables and grains are not sufficient to meet the wants of man, then the Creator made a mistake in providing for Adam.

The habits of the age are serious obstacles to the perfecting of Christian character. Physically we are composed of what we eat, and our minds are greatly influenced by our bodies. If we subsist largely upon the flesh of animals, the animal nature is increased in like proportion. Man is sufficiently animal in his nature without cultivating those propensities by the eating of food which stimulates and excites the animal organs to activity. As these propensities are strengthened the mental and moral powers are diminished.

God did not withhold meat from the Hebrews in the wilderness simply to show his authority, but for their good, that they might preserve physical and moral strength. He knew that the use of animal food strengthens the animal passions and enfeebles the intellect. He knew that the gratification of

the appetite of the Hebrews for flesh-meats, would weaken their moral powers, and induce such an irritable disposition that the vast army would become insubordinate, that they would lose the high sense of their moral obligations, and refuse to be controlled by the wise laws of Jehovah. Violence and rebellion would exist among them, making it impossible for them to be a pure and happy people in the land of Canaan. God knew what was best for the children of Israel, therefore he deprived them in a great measure of flesh-meats.

Satan tempted them to consider this unjust and cruel. He caused them to lust after forbidden things, because he saw that through the indulgence of perverted appetite they would become carnally-minded and could be easily brought to do his will; the lower organs would be strengthened, while the intellectual and moral powers would be weakened.

Satan is no novice in the business of destroying souls. He well knows that if he can lead men and women into wrong habits of eating and drinking, he has gained, in a great degree, the control of their minds and baser passions. In the beginning man ate of the fruits of the earth, but sin brought into use the flesh of dead animals as food. This diet works directly against the spirit of true refinement and moral purity. The substance of that which is taken into the stomach, passes into the circulation, and is converted into flesh and blood.

Those who subsist largely upon flesh-meats inflame the stomach thereby, the blood becomes torpid and impure, head-aches and indispositions follow. The system is filled with humors; fevers, scrofula and cancers are the consequences. Especially is this true of those who eat swine's flesh. Yet so great is the tendency to ignore these evils, that few can be brought to realize the true effects of this sort of diet upon the human system.

God requires that his people should be temperate in all things. The

example of Christ, during that long fast in the wilderness, should teach his followers to repulse Satan when he comes under the guise of appetite. Then may they have influence to reform those who have been led astray by indulgence, and have lost moral power to overcome the weakness and sin that has taken possession of them. Thus may Christians secure health and happiness, in a pure, well-ordered life and a mind clear and untainted before God.

January 6, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White

Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

The name of Mrs. Ellen G. White is widely known in consequence of her writings and her public labors as a speaker in nineteen of the States and in the Canadas. Her books in print amount to about four thousand pages which have had an extensive circulation. And her labors as a speaker cover a period of more than thirty years. But in the last ten years the providence of God, in harmony with the wishes of the people with whom she has been connected, has moved her out to speak to the crowds at our annual conferences and camp-meetings in the several states where they have been held. Newspaper reporters have given sketches of her addresses, and have made statements of their effects upon audiences which have given her prominence in the minds of thousands who have neither read her books nor heard her speak. And the fact which is made prominent in her books that Mrs. White has received the sentiments she has taught by direct revelation from God, has made her a person of peculiar interest to all those who have received her as one thus favored of the Lord. And, on the other hand, persons have not been wanting among those who reject her testimony and her work, to mention her name unfavorably through the press, and in the spirit of persecution seek to excite prejudice against her. This, however, has served as an advertisement, and has greatly increased the desire of the people to hear her speak, and to read her books.

In view of the situation, we have for several years felt that it was due the public that the life, Christian experience, and labors of Mrs. White, be brought out in a humble volume for circulation as extensively as her name is known. Almost every opponent, in preaching and writing against the Sabbath and other doctrines held by the Seventh-day Adventists, refers to Mrs. White

and her work in a scoffing manner, in order to please the rabble, and prejudice honest people. And many, in consequence of misrepresentations of her work, and from want of knowledge of the facts in the case, take unfavorable views of the cause with which she has held close connection from its earliest existence. It is therefore necessary in order to disabuse honest minds, and for the general good of the cause of Bible truth, that her work be correctly represented, and properly defended before the people. The reader will doubtless be interested in brief sketches of Mrs. White's parentage and early life.

Her parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, were residents of Maine. In early life they were earnest and devoted members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In that church they held prominent connection, and labored for the conversion of sinners, and to build up the cause of God for a period of forty years. During this time they had the joy of seeing their children, eight in number, all converted and gathered to the fold of Christ. Their decided Second Advent views, however, severed the connection of the family from the Methodist Church in the year 1843, after which meetings were held in their house in the city of Portland much of the time for several years. Of her early life and Christian experience we will here let Mrs. White speak for herself, as taken from her second volume of Spiritual Gifts.

"At the age of nine years an accident happened to me which was to affect my whole life. In company with my twin sister and one of our schoolmates, I was crossing a common in the city of Portland, Maine, when a girl about thirteen years of age, also a member of our school, becoming angry at some trifle, followed us, threatening to strike us. Our parents had taught us never to contend with any one, but if we were in danger of being abused or injured, to hasten home at once. We were doing this with all speed, but the girl followed us as rapidly, with a stone in her hand. I turned my head to see how far she was behind me, and as I did so, she threw the stone and it hit me on the nose. A blinding, stunning sensation overpowered me, I fell

senseless.

"When I revived and became conscious, I found myself in a merchant's store, my garments were covered with blood which was pouring from my nose and streaming over the floor. A kind stranger offered to take me home in his carriage, but I, not knowing how weak I was, told him that I preferred to walk home rather than soil his carriage with blood. Those present were not aware that I was so seriously injured, and allowed me to have my own way; but I had only walked a few rods when I grew faint and dizzy. My twin sister and my schoolmate carried me home.

"I have no recollection of any thing further for some time after the accident. My mother said that I noticed nothing but lay in a stupor for three weeks; no one but herself thought it possible for me to recover. For some reason she felt that I would live. A kind neighbor, who had been very much interested in my behalf, at one time thought me to be dying. She wished to purchase a burial robe for me, but my mother said 'Not yet,' for something told her that I would not die.

"When I again aroused to consciousness, it seemed to me that I had been asleep. I did not remember the accident and was ignorant of the cause of my illness. As I began to gain a little strength, my curiosity was aroused by overhearing those who came to visit me say 'What a pity!' 'I should not have known her,' etc. I asked for a looking-glass, and as I gazed into it, I was shocked at the change in my appearance. Every feature of my face seemed changed. The bones of my nose had been broken and caused this disfigurement.

"The idea of carrying my misfortune through life was insupportable. I could see no pleasure in my existence. I did not wish to live and I dared not die for I was unprepared. Friends often visited my parents and looked with pity upon me and advised them to prosecute the father of the girl who had, as

they said, ruined me. But my mother was for peace; she said that if such a course could bring me back my health and natural looks there would be something gained, but as this was impossible, it was best not to make enemies by following such advice.

"Physicians thought that a silver wire might be put in my nose to hold it in shape. This would have been very painful, and they feared it would be of little use, as I had lost so much blood and sustained such a nervous shock that my recovery was very doubtful. Even if I revived it was their opinion I could live but a short time. I was reduced almost to a skeleton.

"At this time I began to pray the Lord to prepare me for death. When Christian friends visited the family, they would ask my mother if she had talked to me about dying. I overheard this and it roused me. I desired to become a Christian and prayed as well as I could for the forgiveness of my sins. I felt a peace of mind resulting. I loved every one and felt desirous that all should have their sins forgiven and love Jesus as I did.

"I well remember one night in winter when the snow was on the ground, the heavens were lighted up, the sky looked red and angry, and seemed to open and shut, while the snow looked like blood. The neighbors were very much frightened. Mother took me out of bed in her arms and carried me to the window. I was happy, I thought Jesus was coming, and I longed to see him. My heart was full, I clapped my hands for joy, and thought my sufferings were ended. But I was disappointed; the singular appearance faded away from the heavens, and the next morning the sun arose the same as usual."

J. W.

January 13, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

We do not say that there are no sound conversions to God in advanced years; but we do affirm that good Christian character is seldom commenced and matured in old age, and even then is perfected under great difficulties. Both the experiences of the past and the uniform appeals of the sacred writers to the young, to seek the Lord in their youth, give evidence that early life, even in tender years, is most favorable to the formation and growth of true Christian character.

Providence, to outward view, was dealing severely with Mrs. W. in her childhood, but now she can look back over thirty years of hardships, toils, and reproaches in the cause of Christ, for his dear name's sake, and kiss the chastening rod that struck down her early hopes for this life, but was sanctified of God to her early consecration and mature growth in grace. Of this we let her speak, as continued from last week:

"I gained strength very slowly. As I became able to join in play with my young friends I was forced to learn the bitter lesson that one's personal appearance makes a difference in the treatment they receive from the majority of their companions. At the time of my misfortune, my father was absent in Georgia. When he returned he embraced my brother and sisters and then inquired for me. I, timidly shrinking back, was pointed out by my mother, but my own father did not recognize me. It was hard for him to believe that I was his little Ellen, whom he had left only a few months before a healthy, happy child. This cut my feelings deeply, but I tried to appear cheerful though my heart seemed breaking.

"Many times in those childish days, I was made to feel my misfortune keenly. My feelings were unusually sensitive and caused me great unhappiness. Often with a wounded pride, mortified and wretched in spirit, have I sought a lonely place and gloomily contemplated the trials I was daily doomed to bear.

"I had not the relief of tears, for I could not weep readily as could my twin sister, so, though my heart was heavy and ached as if it were breaking, I could not shed a tear. I often felt that it would greatly relieve me to weep away my overcharged feelings. Sometimes the kindly sympathy of friends banished my gloom and removed, for a time, the leaden weight that oppressed my heart. How vain and empty seemed the pleasures of earth to me then! How changeable the friendships of my young companions! yet these little schoolmates were not unlike a majority of the great world's people. A pretty face, a handsome dress attracts them, but let misfortune take these away and the fragile friendship grows cold or is broken. But when I turned to my Saviour, he comforted me. I sought the Lord earnestly in my trouble and received consolation, for I believed that Jesus loved even me.

"My health seemed to be completely shattered. For two years I could not breathe through my nose, and was able to attend school but little. It seemed impossible for me to study and retain what I learned. The same girl who was the cause of my misfortune, was appointed monitor by our teacher, and it was among her duties to assist me in my writing and other lessons. She always seemed sincerely sorry for the great injury she had done me, although I was careful not to remind her of it. She was tender and patient with me, and seemed sad and thoughtful as she saw me laboring, under serious disadvantages, to get an education.

"My nervous system was prostrated, and my hand trembled so that I made but little progress in writing and could get no farther than the simple copies in coarse hand. As I endeavored to bend my mind to my studies, the

letters on the page would run together, great drops of perspiration would stand upon my brow, and a faintness and giddiness would seize me. I had a bad cough, and my whole system seemed debilitated: My teachers advised me to leave school and not pursue my studies further till my health would warrant it. It was the hardest struggle of my young life to yield to my feebleness, and decide that I must give up my studies and relinquish the cherished hope of acquiring an education.

"My ambition to become a scholar had been very great, and when I pondered over my disappointed hopes, and the thought that I was to be an invalid for life, despair seized me. The future stretched out before me dark and cheerless, without one ray of light. I was unreconciled to my lot, and at times murmured against the providence of God in thus afflicting me. I concealed my troubled feelings from my family and friends, fearing that they could not understand me. This was a mistaken course, had I opened my mind to my mother, she might have instructed, soothed, and encouraged me.

"After I had struggled with this unreconciled spirit for days the tempter came under a new guise and increased my distress by condemning me for having allowed such rebellious thoughts to take possession of my mind. My conscience was perplexed, and I knew no way to extricate myself from the labyrinth in which I was wandering.

"The happy confidence in the Saviour's love that I had enjoyed during my illness, was gone. I had lost the blessed consciousness that I was a child of God, and felt that the hopes of my heart had deceived me. It was my determination not to again put confidence in my feelings, until I knew for a certainty that the Lord had pardoned my sins.

"At times my sense of guilt and responsibility to God lay so heavy upon my soul, that I could not sleep but lay awake for hours, thinking of my lost condition and what was best for me to do. The consequences of my

unfortunate accident again assumed gigantic proportions in my mind. I seemed to be cut off from all chance of earthly happiness, and doomed to continual disappointment and mortification. I was even pained by the tender sympathy of my friends, for my pride rebelled against being in a condition to excite their pity. My prospect of worldly enjoyment was blighted, and Heaven seemed closed against me.

"I had the highest reverence for Christians and ministers of the gospel, but religion seemed too holy and sacred for me to obtain. A strange inconceivable anguish bore me down until I felt that I could no longer live beneath the burden. I locked my secret agony within my heart, and did not seek the advice of experienced Christians as I should have done.

"No one conversed with me on the subject of my soul's salvation, and no one prayed with me. I felt that Christians were so far removed from me, so much nobler and purer than myself, that I dared not approach them on the subject that engrossed my thoughts, for I was ashamed to reveal the lost and wretched condition of my heart." J. W.

January 20, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

Thorough Christian experience lies at the foundation of the Christian life. Such experiences can be read from our blessed Bible, from the prophets, the psalms, and from the epistles, and acts of the apostles. These are distinctly marked by sorrow for sin, self-abasement, solemn vows of consecration and obedience followed by the peace of God ruling in the heart which passeth all knowledge.

Experiences of this kind were common in the good old days of thorough reformation about the time when Wm. Miller came upon the stage as a lecturer upon the prophecies, giving his reasons for expecting the second coming of Christ "about the year 1843." Then, and long before that time, the wholesome phrase was current, that this one and that were "struck under conviction." Mrs. W. Continues her experience:

"In March, 1840, Eld. Wm. Miller visited Portland, Me., and gave his first course of lectures on the second coming of Christ. These lectures produced a great sensation, and the Christian church, on Casco street, that Eld. Miller occupied, was crowded day and night. No wild excitement attended these meetings, but a deep solemnity pervaded the minds of those who heard his discourses. Not only was there manifested a great interest in the city, but the country people flocked in day after day, bringing their lunch-baskets, and remaining from morning until the close of the evening meeting.

"Eld. Miller dwelt upon the prophecies, reasoning from Bible history, that the end of the world was near. In company with my friends I attended these meetings and listened to the strange doctrines of the preacher. Four

years previous to this, on my way to school, I had picked up a scrap of paper containing an account of a man in England, who was preaching that the earth would be consumed in about thirty years from that time. I took this paper home and read it to the family.

"In contemplating the event predicted, a great terror seized me; for the time seemed so short for the conversion and salvation of the world. I had been taught that a temporal millennium would take place prior to the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Such a deep impression was made upon my mind by the little paragraph on the waste scrap of paper, that I could scarcely sleep for several nights, and prayed continually to be ready when Jesus came.

"But now I was listening to the most solemn and powerful sermons to the effect that Christ was coming in 1843, only a few short years in the future. The preacher traced down the prophecies with a keen exactitude that struck conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He dwelt upon the prophetic periods, and piled up proof to strengthen his position. Then his solemn and powerful appeals and admonitions to those who were unprepared, held the crowds as if spell-bound.

"Special meetings were appointed where sinners might have an opportunity to seek their Saviour and prepare for the fearful events soon to take place. Terrible conviction spread through the entire city. Prayer-meetings were established, and there was a general awakening among the various denominations, for they all felt more or less the influence that proceeded from the teaching of the near coming of Christ.

"When sinners were invited forward to the anxious seats, hundreds responded to the call, and I, among the rest, pressed through the crowd and took my humble place with the seekers. But there was a hopeless feeling in my heart that I could never become worthy to be called a child of God. A

lack of confidence in myself and a conviction that it would be impossible to make any one understand my feelings, prevented me from seeking advice and aid from my Christian friends. Thus I wandered needlessly in darkness and despair, while they, not penetrating my peculiar reserve, were entirely ignorant of my true state.

"One evening my brother Robert and myself were returning from a meeting where we had listened to a most impressive discourse on the approaching reign of Christ upon the earth, followed by an earnest and solemn appeal to Christians and sinners, urging them to prepare for the Judgment and the coming of the Lord. My soul had been stirred within me by what I had heard. And so deep was the sense of conviction in my heart, that I feared the Lord would not spare me to reach home.

"These words kept ringing in my ears, The great day of the Lord is at hand! Who shall be able to stand when he appeareth! The language of my heart was, 'Spare me, O Lord, through the night! Take me not away in my sins, pity me, save me!' For the first time, I tried to explain my feelings to my brother Robert, who was two years older than myself; I told him that I dared not rest nor sleep until I knew that God had pardoned my sins.

"My brother made no immediate response, but the cause of his silence was soon apparent to me; he was weeping in sympathy with my distress. This encouraged me to confide in him still more, to tell him that I had coveted death in the days when life seemed so heavy a burden for me to bear; but now the thought that I might die in my present sinful state and be eternally lost, filled me with inexpressible terror. I asked him if he thought God would spare my life through that one night, if I spent it agonizing in prayer to him. He answered, 'I think he will if you ask him with faith, and I will pray for you and for myself. Ellen, we must never forget the words we have heard this night.'

"Arriving home. I spent the most of the long hours of darkness in prayer and tears. One special reason that prompted me to conceal my feelings from my friends, was that I very much dreaded a word of discouragement. My hope was so small, and my faith so weak, that I feared if another took a similar view of my condition, it would plunge me into absolute despair. Yet how I longed to have some one tell me what I should do to be saved, what steps to take to meet my Saviour and give myself entirely up to the Lord. I regarded it a great thing to be a Christian, and felt that it required some peculiar effort on my part.

"For months my mind remained in this condition. I had usually attended the Methodist meetings with my parents; but since becoming interested in the soon appearing of Christ, I had attended the meetings on Casco street. The following summer my parents went to the Methodist Camp-meeting at Burton, Me., taking me with them. I was fully resolved to seek the Lord in earnest there, and obtain, if possible, the pardon of my sins. There was a great longing in my heart for the Christians hope and the peace that comes of believing.

"Some things at this camp-meeting perplexed me exceedingly. I could not understand the exercises of many persons during the conference meetings at the stand and in the tents. They shouted at the top of their voices, clapped their hands, and appeared greatly excited. Quite a number fell, through exhaustion it appeared to me, but those present said they were sanctified to God, and this wonderful manifestation was the power of the Almighty upon them. After lying motionless for a time, these persons would rise and again talk and shout as before.

"In some of the tents, meetings were continued through the night, by those who were praying for freedom from sin and the sanctification of the Spirit of God. Quite a number became sick in consequence of the excitement and loss of sleep, and were obliged to leave the ground. These singular

manifestations brought no relief to me, but rather increased my discouragement. I despaired of ever becoming a Christian if, in order to obtain the blessing, it was necessary for me to be exercised as these people were. I was terrified by such peculiar demonstrations, and at a loss to understand them." J. W.

January 27, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

The Christian life is made up of Christian experience from beginning to end. And it is important that the convert should commence the new life with correct views of the change from sin to obedience and holiness. True repentance is a sorrow for sins committed, and forsaking a sinful life by turning to the Lord with full purpose of heart. Conversion means change. For want of a proper sense of the great change in scriptural conversion, very many are converted only in part, and never reach the Bible standard of the Christian life. Last week Mrs. W. Spoke of her early conviction. Of confiding faith and pardoning love, she speaks this week as follows:

"At length I was greatly relieved while listening to a discourse from the words, 'I will go in unto the king,' 'and if I perish, I perish.' In his remarks the speaker referred to those who were wavering between hope and fear, longing to be saved from their sins and receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt and bondage by timidity and fear of failure. He counseled such ones to surrender themselves to God and venture upon his mercy without delay. They would find a gracious Saviour ready to present to them the scepter of mercy even as Ahasuerus offered to Esther the signal of his favor. All that was required of the sinner, trembling in the presence of his Lord, was to put forth the hand of faith and touch the scepter of his grace. That touch ensured pardon and peace.

"Those who were waiting to make themselves more worthy of divine favor, before they dared venture to claim the promises, were making a fatal mistake. Jesus alone cleanses from sin, he only can forgive our transgressions. He has pledged himself to listen to the petition and grant the

prayer of those who come to him in faith. Many had a vague idea that they must make some wonderful effort in order to gain the favor of God. But all self-dependence is vain. It is only by connection with Jesus through faith that the sinner becomes a hopeful, believing child of God.

"These words comforted me and gave me views of what I must do to be saved. Soon after this I passed into a tent where the people were praying and shouting, some confessing their sins and crying for mercy, while others were rejoicing in their new-found happiness. My attention was attracted to a little girl who seemed to be in great distress. Her face would pale and flush by turns, as though she were passing through a severe conflict.

"Tightly clasped in her arms was a pretty little parasol, occasionally she would loosen her hold of it for a moment as if about to let it fall, then her grasp would tighten upon it again; all the time she seemed to be regarding it with a peculiar fascination. At last she cried out, 'Dear Jesus, I want to love thee and go to Heaven! Take away my sins! I give myself to thee, parasol and all.' She threw herself into her mother's arms weeping and exclaiming, 'Ma, I am so happy, for Jesus loves me and I love him better than my parasol or anything else!'

"The face of the child was fairly radiant, she had surrendered her little all. In her childish experience she had fought the battle and won the victory. There was much weeping and rejoicing in the tent. The mother was deeply moved and very joyful that the Lord had added her dear child as a lamb to his fold. She explained to those present that her little daughter had received the parasol as a present not long before. She was very much delighted with it, and had kept it in her hands most of the time, even taking it to bed with her.

"During the meeting her tender heart had been moved to seek the Saviour, she had heard that nothing must be withheld from Jesus, that nothing short of an entire surrender of ourselves and all we have would be

acceptable with him. The little parasol was the child's earthly treasure upon which her heart was set, and, in the struggle to give it up to the Lord, she had passed through a trial keener perhaps than that of the mature Christian, who sacrifices this world's treasures for the sake of Christ.

"It was afterwards explained to the little girl, that since she had relinquished her parasol to Jesus, and it no longer stood between herself and her love for him, it was right for her to retain and use it in a proper manner.

"Many times in after life that little incident has been brought to my mind. When I saw men and women holding desperately to the riches and vanity of earth, yet anxiously praying for the love of Christ, I would think, 'How hard it is to give up the parasol!' Yet Jesus gave up Heaven for our sake, and became poor that we, through his poverty and humiliation, might secure eternal riches.

"I now began to see my way more clearly, and the darkness began to pass away. I saw that, in my despair of at once attaining to the perfection of Christian character, I had scarcely dared to make the trial of serving God. I now earnestly sought the pardon of my sins and strove to give myself entirely to the Lord. But my mind was often in great distress for I did not experience the spiritual ecstasy that I considered would be the evidence of my acceptance with God, and dared not believe myself converted without it. How much I needed instruction concerning the simplicity of faith.

"While bowed at the altar with others who were seeking the Lord, all the language of my heart was, 'Help, Jesus, save me or I perish! I will never cease to entreat till my prayer is heard and my sins forgiven!' I felt my needy, helpless condition as never before. As I knelt and prayed, suddenly my burden left me and my heart was light. At first a feeling of alarm came over me and I tried to resume my load of distress again. It seemed to me that I had no right to feel joyous and happy. But Jesus seemed very near me, I felt able

to come to him with all my griefs, misfortunes and trials, even as the needy ones came to him for relief when he was upon earth. There was a surety in my heart that he understood my peculiar trials and sympathized with me. I can never forget this precious assurance of the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward one so unworthy of his notice. I learned more of the divine character of Christ in the short period when bowed among the praying ones than ever before.

"One of the mothers in Israel came to me and said, 'Dear child, have you found Jesus?' I was about to answer, 'Yes,' when she exclaimed, 'Indeed you have, his peace is with you, I can see it in your face!' Again and again I said to myself, 'Can this be religion? Am I not mistaken?' It seemed too much for me to claim, too exalted a privilege. But I felt that the Saviour had blessed me and pardoned my sins, though I was too timid to openly confess it.

"Soon after this the meeting came to a close and we started for home. My mind was full of the sermons, exhortations and prayers we had heard. Everything in nature seemed changed. During the meeting, clouds and rain prevailed a greater part of the time and my feelings had been in harmony with the weather. Now the sun shone bright and clear and flooded the earth with light and warmth. The trees and grass were a fresher green, the sky a deeper blue. The earth seemed to smile under the peace of God. So the rays of the Sun of righteousness had penetrated the clouds and darkness of my mind, and dispelled its gloom.

"It seemed to me that every one must be at peace with God and animated by his Spirit. Everything my eyes rested upon seemed to have undergone a change. The trees were more beautiful, and the birds sang sweeter than ever before; they seemed to be praising the Creator in their songs. I did not care to talk, for fear this happiness might pass away, and I should lose the precious evidence of Jesus' love for me.

"As we neared our home in Portland, we passed men at work upon the street. They were conversing upon ordinary topics with each other, but my ears were deaf to everything but the praise of God, and their words came to me as grateful thanks and glad hosannas. Turning to my mother, I said, 'Why, these men are all praising God, and they haven't been to the camp-meeting.' I did not then understand why the tears gathered in my mother's eyes, and a tender smile lit up her face, as she listened to my simple words, that recalled a similar experience of her own.

"My mother was a great lover of flowers, and took great pleasure in cultivating them, and thus making her home attractive and pleasant for her children. But our garden had never before looked so lovely to me as upon the day of our return. I recognized an expression of the love of Jesus in every shrub, bud, and flower. These things of beauty seemed to speak in mute language of the love of God.

"There was a beautiful pink flower in the garden called the rose of Sharon. I remember approaching it and touching the delicate petals reverently; they seemed to possess a sacredness in my eyes. My heart overflowed with tenderness and love for these beautiful creations of God. I could see divine perfection in the flowers that adorned the earth. God tended them, and his all-seeing eye was upon them. He had, made them and called them good. 'Ah,' thought I, 'If he so loves and cares for the flowers that he has decked with beauty, how much more tenderly will he guard the children who are formed in his image.' I repeated softly to myself, 'I am a child of God, his loving care is around me, I will be obedient and in no way displease him, but will praise his dear name and love him always.'

"My life appeared to me in a different light. The affliction that had darkened my childhood seemed to have been dealt me in mercy for my good, to turn my heart away from the world and its unsatisfying pleasures and incline it towards the enduring attractions of Heaven.

"Soon after our return from the camp-meeting, I, with several others, was taken into the church on probation. My mind was very much exercised on the subject of baptism. Young as I was, I could see but one mode of baptism authorized by the Scriptures, and that was immersion. My sisters tried in vain to convince me that sprinkling was Bible baptism. The Methodist minister consented to immerse the candidates if they conscientiously preferred that method, although he intimated that sprinkling would be equally acceptable with God.

"Finally the day was appointed for us to receive this solemn ordinance. Although usually enjoying, at this time, a great peace, I frequently feared that I was not a true Christian, and was harassed by perplexing doubts as to my conversion. It was a windy day when we, twelve in number, were baptized, walking down into the sea. The waves ran high and dashed upon the shore, but in taking up this heavy cross, my peace was like a river. When I arose from the water, my strength was nearly gone for the power of the Lord rested upon me. I felt that henceforth I was not of this world, but had risen from the watery grave into a newness of life.

"My cousin Hannah made confession of her faith at the same time that I did. She wished to be baptized by immersion, but her father, who was not a Christian, would not consent to this although we urged him to do so. So she knelt before the altar and had a few drops of water sprinkled upon her head. As I witnessed the ceremony, my heart rejoiced that I had not submitted to receive sprinkling for baptism, feeling confident that there was no scripture to sustain it.

"The same day in the afternoon, I was received into the church in full membership. A young woman, arrived at the age of maturity, stood by my side and was also a candidate for admission to the church with myself. My mind was peaceful and happy till I noticed the gold rings glittering upon this

sister's fingers, and the large showy ear-rings in her ears. I then observed that her bonnet was adorned with artificial flowers and trimmed with costly ribbons, arranged in bows and puffs. My joy was dampened by this display of vanity in one who professed to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

"I expected that the minister would give some whispered reproof or advice to this sister, but he was apparently regardless of her showy apparel and no rebuke was administered. We both received the right hand of fellowship. The hand decorated with jewels was clasped by the representative of Christ, and both our names were registered upon the church book." J. W.

February 3, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

The religion of Jesus Christ is within the grasp of even the youthful mind when taught from the plain letter of the word of God. It is then that Christian experience appears rational and beautiful. Extremes in the Christian lives of many are the result of those wrong teachings which clothe in bewildering mysteries the pure, simple and plain teachings of the Bible relative to the way of life.

The Christian world is cursed with religious fiction. This is especially exhibited in Sunday-school books which are early thrown into the laps of children as their first series for instruction. Next, as they reach riper years, come those volumes in which learned doctors of divinity philosophize upon the mysteries of the "hidden life." Their efforts to make it appear that "entire consecration" is a second great work to succeed justification, has added to the general bewilderment.

By this time the religion of the plain and humble teacher of Judea, the meek, dying sacrifice of Calvary, the adorable Redeemer and pitying Mediator at the Father's right hand, is wrapped in impenetrable mystery, and placed at a dizzy height in the minds of most young people. Despair of ever reaching a life of holiness and perfect obedience seizes them, followed by a decided distaste for what is supposed to be the religion of the Bible. Under these influences and false impressions the path of Bible holiness is made obscure and difficult, as seen in Mrs. White's experience continued from last week:

"I can now look back upon my youthful experience and see how near I

came to making a fatal mistake. I had read many of the religious biographies of children who had possessed numberless virtues and lived faultless lives. I had conceived a great admiration for the paragons of perfection there represented. But far from encouraging me in my efforts to become a Christian, these books were as stumbling-blocks to my feet. I despaired of ever attaining to the perfection of the youthful characters in those stories who lived the lives of saints and were free from all the doubts, and sins, and weaknesses under which I staggered.

"Their faultless lives were followed by a premature but happy death, and the biographers tacitly intimated that they were too pure and good for earth, therefore, God in his divine pity had removed them from its uncongenial atmosphere. The similarity of these avowedly true histories seemed to point the fact to my youthful mind, that they really presented a correct picture of a child's Christian life.

"I repeated to myself again and again, 'If that is true, I can never be a Christian. I can never hope to be like those children,' and was driven by this thought to discouragement and almost to despair. But when I learned that I could come to Jesus just as I was, that the Saviour had come to ransom just such unworthy sinners, then light broke upon my darkness, and I could claim the promises of God.

"Later experience has convinced me that these biographies of immaculate children mislead the young. They extol the amiable qualities of their characters, and suppress their faults and failures. If they were represented as struggling with temptations, occasionally vanquished, yet triumphing over their trials in the end, if they were represented as subject to human frailties, and beset by ordinary temptations, then children would see that they had experienced like trials with themselves, yet had conquered through the grace of God. Such examples would give them fresh courage to renew their efforts to serve the Lord, hoping to triumph as those before them

had done.

"But the sober realities and errors of the young Christian's life were vigorously kept out of sight, while the virtues were so exaggerated as to lift them from above the common level of ordinary children, who naturally despair of ever reaching such excellence and therefore give up the effort, in many cases, and gradually sink into a state of indifference.

"I again became very anxious to attend school and make another trial to obtain an education. But upon attempting to resume my studies my health rapidly failed, and it became apparent that if I persisted in attending school it would be at the expense of my life. I had found it difficult to enjoy religion in a large female seminary, surrounded by influences calculated to attract the mind and lead it from God.

"I felt a constant dissatisfaction with myself and my Christian attainments, and did not continually realize a lively sense of the mercy and love of God. Feelings of discouragement would come over me, and this caused me great anxiety of mind. I heard much in regard to sanctification, but had no defined idea in regard to it. This blessing seemed away beyond my reach, a state of purity my heart could never know. The manner in which it was preached and taught made it appear a human impossibility.

"In June, 1842, Elder Wm. Miller gave his second course of lectures in the Casco street church, in Portland, I felt it a great privilege to attend these lectures, for I had fallen under discouragements and did not feel prepared to meet my Saviour. This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. The different denominations, with a very few exceptions, closed the doors of their churches against Elder Miller. Many discourses from the different pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer. But crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings while many were unable to enter the house, which was literally packed.

"The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive. His manner of preaching was not flowery or oratorical, but he dealt in plain and startling facts that roused his hearers from the apathy in which they had been locked. He substantiated his statements and theories by Scripture as he progressed. A convincing power attended his words that seemed to stamp them as the language of truth.

"He was courteous and sympathetic. When every seat in the house was full, and the platform and places about the pulpit seemed crowded, I have seen him leave the desk and walk down the aisle, and take some feeble old man or woman by the hand and find a seat for them, then return and resume his discourse. He was indeed rightly called Father Miller, for he had a watchful care over those who came under his ministrations, was affectionate in his manner, of genial and tender heart.

"He was a very interesting speaker, and his exhortations, both to professed Christians and the impenitent, were appropriate and powerful. Sometimes a solemnity so marked as to be painful, pervaded his meetings. A sense of the impending crisis of human events impressed the minds of the listening crowds. Many yielded to the conviction of the Spirit of God. Gray-haired men and aged women, with trembling steps, sought the anxious-seats. Those in the strength of maturity, the youth and children, were deeply stirred. Groans and the voice of weeping and of praising God were mingled together at the altar of prayer.

"I believed the solemn words spoken by the servant of God, and my heart was aggrieved when they were opposed or made the subject of jest. I attended the meetings on Casco street quite frequently, and believed that Jesus was soon to come in the clouds of Heaven; but my great anxiety was to be ready to meet him. My mind constantly dwelt upon the subject of holiness of heart, I longed above all things to obtain this great blessing, and feel that I

was entirely accepted of God.

"Among the Methodists I had heard much in regard to sanctification, I had seen people lose their physical strength under the influence of strong mental excitement, and had heard this pronounced to be the evidence of sanctification. But I could not comprehend what was necessary in order to be fully consecrated to God. My Christian friends said to me, 'Believe in Jesus now! Believe that he accepts you now! This I tried to do but found it impossible to believe that I had received a blessing which, it seemed to me, should electrify my whole being. I wondered at my own hardness of heart in being unable to experience the exaltation of spirit that others manifested. It seemed to me that I was different from them, and forever shut out from the perfect joy of holiness of heart.

"My ideas concerning justification and sanctification were confused. These two states were presented to my mind as separate and distinct from each other. Yet I failed to comprehend the difference or understand the meaning of the terms, and all the explanations of the preachers increased my difficulties. I was unable to claim the blessing for myself, and wondered if it was only to be found among the Methodists, and if, in attending the Advent meetings, I was not shutting myself away from that which I desired above all else, the sanctifying Spirit of God.

"Still, I observed that some of those who pretended to be sanctified, manifested a bitter spirit when the subject of the soon coming of Christ was introduced; this did not seem to me a manifestation of the holiness which they professed. I could not understand why ministers from the pulpit should so oppose the doctrine that Christ's second coming as near at hand. Reformation had followed the preaching of this belief and many of the most devoted ministers and laymen had received it as the truth. It seemed to me that those who sincerely loved Jesus would be ready to accept the tidings of his coming, and rejoice that it was near at hand." J. W.

February 10, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

I felt that I could only claim what they called justification. In the word of God I read that without holiness no man should see God. Then there was some higher attainment that I must reach before I could be sure of eternal life. I studied over the subject continually, for I believed that Christ was soon to come, and feared he would find me unprepared to meet him. Words of condemnation rang in my ears day and night, and my constant cry to God was, What shall I do to be saved? In my mind the justice of God eclipsed his mercy and love.

I had been taught to believe in an eternally burning hell, and the horrifying thought was ever before me that my sins were too great to be forgiven, and that I should be forever lost. The frightful descriptions that I had heard of souls lost in perdition sank deep into my mind. Ministers in the pulpit drew vivid pictures of the condition of the damned. They taught that God never proposed to save any but the sanctified. The eye of God was upon us always, every sin was registered and would meet its just punishment. God himself was keeping the books with the exactitude of infinite wisdom, and every sin we committed was faithfully recorded against us.

The devil was represented as eager to seize upon his prey and bear us to the lowest depths of anguish, there to exult over our sufferings in the horrors of an eternally burning hell, where, after the tortures of thousands upon thousands of years, the fiery billows would roll to the surface the writhing victims, who would shriek, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Then the answer would thunder down the abyss, "Through all eternity!" Again the molten waves would engulf the lost, carrying them down into the depths of an ever

restless sea of fire.

While listening to these terrible descriptions, my imagination would be so wrought upon that the perspiration would start from every pore, and it was difficult to suppress a cry of anguish, for I seemed to already feel the pains of perdition. Then the minister would dwell upon the uncertainty of life. One moment we might be here, and the next in hell, or one moment on earth, and the next in Heaven. Would we choose the lake of fire and the company of demons, or the bliss of Heaven with angels for our companions. Would we hear the voice of wailing and the cursing of lost souls through all eternity, or sing the songs of Jesus before the throne.

Our Heavenly Father was presented before my mind as a tyrant, who delighted in the agonies of the condemned; not the tender, pitying Friend of sinners who loves his creatures with a love past all understanding, and desires them to be saved in his kingdom.

My feelings were very sensitive. I dreaded giving pain to any living creature. When I saw animals ill-treated my heart ached for them. Perhaps my sympathies were more easily excited by suffering, because I myself had been the victim of thoughtless cruelty, resulting in the injury that had darkened my childhood. But when the thought took possession of my mind that God delighted in the torture of his creatures, who were formed in his image, a wall of darkness seemed to separate me from him. When I reflected that the Creator of the universe would plunge the wicked into hell, there to burn through the ceaseless rounds of eternity, my heart sank with fear, and I despaired that so cruel and tyrannical a being would ever condescend to save me from the doom of sin.

I thought that the fate of the condemned sinner would be mine, to endure the flames of hell forever, even as long as God himself existed. This impression deepened upon my mind until I feared that I should lose my

reason. I would look upon the dumb beasts with envy, because they had no soul to be punished after death. Many times the wish arose that I had never been born.

Total darkness settled upon me and there seemed no way out of the shadows. Could the truth have been presented to me as I now understand it, my despondency would have taken flight at once, much perplexity and sorrow would have been spared me. If the love of God had been dwelt upon more and his stern justice less, the beauty and glory of his character would have inspired me with a deep and earnest love for my Creator.

I have since thought that many inmates of the lunatic asylums were brought there by experiences similar to my own. Their tender consciences have been stricken with a sense of sin, and their trembling faith dared not claim the promised pardon of God. They have listened to descriptions of the orthodox hell until it has seemed to curdle the very blood in their veins, and burnt an impression on the tablets of their memory. Waking or sleeping, the frightful picture has ever been before them, until reality has become lost in imagination, and they see only the wreathing flames of a fabulous hell and hear only the shrieking of the damned. Reason has become dethroned and the brain is filled with the wild phantasy of a terrible dream. Those who teach the doctrine of an eternal hell, would do well to look more closely after their authority for so cruel a belief.

I had never prayed in public, and had only spoken a few timid words in prayer-meeting. It was now impressed upon me that I should seek God in prayer at our small social meetings. This I dared not do, fearful of becoming confused, and failing to express my thoughts. But the duty was impressed upon my mind so forcibly that when I attempted to pray in secret I seemed to be mocking God, because I had failed to obey his will. Despair overwhelmed me, and for three long weeks no ray of light pierced the gloom that encompassed me about.

My sufferings of mind were intense. Sometimes for a whole night I would not dare to close my eyes, but would wait until my twin sister was fast asleep, then quietly leave my bed and kneel upon the floor, praying silently with a dumb agony that cannot be described. The horrors of an eternally burning hell were ever before me. I knew that it was impossible for me to live long in this state, and I dared not die and meet the terrible fate of the sinner. With what envy did I regard those who realized their acceptance with God. How precious did the Christian's hope seem to my agonized soul.

I frequently remained bowed in prayer nearly all night, groaning and trembling with inexpressible anguish and hopelessness that passes all description. Lord have mercy! was my plea, and, like the poor publican, I dared not lift my eyes to Heaven but bowed my face upon the floor. I became very much reduced in flesh and strength, yet kept my suffering and despair to myself.

While in this state of despondency, I had a dream that made a powerful impression upon my mind, but in no wise lifted the vail of melancholy that darkened my life. I dreamed that I saw a temple, to which many people were flocking. Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved when time should close. All who remained outside would be forever lost. The multitudes without who were going about their various ways, were deriding and ridiculing those who were entering the temple, and told them that this plan of safety was a cunning deception, that in fact there was no danger whatever to avoid. They even laid hold of some to prevent them from hastening within the walls.

Fearing to be laughed at and ridiculed, I thought best to wait until the multitude were dispersed or until I could enter unobserved by them. But the numbers increased instead of diminishing, and fearful of being too late, I hastily left my home and pressed through the crowd. In my anxiety to reach

the temple I did not notice or care for the throng that surrounded me. On entering the building I saw that the vast temple was supported by one immense pillar, and to this was tied a Lamb all mangled and bleeding. We who were present seemed to know that this Lamb had been torn and bruised on our account. All who entered the temple must come before it and confess their sins.

Just before the Lamb, were elevated seats upon which sat a company of people looking very happy. The light of Heaven seemed to shine upon their faces and they praised God and sang songs of glad thanksgiving that seemed to be like the music of the angels. These were they who had come before the Lamb, confessed their sins, been pardoned, and were now waiting in glad expectation of some joyful event.

Even after having entered the building, a fear came over me, and a sense of shame that I must humiliate myself before these people. But I seemed compelled to move forward, and was slowly making my way around the pillar in order to face the Lamb, when a trumpet sounded, the temple shook, shouts of triumph arose from the assembled saints, an awful brightness illuminated the building, then all was intense darkness. The happy people had all disappeared with the brightness, and I was left alone in the silent horror of night.

I awoke in agony of mind and could hardly convince myself that I had been dreaming. It seemed to me that my doom was fixed, that the Spirit of the Lord had left me never to return. My despondency deepened if that were possible. Soon after this I had another dream. I seemed to be sitting in abject despair with my face in my hands, reflecting like this: If Jesus were upon earth I would go to him, throw myself at his feet and tell him all my sufferings. He would not turn away from me, he would have mercy upon me, and I should love and serve him always. Just then the door opened, and a person of beautiful form and countenance entered. He looked upon me

pitifully and said, "Do you wish to see Jesus? He is here and you can see him if you desire to do so. Take everything you possess and follow me."

I heard this with unspeakable joy, and gladly gathered up all my little possessions, every treasured trinket, and followed my guide. He led me to a steep and apparently frail stairway. As I commenced to ascend the steps, he cautioned me to keep my eyes fixed upward, lest I should grow dizzy and fall. Many others who were climbing up the steep ascent fell before gaining the top.

Finally we reached the last step and stood before a door. Here my guide directed me to leave all the things that I had brought with me. I cheerfully laid them down, he then opened the door and bade me enter. In a moment I stood before Jesus. There was no mistaking that beautiful countenance; to no other could belong such a radiant expression of benevolence and majesty. As his gaze rested upon me I knew at once that he was acquainted with every circumstance of my life and all my inner thoughts and feelings.

I tried to shield myself from his gaze, feeling unable to endure his searching eyes, but he drew near with a smile, and, laying his hand upon my head, said, "Fear not." The sound of his sweet voice thrilled my heart with a happiness it had never before experienced, I was too joyful to utter a word, but, overcome with ineffable happiness sank prostrate at his feet. While I was lying helpless there, scenes of beauty and glory passed before me, and I seemed to have reached the safety and peace of Heaven. At length my strength returned and I arose. The loving eyes of Jesus were still upon me, and his smile filled my soul with gladness. His presence filled me with a holy reverence and an inexpressible love. My guide now opened the door, and we both passed out. He bade me take up again all the things I had left without. This done, he handed me a green cord coiled up closely, this he directed me to place next my heart, and when I wished to see Jesus take it from my bosom and stretch it to the utmost. He cautioned me not to let it

remain coiled for any length of time, lest it should become knotted and difficult to straighten. I placed the cord near my heart and joyfully descended the narrow stairs, praising the Lord as I went, and joyfully telling all whom I met where they could find Jesus. This dream gave me hope. The green cord represented faith to my mind, and the beauty and simplicity of trusting in God began to dawn upon my benighted soul.

February 24, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

I now confided all my sorrows and perplexities to my mother. She tenderly sympathized with and encouraged me, advising me to go for counsel to Bro. Stockman who then preached the Advent doctrine in Portland. I had great confidence in him, for he was a devoted servant of Christ. Upon hearing my story, he placed his hands affectionately upon my head, saying with tears in his eyes, "Ellen, you are only a child. Yours is a most singular experience for one of your tender age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work."

He then told me that even if I were a person of mature years and thus harassed with doubt and despair, he should tell me that he knew there was hope for me, through the love of Jesus. The very agony of mind I had suffered was positive evidence that the Spirit of the Lord was striving with me. He said that when the sinner becomes hardened in guilt he does not realize the enormity of his transgressions, but flatters himself that he is about right and in no particular danger. The Spirit of the Lord leaves him and he becomes careless and indifferent or recklessly defiant. This good man told me of the love of God for his erring children, that instead of rejoicing in their destruction he longed to draw them to himself in simple faith and trust. He dwelt upon the great love of Christ and the plan of redemption.

He spoke of my early misfortune, and said it was indeed a grievous one, but he bade me believe that the hand of a loving Father had not been withdrawn from me; that in the future life, when the mist that then darkened my mind had vanished, I would discern the wisdom of the providence which had seemed so cruel and mysterious. Jesus said to his disciples, "What I do

thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." In the great future we should no longer see as through a glass darkly, but come face to face with the great beauties of divine love.

"Go free, Ellen," said he with tears in his eyes, "Return to your home trusting in Jesus, for he will not withhold his love from any true seeker." He then prayed earnestly for me, and it seemed that God would certainly regard the prayer of this saint, even if my humble petitions were unheard. I was much relieved in mind. My wretched slavery of doubt and fear departed as I listened to the wise and tender counsel of this teacher in Israel. I went away from his presence comforted and encouraged.

During the few minutes in which I received instruction from Bro. Stockman, I had obtained more knowledge on the subject of God's love and pitying tenderness, than from all the sermons and exhortations to which I had ever listened. I returned home and again went before the Lord, promising to do and suffer any thing he might require of me, if only the smiles of Jesus might illumine my heart. The same duty was presented to me that had troubled my mind before, to take up my cross among the assembled people of God. An opportunity was not long wanting; there was a prayer-meeting that evening which I attended.

I bowed trembling during the prayers that were offered. After a few had prayed, I lifted up my voice in prayer before I was aware of it, and, in that moment the precious promises of God appeared to me like so many precious pearls that were to be received only for the asking. As I prayed, the burden and agony of soul that I had endured so long, left me, and the blessing of the Lord descended upon me like the gentle dew. I praised God from the depths of my heart. Everything seemed shut out from me but Jesus and his glory, and I lost consciousness of what was passing around me.

When I again awoke to realization, I found myself cared for in the house

of my uncle where we had assembled for the prayer-meeting. Neither my uncle nor aunt enjoyed religion, although the former once made a profession but had since backslidden. I was told that he had been greatly disturbed while the power of God rested upon me in so special a manner, and had walked the floor, sorely troubled and distressed in his mind. When I was first struck down, some of those present were greatly alarmed, and were about to run for a physician, thinking that some sudden and dangerous indisposition had attacked me, but my mother bade them let me alone, for it was plain to her, and to the other experienced Christians, that it was the wondrous power of God that had prostrated me.

The next day I had recovered sufficiently to go home, but a great change had taken place in my mind. It seemed to me that I could hardly be the same person that left my father's house the previous evening. This passage was continually in my thoughts: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." My heart was full of happiness as I softly repeated these words.

Faith now took possession of my heart. I felt an inexpressible love for God, and had the witness of his Spirit that my sins were pardoned. My views of the Father were changed, I now looked upon him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out towards him in a deep and fervent love. Obedience to his will seemed a joy, it was a pleasure to be in his service. My path was radiant before me, no shadow clouded the light that revealed to me the perfect will of God. I felt the assurance of an indwelling Saviour, and realized the truth of what Christ had said: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Everything in nature seemed to possess a glory, and seemed to reflect the loving smiles of God. My peace and happiness was in such marked contrast with my former gloom and anguish that it seemed to me as if my soul had been rescued from hell and transported to Heaven. I could even

praise God for the misfortune that had been the trial of my life, for it had been the means of concentrating my thoughts upon eternity. Naturally proud and ambitious, I might not have been inclined to give my heart to Jesus had it not been for the sore affliction that had cut me off, in a manner, from the triumphs and vanities of the world.

For six months not a shadow clouded my mind, nor did I neglect one known duty. My whole endeavor was to do the will of God and keep Jesus and Heaven continually in my mind. I was surprised and enraptured with the clear views now presented to my mind of the atonement and the work of Jesus Christ. I will not attempt to farther explain the exercises of my mind, suffice it to say that old things had passed away, and behold, all things had become new. There was not a cloud to mar my perfect bliss. I longed to tell the story of Jesus' love, but felt no disposition to engage in common conversation with any one. My heart was so filled with love to God and the peace that passeth understanding, that I loved to meditate and to pray.

The night after receiving so great a blessing I attended the Advent meeting. When the time arrived for the followers of Christ to speak in his favor, I could not remain silent, but rose and related my experience. Not a thought had entered my mind of what I should say; but the simple story of Jesus' love to me fell from my lips with perfect freedom, and my heart was so happy to be liberated from its thralldom of dark despair that I lost sight of the people about me and seemed to be alone with God. I found no difficulty in expressing my peace and happiness, except for the tears of gratitude that choked my utterance, as I told of the wondrous love that Jesus had shown for me.

Brother Stockman was present. He had so recently seen me in deep despair, and had endeavored to encourage me and inspire me with hope, that the remarkable change in my appearance and feelings touched his heart and he wept aloud, rejoicing with me and praising God for this proof of his

tender mercy and loving kindness. My heart was so over-flowing with joy that I wanted to tell others how much the Lord had done for me.

I occasionally attended the Christian church, where Elder Brown was pastor. During a conference meeting I was invited to relate my experience, which was considered a marked one, and I felt not only great freedom of expression, but happiness in telling my simple story of the love of Jesus and the joy of being accepted by God. I told of my wonderful deliverance from the bondage of doubt and despair, and the joy that I experienced in the hope of salvation. As I spoke in simple language with subdued heart and tearful eyes, my soul seemed drawn toward Heaven in an ecstasy of thanksgiving. The melting power of the Lord came upon the assembled people. Many were weeping and others praising God.

Sinners were invited to arise for prayers, and many responded to the call. My heart was so thankful to God for the unspeakable blessing he had given me, that I longed to have others participate in this sacred joy. My mind was deeply interested for those who might be suffering under a sense of the Lord's displeasure and the burden of sin. While relating my experience, I felt that no one could resist the evidence of God's pardoning love that had wrought such a wonderful change in me. The reality of true conversion seemed so plain to me that I felt like helping my young friends into the light, and at every opportunity exerted my influence toward this end.

I arranged meetings with my young friends, some of whom were considerably older than myself, and a few were married persons. A number of them were vain and thoughtless, my experience sounded to them like an idle tale, and they did not heed my entreaties. But I felt that my efforts should never cease till these dear souls, for whom I had so great an interest, yielded to God. I spent several entire nights in earnest prayer for those whom I had sought out and brought together for the purpose of laboring and praying with them.

Some of these had met together with us from curiosity to hear what I had to say, others thought me beside myself to be so persistent in my efforts, especially when they manifested no concern on their own part. But at every one of our little meetings I continued to exhort and pray for each one separately, until my labors were crowned with success, and every one had yielded to Jesus, acknowledging the merits of his pardoning love. Every one was converted to God.

Night after night in my dreams I seemed to be laboring for the salvation of souls. At such times special cases were presented to my mind, which I afterwards sought out and prayed with. In every instance but one these persons yielded themselves to the Lord. Some of our more formal brethren feared that I was too zealous and solicitous for the conversion of souls, but time seemed to me so short that it behooved all who had a hope of a blessed immortality, and looked for the soon coming of Christ, to labor without ceasing for those who were still in their sins and standing on the awful brink of ruin.

True I was very young, but the plan of salvation was so clear to my mind, and my personal experience had been so marked, that, upon carefully considering the matter, I knew it was my duty to continue my efforts for the salvation of precious souls, and to pray and confess Christ at every opportunity. I offered my entire being to the service of my Master. Let come what would, I determined to please God, and live as one who expected the Saviour to come and reward the faithful. I felt like a little child coming to God as to my father and asking him what he would have me to do. Then as my duty was made plain to me, it was my greatest happiness to perform it. Peculiar trials sometimes beset me. Those older in experience than myself endeavored to hold me back and cool the ardor of my faith, but with the smiles of Jesus brightening my life, and the love of God in my heart, I went on my way with a joyful spirit.

March 2, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

As I look back upon my early life, and recall my youthful experience, my brother, the confidant of my hopes and fears, the earnest sympathizer with me in my Christian experience, comes to my mind with a flood of tender memories. He was one of those to whom sin presents but few temptations. Naturally devotional, he never sought the society of the young and gay, but chose rather the company of Christians, whose conversation would instruct him in the way of life. His manner was serious beyond his years, he was gentle and peaceful, and his mind was filled with thoughts upon religion. His life was pointed at, by those who knew him, as a pattern to the youth, a living example of the grace and beauty of true Christianity.

My father's family still occasionally attended the Methodist church and also the class-meetings held in private houses. One evening my brother Robert and myself went to class-meeting. The Methodist presiding elder was present. When it came my brother's turn, he spoke with great humility, yet with clearness, of the necessity for a complete fitness to meet our Saviour, when he should come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. While speaking, a heavenly light irradiated his usually pale countenance. He seemed to be carried in spirit above present surroundings, and spoke as if in the presence of Jesus. When I was called upon to speak, I arose, free in spirit, with a heart full of love and peace. In my simple way I told the story of my great suffering under the conviction of sin, how that I had at length received the blessing I had sought so long, an entire conformity to the will of God; that I rejoiced in the tidings of the soon coming of my Redeemer to take his children home.

I expected, in my simplicity, that my Methodist brethren and sisters would understand my feelings and rejoice with me. But I was disappointed; several sisters groaned and moved their chairs noisily, turning their backs upon me. I could not think what I had said to offend them. I spoke very briefly, feeling the chilling influence of their disapprobation. After I ceased speaking, Elder B--asked me if it would not be more pleasant to live a long life of usefulness here, doing others good, than for Jesus to come speedily and destroy poor sinners. I replied that I longed for the coming of Jesus. Then sin would have an end, and we should enjoy sanctification forever, with no devil to tempt and lead us astray.

He then inquired if I would not rather die peacefully upon my bed than to pass through the pain of being changed, while living, from mortality to immortality. My answer was that I wished for Jesus to come and take his children; that I was willing to live or die as God willed; that I could easily endure all the pain that could be borne in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; that I desired the wheels of time to roll swiftly round, and bring the welcome day when these vile bodies should be changed, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. I also stated that when I lived nearest to the Lord, then I most earnestly longed for his appearing. Here some present seemed to be greatly displeased.

When Elder B--addressed others in the class he expressed great joy in anticipating the temporal millennium of a thousand years, when the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. He longed to see this glorious period ushered in, and appeared to be in an ecstasy over the expected event. After the meeting closed I was conscious of being treated with marked coldness by those who had formerly been kind and friendly to me. My brother and I returned home feeling sad that we should be so misunderstood by our brethren, and that the subject of the near coming of Jesus should awaken such bitter antagonism in their breasts.

Yet we were thankful that we could discern the precious light, and rejoice in looking for the coming of the Lord. On the way we talked seriously concerning the evidences of our new faith and hope. "Ellen," said Robert, "are we deceived? Is this hope of Christ's soon appearing upon earth a heresy, that ministers and professors of religion oppose it so bitterly? They say that Jesus will not come for thousands and thousands of years. If they even approach the truth, then the world cannot come to an end in our day."

I dared not give unbelief a moment's encouragement, but quickly replied, "I have not a doubt but that the doctrine preached by Wm. Miller is the truth. What power attends his words, what conviction is carried home to the sinner's heart."

We talked the matter over candidly, as we walked along, and decided that it was our duty and privilege to look for our Saviour's coming, that it would be safest to make ready for his appearing and be prepared to meet him with joy. If he did come, what would be the prospect of those who were now saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and had no desire for his appearance? We wondered how ministers dared to quiet the fears of sinners and backsliders by saying peace, peace, while the message of warning was being given by a few faithful souls all over the land. The period seemed very solemn to us, we felt that we had no time to lose.

Said Robert, "A tree is known by its fruits. What has this belief done for us? It has convinced us that we were not ready for the coming of the Lord, that we must become pure in heart or we cannot meet our Saviour in peace. It has aroused us to seek for new strength and grace from God. What has it done for you, Ellen? Would you be what you are now if you had never heard the doctrine of Christ's soon coming? What hope has inspired your heart, what peace, joy, and love has it given you. And for me, it has done everything. I love Jesus, and all Christians. I love the prayer-meeting. I find great joy in reading my Bible and in prayer. If this precious faith has done so

great a work for us, will it not do as much for all those who will believe it, and earnestly long for the appearing of the Lord?"

We both felt strengthened by this conversation, and resolved that we would not be turned from our honest convictions of truth, and the blessed hope of Christ's soon coming in the clouds of heaven. Not long after this we again attended the class-meeting. We really wanted an opportunity to speak of the precious love of God that animated our souls. I wished particularly to tell of the Lord's goodness and mercy to me. So great a change had been wrought in me that it seemed my duty to improve every opportunity of testifying to the unsurpassed love of my Saviour.

When my turn came to speak, I stated the evidences I enjoyed of Jesus' love, and that I looked forward with glad expectation to meeting my Redeemer soon. The belief that Christ's coming was near had stirred my soul to seek most earnestly for the sanctification of the Spirit of God. Here the class-leader interrupted me, saying, "You received sanctification through Methodism, through Methodism, sister, not through an erroneous theory." My heart was full of love and happiness, but I felt that I must confess the truth, that it was not through Methodism my heart had received its new blessing. But by the stirring truths I had heard concerning the personal appearance of Jesus, I had found peace and joy and perfect love. Thus I finished my testimony, the last that I was to bear in class with my Methodist brethren.

Robert then spoke in his meek way, yet in so clear and touching a manner that some wept and were much moved; but others coughed dissentingly and seemed quite uneasy: After leaving the class-room, we again talked over our faith, and marveled that our Christian brethren and sisters could so illy endure to have a word spoken in reference to our Saviour's coming. We thought if they loved Jesus as they should, it would not be so great an annoyance to hear of his second advent, but, on the

contrary, they would hail the news with great joy.

We were convinced that we ought no longer to attend the Methodist class-meeting. The hope of the glorious appearing of Christ filled our souls, and would find expression when we rose to speak. This seemed to kindle the ire of those present against the two humble children who dared, in the face of opposition, to speak of the faith that had filled their hearts with peace and happiness. It was evident that we could have no freedom in the class-meeting, for our simple testimony provoked sneers and taunts that reached our ears at the close of the meeting from brethren and sisters whom we had respected and loved.

March 9, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

Meetings of the Adventists were held at this time in Beethoven Hall. My father, with his family, attended them quite regularly, for we greatly prized the privilege of hearing the doctrine of Christ's personal and soon appearing upon earth. The period of the second advent was thought to be in the year 1843. The time seemed so short in which souls could be saved, that I resolved to do all that was in my power to lead sinners into the light of truth. But it seemed impossible for me, so young, and in feeble health, to do much in the great work.

There were three sisters of us at home, Sarah, who was several years the oldest, my twin sister Elizabeth, and myself. We talked the matter over among ourselves, and decided to earn what money we could and spend it in buying books and tracts to distribute gratuitously among the people. This was the best we could do, and we did this little gladly. I could earn only twenty-five cents a day, but my dress was plain, I spent nothing for needless ornaments, or ribbons, for vain display appeared sinful in my eyes; so I had ever a little fund in store with which to purchase suitable books. These were placed in the hands of experienced persons to send abroad.

Every leaf of this printed matter seemed precious in my eyes, for they were as messages of light to the world, bidding them to prepare for the great event near at hand. Day after day I have sat in bed propped up with pillows, performing my allotted task with trembling fingers; how carefully would I lay aside the precious bits of silver taken in return, and which was to be expended in reading matter that might enlighten and arouse those who were in darkness. I had no temptation to lay out my earnings for my own personal

gratification, for the salvation of souls was the burden of my mind, and my heart ached for those who flattered themselves they were living in security, while the message of warning was being given to the world. My constant thought was, What can I, a child, do to help on the work of God and save poor sinners from destruction.

One day I was listening to a conversion between my mother and a sister, in reference to a discourse which they had recently heard, to the effect that the soul had not natural immortality. Some of the minister's proof texts were repeated. Among them I remember these impressed me very forcibly:

"The soul that sinneth it shall die." "A living dog is better than a dead lion, for the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything." "Which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life." "Why," said my mother, after quoting the foregoing passage, "should they seek for what they already have?"

I listened to these new ideas with an intense and painful interest. When alone with my mother, I inquired if she really believed that the soul was not immortal? Her reply was she feared we had been in error on that subject as well as upon some others."

"But mother," said I, "Do you really believe that the soul sleeps in the grave until the resurrection? Do you think that the Christian, when he dies, does not go immediately to Heaven, nor the sinner to hell?"

She answered, "The Bible gives us no proof that there is an eternally burning hell. If there is such a place, it should be mentioned in the Sacred Book."

"Why, mother!" cried I, in astonishment, "This is strange talk for you! If you believe this strange theory, do not let any one know of it, for I fear that sinners would gather security from this belief and never desire to seek the Lord."

"If this is sound Bible truth," she replied, "instead of preventing the salvation of sinners, it will be a means of winning them to Christ. If the love of God will not induce the rebel to yield, the terrors of an eternal hell will not drive him to repentance. Besides it does not seem a proper way to win souls to Jesus, by appealing to one of the lowest attributes of the mind, abject fear. The love of Jesus attracts, it will subdue the hardest heart."

It was some months after this conversation before I heard of anything farther concerning this doctrine; but I had, during this time, thought much upon the subject. When I heard it preached I believed it to be the truth. From the time that light in regard to the sleep of the dead dawned upon my mind, the mystery that had enshrouded the resurrection vanished, and the great event itself assumed a new and sublime importance. My mind had often been disturbed by its efforts to reconcile the immediate reward or punishment of the dead, with the undoubted fact of a future resurrection and Judgment. If the soul, at death, entered upon eternal happiness or misery, where was the need of a resurrection of the poor mouldered body?

But this new and beautiful faith taught me the reason that inspired writers had dwelt so much upon the resurrection of the body, it was because the entire being was slumbering in the grave. I could now clearly perceive the fallacy of our former position on this question. The confusion and uselessness of a final Judgment, after the souls of the departed had already been judged once and appointed to their lot, was very apparent to me now. I saw that the hope of the bereaved was in looking forward to the glorious day when the Life-giver shall break the fetters of the tomb, and the righteous

dead shall arise and leave their prison-house, to be clothed with glorious immortal life.

Our family were all interested in the doctrine of the Lord's soon coming. My father had long been considered one of the pillars of the Methodist church where he lived, and the whole family had been active members, but we made no secret of our new belief, although we did not urge it upon others on inappropriate occasions, or manifest any antagonism toward our church. However, the Methodist minister made us a special visit, and took the occasion to inform us that our faith and Methodism could not agree. He did not inquire our reasons for believing as we did, nor make any reference to the Bible in order to convince us of our error; but he stated that we had adopted a new and strange belief that the Methodist church could not accept.

My father replied that he must be mistaken in calling this a new and strange doctrine, that Christ himself had preached his second advent to his disciples. He had said, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

When he was taken up to Heaven before their eyes and a cloud received him out of their sight, as his faithful followers stood gazing after their vanishing Lord, "Behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

"And," said my father, warming with his subject, "the inspired Paul wrote a letter to encourage his brethren in Thessalonica, saying, 'And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that

know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.' 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.'"

"This is high authority for our faith. Jesus and his apostles dwell upon the event of the second advent with joy and triumph; and the holy angels proclaim that Christ who has ascended up into Heaven shall come again. This is our offense, believing the word of Jesus and his disciples. This is a very old doctrine, and bears no taint of heresy."

The minister did not attempt to refer to a single text that would prove us in error, but excused himself on the plea of a want of time. He advised us to quietly withdraw from the church and avoid the publicity of a trial. We were aware that others of our brethren were meeting with similar treatment, for a like cause, and we did not wish it understood that we were ashamed to acknowledge our faith, or were unable to sustain it by Scripture; so my parents insisted that they should be acquainted with the reason for this request.

The only answer to this was an evasive declaration that we had walked contrary to the rules of the church, and the best course would be to voluntarily withdraw from it to save a trial. We answered that we preferred a regular trial, and demanded to know what sin was charged to us, as we were conscious of no wrong in looking for and loving the appearing of the Saviour.

Not long after, we were notified to be present at a meeting to be held in the vestry of the church. There were but few present. The influence of my father and his family was such that our opposers had no desire to present our cases before a large number of the congregation. The single charge preferred was that we had walked contrary to their rules. Upon our asking what rules we had violated, it was stated, after a little hesitation, that we had attended other meetings and had neglected to meet regularly with our class. We stated that a portion of the family had been in the country for some time past, that none who remained in the city had been absent from class-meeting more than a few weeks, and they were morally compelled to remain away because the testimonies they bore met with such marked disapprobation. If the hope of their Saviour's soon coming was mentioned, a feeling of displeasure was manifested against them, and they were conscious of arousing a bitter spirit of antagonism. We also reminded them that certain persons who had not attended class-meeting for a year were yet held in good standing.

It was asked if we would confess that we had departed from their rules, and if we would also agree to conform to them in future. We answered that we dared not yield our faith nor deny the sacred truth of God; that we could not forego the hope of the soon coming of our Redeemer; that after the manner which they called heresy we must continue to worship the Lord. My father in his defense received the blessing of God, and we all left the vestry with free spirits and happy in the consciousness of right and the approving smile of Jesus. We felt the assurance that God was on our side, and he was stronger than all that were against us.

The next Sunday, at the commencement of love-feast, Elder B ----- read off our names, seven in number, as discontinued from the church. He stated that we were not expelled on account of any wrong or immoral conduct, that we were of unblemished character and enviable reputation; but we had been guilty of walking contrary to the rules of the Methodist church. He also

declared that a door was now open and all who were guilty of a similar breach of the rules, would be dealt with in like manner.

At this time there were many in the church who waited for the appearing of the Saviour, and this implied threat was made for the purpose of frightening them into subjection. In some cases this policy brought about the desired result, and the favor of God was sold for a place in the Methodist church. Many believed, but dared not confess their faith lest they should be turned out of the synagogue. But some left soon afterward and joined the company of those who were looking for the Saviour.

At this time the words of the prophet were exceedingly precious: "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

March 16, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

For six months not a cloud intervened between me and my Saviour. Whenever there was a proper opportunity I bore my testimony, and was greatly blessed. At times the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me with such power that my strength was taken from me. This was a trial to some who had come out from the formal churches, and remarks were often made that grieved me much. Many could not believe that one could be so overpowered by the Spirit of God as to lose all strength. My position was exceedingly painful. I began to reason with myself whether I was not justified in withholding my testimony in meeting, and thus restrain my feelings when there was such an opposition in the hearts of some who were older in years and experience than myself.

I reasoned that repressing my testimony would not hinder me from faithfully living out my religion. I adopted this plan of silence for a time. I often felt strongly impressed that it was my duty to speak in meeting, but refrained from doing so, and was sensible of having grieved the Spirit of God. Sometimes I even remained away from meetings that I knew would be attended by those who were annoyed by my testimony. I shrank from offending my brethren; but in this I allowed the fear of men to break up that interrupted communion with God which had blessed my heart for so many months.

We had appointed evening prayer-meetings in different localities of the city to accommodate all who wished to attend them. The family who had been most forward in opposing me attended one of these. Upon this occasion, while those assembled were engaged in prayer, the Spirit of the

Lord came upon the meeting, and one of the members of this family was prostrated as one dead. His relatives stood weeping around him, rubbing his hands and applying restoratives. At length he gained sufficient strength to praise God, and quieted their fears by shouting with triumph over the marked evidence he had received of the power of the Lord upon him. This young man was unable to return home that night.

This was believed by the family to be a demonstration of the Spirit of God, but did not convince them that it was the same divine power that rested upon me at times, robbing me of my natural strength, and filling my soul with the unbounded peace and love of Jesus. They were free to say that not a doubt could be entertained of my sincerity and perfect honesty, but they considered me deceived in taking that for the power of the Lord which was only the result of my own over-wrought feelings.

My mind was in great perplexity, in consequence of this opposition, and, as the time drew near for our regular meeting, I was in doubt whether or not it was best for me to attend it. For some days previous I had been in great distress on account of the feeling manifested towards me. Finally I decided not to go, and thus escape the criticism of my brethren. In trying to pray I repeated these words again and again, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" The answer that came to my heart seemed to bid me trust in my Heavenly Father and wait patiently to know his will. I yielded myself to the Lord with the simple trust of a little child, remembering that he had promised that those who follow him shall not walk in darkness.

My duty impelled me to go to the meeting. I went with the full assurance in my mind that all would be well. While we were bowed before the Lord, my heart was drawn out in prayer and filled with a peace that only Christ can give. My soul rejoiced in the love of the Saviour, and my physical strength left me. With child-like faith I could only say, "Heaven is my home, and Christ my Redeemer."

One of the same family whom I have mentioned as being opposed to the manifestations of the power of God upon me, stated on this occasion, that he considered I was under an excitement which he thought it my duty to resist, but instead of doing so he thought I encouraged it, as a mark of God's favor. His doubts and opposition did not affect me at this time, for I seemed shut in with the Lord, and lifted above all outward influence. But he had scarcely stopped speaking when a strong man, a devoted and humble Christian, was struck down by the power of God before his eyes, and the room was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Upon recovering sufficiently, I was very happy in bearing my testimony for Jesus, and in telling of his love for me. I confessed my lack of faith in the promises of God, and that I had checked the promptings of his Spirit from fear of men, but that, notwithstanding my distrust, he had bestowed upon me unlooked for evidence of his love and sustaining grace. H----- P-----, the brother who had opposed me, rose, and with many tears, confessed his error in regard to me, that his feelings had been all wrong. He humbly asked my forgiveness. Said he, "Sister Ellen, I will never again lay a straw in your way. God has shown me the coldness and stubbornness of my heart, and he has broken it by the evidence of his power. I have been very wrong. When sister Ellen seemed so happy I would think, Why don't I feel like that? Why don't brother R-----receive some such evidence? for I felt that he was a devoted Christian, yet no such power had fallen upon him. I offered a silent prayer that, if this was the holy influence of God, brother R-----might experience it this evening.

"Almost as the desire went up from my heart, brother R----- fell, prostrated by the power of God, crying, 'Let the Lord work!' My heart is convinced that I have been warring against the Holy Spirit, but I will grieve it no more by stubborn unbelief. Welcome, light! Welcome, Jesus! I have been backslidden and hardened, feeling offended if any one praised God and

manifested a fullness of joy in his love; but now my feelings are changed, my opposition is at an end, Jesus has opened my eyes, and I may yet shout his praises myself. I have said bitter and cutting things of sister Ellen, that I sorrow over now, and pray for her forgiveness as well as all who are present."

Brother R----- then bore his testimony. His face was lighted with the glory of Heaven, as he praised the Lord for the wonders he had wrought that night. Said he, "This place is awfully solemn because of the presence of the Most High. Sister Ellen, in future you will have our help and sustaining sympathies, instead of the cruel opposition that has been shown you. We have been blind to the manifestations of God's Holy Spirit."

There had never been a question as to my perfect sincerity, but many had thought me young and impressible, and that it was my duty to restrain my feelings, which they regarded as the effect of excitement. But all the opposers were now brought to see their mistake and confess that the work was indeed of the Lord. In a prayer-meeting soon after, H----- P-----, the brother who had confessed that he was wrong in his opposition, experienced the power of God in so great a degree that his countenance shone with a heavenly light, and he fell helpless to the floor. When his strength returned, he again acknowledged that he had been ignorantly warring against the Spirit of the Lord in cherishing the feeling he had against me.

In another prayer-meeting still another member of the same family was exercised in a similar manner and bore the same testimony. A few weeks after, while the large family of brother P----- were engaged in prayer at their own house, the Spirit of God swept through the room and prostrated the kneeling suppliants. My father came in soon after and found them all, both parents and children, helpless under the power of the Lord.

Cold formality began to melt before the mighty influence of the Most

High. All who had opposed me, confessed that they had grieved the Holy Spirit by so doing, and they united in sympathy with me and in love for the Saviour. My heart was glad that divine mercy had smoothed the path for my feet to tread, and rewarded my faith and trust so bounteously. Unity and peace now dwelt among our people who were looking forward toward the coming of the Lord.

March 23, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

How carefully and tremblingly did we approach the time of expectation. We sought, as a people, with solemn earnestness to purify our lives that we might be ready to meet the Saviour at his coming. Notwithstanding the opposition of ministers and churches, Beethoven Hall, in the city of Portland, was nightly crowded, and especially was there a large congregation on Sundays. Elder Stockman was a man of deep piety. He was in feeble health, yet when he stood before the people he seemed to be lifted above physical infirmity, and his face was lighted with the consciousness that he was teaching the sacred truth of God.

There was a solemn, searching power in his words that struck home to many hearts. He sometimes expressed a fervent desire to live until he should welcome the Saviour coming in the clouds of heaven. Under his ministration, the Spirit of God convicted many sinners, and brought them into the fold of Christ. Meetings were still held at private houses in different parts of the city with the best results. Believers were encouraged to work for their friends and relatives, and conversions were multiplying day by day.

In the district where my father's family properly belonged, these evening meetings were held at the house of a sea-captain. He made no profession of religion, but his wife was a sincere lover of the truth. Finally the captain became convicted through the influence of the meetings, professed Christ and embraced the belief that he was soon coming to the world.

All classes flocked to the meetings at Beethoven Hall. Rich and poor, high and low, ministers and laymen were all, from various causes, anxious to

hear for themselves the doctrine of the second advent. The crowd was such that fears were expressed that the floor might give way beneath its heavy load; but the builder, upon being consulted, quieted such apprehensions and established confidence in regard to the strength of the building.

Many came who, finding no room to stand, went away disappointed. The order of the meetings was simple; usually a short and pointed discourse was given, then liberty was granted for general exhortation. There was usually the most perfect stillness possible for so large a crowd. The Lord held the spirit of opposition in check, while his servants explained the reasons of their faith.

Sometimes the instrument was feeble but the Spirit of God gave weight and power to his truth. The presence of the holy angels was felt in the assembly, and numbers were daily being added to the little band of believers.

On one occasion, while Elder Stockman was preaching, Elder Brown, a Christian Baptist minister, whose name has been mentioned before in this narrative, was sitting in the desk listening to the sermon with intense interest. He became deeply moved, suddenly his countenance grew pale as the dead, he reeled in his chair, and Elder Stockman caught him in his arms just as he was falling to the floor, and laid him on the sofa behind the desk, where he lay powerless until the discourse was finished.

He then arose, his face still pale, but shining with light from the Son of righteousness, and gave a very impressive testimony. He seemed to receive holy unction from above. He was usually slow of speech, with a solemn manner, entirely free from excitement. But on this occasion, his solemn, measured words carried with them a new power, as he warned sinners and his brother ministers to put away unbelief, prejudice and cold formality, and, like the noble Bereans, search the sacred writings, comparing scripture with scripture to ascertain if these things are not true. He entreated the ministers

present not to feel themselves injured by the direct and searching manner in which Elder Stockman had presented the solemn subject that interested all minds.

Said he, "We want to reach the people, we want sinners to be convicted and become truly repentant to God before it is too late for them to be saved, lest they shall take up the lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Brethren in the ministry say that our arrows hit them, will they please stand aside from between us and the people, and let us reach the hearts of sinners? If they make themselves a target for our aim they have no reason to complain of the wounds they receive. Stand aside brethren and you will not get hit!"

He related his own experience with such simplicity and candor, that many who had been greatly prejudiced were affected to tears. The Spirit of God was felt in his words and seen upon his countenance. With a holy exaltation he boldly declared that he had taken the Word of God as his counsellor, that his doubts had been swept away and his faith confirmed. With sanctified earnestness he invited his brother ministers, church-members, sinners and infidels to examine the Bible for themselves and let no man turn them from their purpose of ascertaining what was the truth.

Elder Brown neither then nor afterwards severed his connection with the Christian Baptist church, but was looked upon with great reverence and respect by his people. After he finished speaking, those who desired the prayers of the people of God were invited to rise. Hundreds responded to the call. The sea-captain who had been recently converted, sprang to his feet with tears raining down his cheeks. He was unable to express his feelings in words, and stood for a moment the picture of mute thanksgiving; then he involuntarily raised his hat, and swung it above his head with the free movement of an old sailor, and in the abandonment of his joy, shouted, "Hurrah for God! I've enlisted in his crew, he is my captain! Hurrah for Jesus

Christ!" He sat down overpowered by the intensity of his emotions, his face glowing with the radiance of love and peace.

His singular testimony, so characteristic of the bluff mariner, was not received with laughter, for the Spirit of God that animated the speaker lent his extraordinary words a strange solemnity that was felt through all that dense crowd.

Others followed with their testimonies. The voice of Bro. Abbot rung through the hall in notes of warning to the world. He repeated the evidences of the soon coming of Christ, and in sacred silence that vast crowd listened to his stirring words. The Holy Spirit rested upon the assembly. Heaven and earth seemed to approach each other. The meeting lasted until a late hour of the night. The power of the Lord was felt upon young, old, and middle aged. Some Methodists and Baptists who were present seemed to fully unite with the spirit of the meeting.

As we returned to our homes by various ways, a voice praising God would reach us from one direction, and, as if in response, voices from another and still another quarter, shouted, "Glory to God, the Lord reigneth!" Men sought their homes with praises upon their lips, and the glad sound rang out upon the still night air. No one who attended these meetings can ever forget those scenes of deepest interest.

Those who sincerely love Jesus can appreciate the feelings of those who watched with the most intense interest for the coming of their Saviour. The point of expectation was nearing. The time when we hoped to meet him was close at hand. We approached this hour with a calm solemnity. The true believers rested in a sweet communion with God, an earnest of the peace that was to be theirs in the bright hereafter. Those who experienced this hope and trust can never forget those precious hours of waiting.

Worldly business was for the most part laid aside for a few weeks. We carefully scrutinized every thought and emotion of our hearts as if upon our death-beds and in a few hours to close our eyes forever upon earthly scenes. There was no making of "ascension robes" for the great event; we felt the need of internal evidence that we were prepared to meet Christ, and our white robes were purity of soul, character cleansed from sin by the atoning blood of our Saviour.

But the time of expectation passed. This was the first close test brought to bear upon those who believed and hoped that Jesus would come in the clouds of heaven. The disappointment of God's waiting people was great. The scoffers were triumphant and winning the weak and cowardly to their ranks. Some who had appeared to possess true faith seemed to have been influenced only by fear, and now their courage returned with the passing of the time and they boldly united with the scoffers declaring they had never been duped to really believe the doctrine of Miller, who was a mad fanatic. Others, naturally yielding or vacillating, quietly deserted the cause. I thought if Christ had surely come, what would have become of these weak and changing ones? Where would have been their robes of righteousness? They professed to love and long for the coming of Jesus, but when he failed to appear they seemed greatly relieved and went back to a state of carelessness and disregard of true religion.

We were perplexed and disappointed, yet we did not renounce our faith. Many still clung to the hope that Jesus would not long delay his coming; the Word of the Lord was sure, it could not fail. We felt that we had done our duty, we had lived up to our precious faith, we were disappointed but not discouraged; the signs of the times denoted that the end of all things was near at hand, we must watch and hold ourselves in readiness for the coming of the Master at any time. We must wait with hope and trust, not neglecting the assembling of ourselves together for instruction, encouragement and comfort, that our light might shine forth into the darkness of the world.

March 30, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

Wm. Miller's calculation of the time was so simple and plain that even the children could understand it. From the date of the decree of the King of Persia, found in Ezra 7, which was given in 457 before Christ, the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14 must terminate with 1843. Accordingly we looked to the end of this year for the coming of the Lord. We were sadly disappointed when the year entirely passed away and the Saviour had not come.

It was not at first perceived that if the decree did not go forth at the beginning of the year 457 B.C. the 2300 years would not be completed at the close of 1843. But it was ascertained that the decree was given near the close of the year 457, B.C., and therefore the prophetic period must reach to the fall of the year 1844. Therefore the vision of time did not tarry, though it had seemed to do so. We learned to rest upon the language of the prophet, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

God tested and proved his people by the passing of the time in 1843. The mistake made in reckoning the prophetic periods was not at once discovered even by learned men who opposed the views of those who were looking for Christ's coming. These profound scholars declared that Mr. Miller was right in his calculation of the time, though they disputed him in regard to the event that would crown that period. But they, with the waiting people of God, were in a common error on the question of time.

We fully believe that God, in his wisdom, designed that his people should meet with a disappointment, which was well calculated to reveal

hearts and develop the true characters of those who had professed to look for and rejoice in the coming of the Lord. Those who embraced the first angel's message (See Revelation 14:6, 7) through fear of the wrath of God's judgments, not because they loved the truth and desired an inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven, now appeared in their true light. They were among the first to ridicule the disappointed ones who sincerely longed for and loved the appearing of Jesus. This most searching test of God revealed the true characters of those who would shirk responsibility and stigma by denying their faith in the hour of trial.

Those who had been disappointed were not left in darkness; for in searching the prophetic periods with earnest prayers, the error was discovered, and the tracing of the prophetic pencil down through the tarrying time. In the joyful expectation of the coming of Christ, the apparent tarrying of the vision had not been taken into account, and was a sad and unlooked for surprise. Yet this very trial was highly necessary to develop and strengthen the sincere believers in the truth.

Our hopes now centered on the coming of the Lord in 1844. This was also the time for the message of the second angel, who, flying through the midst of heaven, cried, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city!" Many left the churches in obedience to the message of the second angel. Near its close the Midnight Cry was given, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!" In every part of the land light was being given concerning this message, and the cry aroused thousands. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into the remote country regions. It reached the learned and talented, as well as the obscure and humble.

This was the happiest year of my life. My heart was full of glad expectation. I felt great pity and anxiety for those who were in discouragement and had no hope in Jesus. As a people, we united in earnest prayer for true inward experience and the unmistakable evidence of our

acceptance with God.

We needed unbounded patience, for the scoffers were many. We were frequently greeted by scornful allusions to our former disappointment. "You are not gone up yet; when do you expect to go up?" and similar sarcasms were often vented upon us by our worldly acquaintances, and even by some professed Christians, who accepted the Bible yet failed to learn its great and important truths. Their blinded eyes seemed to see but a vague and distant meaning in the solemn warning that "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world," and that the saints will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

The formal churches used every means to prevent the belief in Christ's soon coming from spreading. No liberty was granted in their meetings to those who dared to mention a hope of the soon coming of Christ. Professed lovers of Jesus scornfully rejected the tidings that their best friend was soon to visit them. They were excited and angered against those who proclaimed the news of his coming and rejoiced that they should speedily behold him in his glory.

Every moment seemed precious and of the utmost importance to me. I felt that we were doing work for eternity, and that the careless and uninterested were in the greatest peril. My faith was unclouded, and I appropriated the precious promises of Jesus to myself. He had said to his disciples, "Ask, and ye shall receive." I firmly believed that whatever I asked in accordance with the will of God would certainly be granted to me. I sank in humility at the feet of Jesus with my heart in harmony with the divine will.

I often visited families and engaged in earnest prayer with those who were oppressed by fears and despondency. My faith was so strong that I never doubted for a moment that God would answer my prayers, and without a single exception the blessing and peace of Jesus rested upon us in answer

to our humble petitions, and the hearts of the despairing ones were made joyful by light and hope.

With diligent searching of hearts and humble confessions we came prayerfully up to the time of expectation. Every morning we felt that it was our first business to secure the evidence that our lives were right before God. We realized that if we were not advancing in holiness we were sure to retrograde. Our interest for each other increased; we prayed much with and for one another. We assembled in the orchards and groves to commune with God and offer up our petitions to him, feeling more nearly in his presence when surrounded by his natural works. The joys of salvation were more necessary to us than our food and drink. If clouds obscured our minds we dared not rest or sleep till they were swept away by the consciousness of our acceptance with the Lord.

My health was very poor, my lungs were seriously affected, and my voice failed me. The Spirit of God often rested upon me with great power and my frail body could scarcely endure the weight of glory that flooded my soul. The name of Jesus filled me with rapture, I seemed to breathe in the atmosphere of Heaven. I rejoiced in the prospect of soon meeting my Redeemer and living in the light of his countenance forever.

The waiting people of God approached the hour when they fondly hoped their joy would be complete in the coming of the Saviour. But the time again passed unheralded by the advent of Jesus. Mortality still clung to us, the effects of the curse were all around us. It was hard to take up the vexing cares of life that we thought had been laid down forever. It was a bitter disappointment that fell upon the little flock whose faith had been so strong and whose hope had been so high. But we were surprised that we felt so free in the Lord, and were so strongly sustained by his strength and grace.

The experience of the former year was, however, repeated to a greater

extent. A large class renounced their faith. Some, who had been very confident, were so deeply wounded in their pride that they felt like fleeing from the world. Like Jonah they complained of God and chose death rather than life. Those who had built their faith upon the evidence of others and not upon the Word of God were now as ready to exchange their views again. The hypocrites, who had hoped to deceive the Almighty as well as themselves, with their counterfeit penitence and devotion, now felt relieved from impending danger, and launched into open opposition to the cause they had lately professed to love.

The weak and the wicked united in declaring that there could be no more fears or expectations now. The time had passed, the Lord had not come, and the world would remain the same for thousands of years. This second great test revealed a mass of worthless drift that had been drawn into the strong current of the Advent faith, and been borne along for a time with the true believers and earnest workers.

April 20, 1876

Christian Watchfulness

We are living in the last days. John exclaims: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Jesus Christ is the only refuge in these perilous times. Satan is at work in secrecy and darkness. Cunningly he draws away the followers of Christ from the cross, and brings them into self-indulgence and wickedness.

Satan is opposed to everything that will strengthen the cause of Christ and weaken his own power. He is diligently laying plans to undermine the work of God. He never rests for a moment when he sees that the right is gaining the ascendancy. He has legions of evil angels that he sends to every point where light from Heaven is shining upon the people. Here he stations his pickets to seize every unguarded man, woman, or child, and pass them over to his service.

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the testimonies, once believed, are doubted, and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this, but he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction.

Very many do not realize that God holds them accountable for every advantage gained by the foe who is admitted to the fort. The desolation and ruin following lays at the door of the unfaithful sentinels, who, by their neglect, become agents in the hands of the adversary to win souls to

destruction. Men professing this faith should seek wisdom and guidance of God and not trust in their own judgment and knowledge. They should, like Solomon, earnestly pray for faith and light, and he will give them freely of his abundant supply.

God would have his work done intelligently, not in a hap-hazard manner. He would have it done with faith and careful exactitude, that he may place the sign of his approval upon it. Those who love him and walk with fear and humility before him, he will bless, and guide, and connect them with Heaven. If the workers rely upon him he will give them wisdom and correct their infirmities, so that they will be able to do the work of the Lord with perfection.

Our good works alone will not save any of us, but we cannot be saved without good works. And after we have done all that we can do, in the name and strength of Jesus we are to say, "We are unprofitable servants." We are not to think we have made great sacrifices and should receive great reward for our feeble services.

We must put on the armor and be prepared to successfully resist all the attacks of Satan. His malignity and cruel power is not sufficiently estimated. When he finds himself foiled upon one point, he assumes new ground and fresh tactics, and tries again, working wonders in order to deceive and destroy the children of men. The youth should be carefully warned against his power, and patiently and prayerfully directed how to endure the trials sure to come upon them in this life. They should be led to cling to the Word of God and give attention to counsel and advice.

The Saviour of the world offers to the erring the gift of eternal life. He watches for a response to his offers of love and forgiveness with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, repenting, suffering son. He cries after the wanderer,

Return unto me and I will return unto you. If the sinner still refuses to heed the voice of mercy which calls after him with tender, pitying love, his soul will be left in darkness.

But if he neglects the opportunity presented him and goes on in his evil course, the wrath of God will, in an unexpected moment, break forth upon him. Those who, being often reprov'd, harden their hearts, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It lays at the foundation of a proper education. Those who, having a favorable opportunity, have failed to learn this first great lesson, are not only disqualified for service in the cause of God, but are a positive injury to the community in which they live.

Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry men through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial. The form of the Fourth will be with them in the fierce heat of the furnace, which will not leave even the smell of fire upon their garments. Children should be encouraged to become Bible students and have firm religious principles that will stand the test of the perils sure to be experienced by all those who live upon earth during the last days, in the closing history of the world.

In this sinful world of ours, truth and falsehood are so mixed that one is not always clearly discerned from the other. But why has one who professes the truth so little strength? Because he understands not his own ignorance and his own weakness. If he knew this, if he was distrustful of himself, he would feel the importance of Divine help to preserve him from the wiles of the enemy.

We need to be active, working Christians, unselfish in heart and life, having an eye single to the glory of God. Oh! what wrecks of weakness we meet everywhere! Silent lips, and fruitless lives! This is the result of falling under temptation. Nothing mars the peace of the soul like sinful unbelief.

Christ asks for all. It will not do to withhold anything. He has purchased us with an infinite price, and he requires that all we have shall be yielded to him a willing offering. If we are fully consecrated to him in heart and life, faith will take the place of doubts, and confidence the place of distrust and unbelief.

April 20, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

We were disappointed but not disheartened. We resolved to submit patiently to the process of purifying that God deemed needful for us; to refrain from murmuring at the trying ordeal by which the Lord was purging us from the dross and refining us like gold in the furnace. We resolved to wait with patient hope for the Saviour to redeem his tried and faithful ones.

We believe that the preaching of definite time was of God. It was this that led men to search the Bible diligently, discovering truths they had not before perceived. Jonah was sent of God to proclaim in the streets of Nineveh that within forty days the city would be overthrown; but God accepted the humiliation of the Ninevites and extended their period of probation. Yet the message that Jonah brought was sent of God, and Nineveh was tested according to his will. The world looked upon our hope as a delusion and our disappointment its consequent failure, but though we were mistaken in the event that was to occur at that period, there was no failure in reality of the vision that seemed to tarry.

The words of the Saviour in the parable of the wicked servant applies very forcibly to those who ridicule the near coming of the Son of man. "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

We found everywhere the scoffers which Peter says shall come in the

last days, "walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But those who had looked for the coming of the Lord were not without comfort, they had obtained valuable knowledge in the searching of the Word. The plan of salvation was plainer to their understanding. Every day they discovered new beauties in its sacred pages and a wonderful harmony running through all, one scripture explaining another and no word used in vain.

Our disappointment was not so great as that of the disciples. When the Son of man rode triumphantly into Jerusalem they expected him to be crowned king. The people flocked from all the region about and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" And Jesus, when the priests and elders besought him to still the multitude, declared that if they should hold their peace even the stones would cry out, for prophecy must be fulfilled. Yet in a few days these very disciples saw their beloved Master, whom they believed would reign on David's throne, stretched upon the cruel cross above the mocking, taunting Pharisees. Their high hopes were drowned in bitter disappointment, and the darkness of death closed about them.

Yet Christ was true to his promises. Sweet was the consolation he gave his people, rich the reward of the true and faithful.

Wm. Miller and those who were in union with him supposed that the cleansing of the sanctuary, spoken of in Daniel 8:14, meant the purifying of the earth prior to its becoming the abode of the saints. This was to take place at the advent of Christ, therefore we looked for that event at the end of the 2300 days, or years. But after our disappointment the Scriptures were carefully searched with prayer and earnest thought, and after a period of suspense as to our true position, light poured in upon our darkness; doubt and uncertainty was swept away.

Instead of the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 referring to the purifying of the earth, it was now plain that it pointed to the closing work of our High Priest in Heaven, the finishing of the atonement, and the preparing of the people to abide the day of his coming.

I might give a more detailed explanation of the passing of the time as considered in the light of prophecy, but it is not in the legitimate province of these articles to do so. I merely designed to give as brief an account as possible of these important events with which my life was so closely interwoven that they cannot consistently be omitted from these pages. I would, however, refer those readers who desire further information, to works on this subject, published at the Signs Office.

I now return to my personal history from which I have necessarily digressed:

After the passing of the time in 1844, my health rapidly failed, I could only speak in a whisper or broken tone of voice. One physician stated that my disease was dropsical consumption, he pronounced my right lung decayed and the left one considerably diseased, while the heart was seriously affected. He thought that I could live but a short time, and might die suddenly at any time. It was very difficult for me to breathe when lying down, and at night I was bolstered in almost a sitting posture, and was frequently wakened by coughing and bleeding at the lungs.

About this time, while visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine, the first vision was given to me. There were but five of us, all women, kneeling quietly in the morning at the family altar, when this event transpired. Space forbids me from entering into a detailed account of the wonders of these visions, which would of themselves, fill volumes; but when the book is published, of which these hasty articles will be the basis, it will contain a full relation of the views that God has seen fit to reveal to me. In

order to record in these sketches some of the most stirring incidents in my busy life, I shall be obliged to pass lightly over, or altogether omit a great share of that which would no doubt be of great interest to the readers. Many facts for which there is not room in the columns of this paper will soon appear in the volume of my life spoken of above.

I related this vision to the believers in Portland, who had full confidence that these manifestations were of God. A power attended them that could only emanate from the divine. A solemn sense of eternal interests was constantly upon me. An unspeakable awe filled me, that I, so young and feeble, should be chosen as the instrument by which God would give light to his people. While under the power of the Lord I was so inexpressibly happy, seeming to be surrounded by radiant angels in the glorious courts of Heaven, where all is peace and joy, that it was a sad and bitter change to wake up to the unsatisfying realities of mortal life.

In a second vision, which soon followed the first, I was shown the trials through which I must pass, and that it was my duty to go and relate to others the things that God had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labors would meet with great opposition, and that my heart would be wrought with anguish, but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all. The teaching of this vision troubled me exceedingly, for it pointed that my duty was to go out among the people and teach the truth.

My health was so poor that I was in actual bodily suffering, and, to all appearance, had but a short time to live. I was but seventeen years of age, small and frail, unused to society, and naturally so timid and retiring that it was painful for me to meet strangers. I prayed earnestly for several days and far into the night, that this burden might be removed from me and laid upon some one else more capable of bearing it. But the light of duty never changed, and the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears, "Make known to others what I have revealed to you."

May 4, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

At this time Bro. Wm. H. Hyde was very sick with bloody dysentery. His symptoms were alarming, and the physician pronounced his case almost hopeless. We visited him and prayed with him, but he had come under the influence of certain fanatical persons, who were bringing dishonor upon our cause. We wished to remove him from their midst, and petitioned the Lord to give him strength to leave that place. He was strengthened and blessed in answer to our prayers, and rode four miles to the house of Bro. P-----. But after arriving there he seemed to be rapidly sinking.

The fanaticism and errors into which he had fallen through evil influence seemed to hinder the exercise of his faith. He gratefully received the plain testimony borne him, and made humble confession of his fault. Only a few who were strong in faith were permitted to enter the sick-room. The fanatics whose influence over him had been so injurious, and who had persistently followed him to Bro. P-----'s, were positively forbidden to come into his presence, while we prayed fervently for his restoration to health. I have seldom known such a reaching out to claim the promises of God. The salvation of the Holy Spirit was revealed, and power from on high rested upon our sick brother and upon all present.

Bro. Hyde immediately dressed and walked out of the room praising God, with the light of Heaven shining upon his countenance. A farmer's dinner was ready upon the table. Said he, "If I were well I should partake of this food; and as I believe God has healed me, I shall carry out my faith." He sat down to dinner with the rest and ate heartily without injury to himself. His recovery was perfect and lasting.

From Topsham we returned to Portland and found there quite a number of our faith from the East. Among them were the very fanatics to whom I had borne my testimony in Exeter, declaring that it was not their duty to visit Portland. These persons had laid aside reason and judgment; they trusted every impression of their excitable and over-wrought minds. Their demonstrative exercises, while claiming to be under the Spirit of God, were unworthy of their exalted profession. We trembled for the church that was to be subjected to this spirit of fanaticism. My heart ached for God's people. Must they be deceived and led away by this false enthusiasm? I faithfully pronounced the warnings given me of the Lord; but they seemed to have little effect except to make these persons of extreme views jealous of me.

These false impressions of theirs might have turned me from my duty, had not the Lord previously showed me where to go and what to do. Although so young and inexperienced, I was preserved from falling into the snare of the enemy, through the mercy of God, in giving me special instructions whom to fear and whom to trust. Had it not been for this protection I now see many times when I might have been led from the path of duty.

About this time I was shown that it was my duty to visit our people in N. H. My constant and faithful companion at this time was Louisa Foss, the sister of my brother-in-law. She has been dead for many years; but I can never forget her kind and sisterly attention to me in my journeyings. We were also accompanied by Bro. Files and his wife, who were old and valued friends of my family, and brethren Haskins and White.

We were cordially received; but there were wrongs existing in that field which burdened me much. We had to meet a spirit of self-righteousness that was very depressing. I had previously been shown the pride and exaltation of certain ones whom we visited, but had not the courage to meet them with my

testimony. Had I done so the Lord would have sustained me in doing my duty.

While visiting at the house of Bro. Morse, the burden did not leave me, but I did not yet feel sufficiently strong to relieve my mind and place the oppressive burden upon those to whom it belonged. During our stay at this house I was very ill. Prayer was offered in my behalf, the Spirit of God rested upon me, and I was taken off in vision. While in this state, some things were shown me concerning the disappointment of 1844, in connection with the case of Bro. Morse. He had been a firm and consistent believer that the Lord would come at that time. He was bitterly disappointed when the period passed without bringing the event that was expected. He was perplexed and unable to explain the delay.

He did not renounce his faith as some did, calling it a fanatical delusion; but he was bewildered, and could not understand the position of God's people on prophetic time. He had been so earnest in declaring that the coming of the Lord was nigh, that when the time passed, he was despondent and did nothing to encourage the disappointed people, who were like sheep without a shepherd, left to be devoured by wolves.

The case of Jonah was presented before me. God commanded him to go into Nineveh and deliver the message that he gave him. Jonah obeyed, and for the space of three days and nights the solemn cry was heard throughout the streets of the wicked city, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" The city was a marvel of wealth and magnificence; yet the king believed the warning and humbled himself and his people before the Lord in fasting and sackcloth.

A merciful God accepted their repentance and lengthened the days of their probation. He turned away his fierce anger and awaited the fruits of Nineveh's humiliation. But Jonah dreaded being called a false prophet. He

murmured at the compassion of God in sparing the people whom he had warned of destruction by the mouth of his prophet. He could not bear the thought of standing before the people as a deceiver. He overlooked the great mercy of God toward the repentant city, in the personal humiliation of seeing his prophecy unfulfilled.

Bro. Morse was in a similar condition to that of the disappointed prophet. He had proclaimed that the Lord would come in 1844. The time had past. The check of fear that had partially held the people was removed, and they indulged in derision of those who had looked in vain for Jesus. Bro. Morse felt that he was a bye-word among his neighbors, an object of jest. He could not be reconciled to his position. He did not consider the mercy of God in granting the world a longer time to prepare for his coming; that the warning of his judgment might be heard more widely, and the people tested with greater light. He only thought of the humiliation of God's servants.

I was shown that although the event so solemnly proclaimed did not occur, as in the case of Jonah, the message was none the less of God, and accomplished the purpose that he designed it should. Subsequent light upon the prophecies revealed the event which did take place, in the High Priest entering the most holy place of the sanctuary in Heaven to finish the atonement for the sins of man. Nevertheless God willed for a wise purpose that his servants should proclaim the approaching end of time.

I was shown that, instead of being discouraged at his disappointment, as was Jonah, Bro. Morse should gather up the rays of precious light that God had given his people and cast aside his selfish sorrow. He should rejoice that the world was granted a reprieve, and be ready to aid in carrying forward the great work yet to be done upon earth, in bringing sinners to repentance and salvation.

It has been reported that on the occasion of this vision I declared that in

forty days the end of the world would come. No such words were uttered by me. I had no light concerning the end of time. The subject of Nineveh, her lengthened probation, and the consequent grief of Jonah, was presented to me as a parallel case with our own disappointment of 1844.

The case of Bro. Morse was presented to me as one that represented the condition of a large class of our people at that time. Their duty was plainly marked; it was to trust in the wisdom and mercy of God and patiently labor as his providence opened the way before them.

May 11, 1876

Mrs. Ellen G. White
Her Life, Christian Experience, and Labors

It was difficult to accomplish much good in New Hampshire. We found little spirituality there. Many pronounced their experience in '44 a delusion; it was hard to reach this class, for we could not accept the position they ventured to take. A number who were active preachers and exhorters in '44, now seemed to have lost their moorings, and did not know where we were in prophetic time; they were fast uniting with the spirit of the world.

Upon one occasion, when I was delivering the message that the Lord had given me for the encouragement of his people, I was interrupted several times by a certain minister. He had been very active in preaching definite time; but when the appointed period passed, his faith utterly failed, and he wandered in darkness, doubting and questioning everything. He was ever ready to array himself against any one who claimed more light than he possessed. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, as I related what had been shown to me of God. This minister interrupted me several consecutive times; but I continued speaking, when he became very angry and excited, violently opposing what I said. He raised his voice to a high key, and abused me till he was forced to stop from sheer exhaustion. In a few moments he left the house, being seized with hemorrhage of the lungs. He rapidly failed from that time, and died not long after.

Our testimony was welcomed by some; but many received us suspiciously. Fanaticism and spiritual magnetism seemed to have destroyed the spirit of true godliness. Many appeared unable to discern or appreciate the motives that led me in my feebleness, to travel and bear my testimony to the people. Those who had little interest for the salvation of souls, and whose

hearts had turned from the work of preparation, could not comprehend the love of God in my soul that quickened my desire to help those in darkness to the same light that cheered my path. Could they also have seen what had been revealed to me of God's matchless love for men, manifested in giving his only Son to die for them, they would not have doubted my sincerity.

I believed all that had been shown me in vision. Truth was to me a living reality, and my labor was for eternity. However others might view my work, the weight of its importance was heavy on my soul. In feeble health I was toiling to do good to others unto eternal life. Moments seemed precious to me, delays dangerous.

In New Hampshire we had to contend with a species of spiritual magnetism, of a similar character with mesmerism. It was our first experience of this kind, and happened thus: Arriving at Claremont, we were told there were two parties of Adventists; one holding fast their former faith, the other denying it. At other places we had visited and labored with this latter class, and found that they were so buried in worldliness, and had so far adopted the popular view in regard to our disappointment that we could not reach nor help them.

But we were now pleased to learn that there was a little company here who believed that in their past experience they had been led by the providence of God. We were directed to Elders B-----t and B-----s as persons holding similar views with ourselves. We discovered that there was much prejudice against these men, but concluded that they were persecuted for righteousness' sake. We called on them and were kindly received and courteously treated. We soon learned that they professed sanctification, claiming they were above the possibility of sin, being entirely consecrated to God. Their clothing was excellent, and they had an air of ease and comfort.

Presently a little boy about eight years old entered, literally clad in dirty

ragged. We were surprised to find that this little specimen of neglect was the son of Elder B-----t. The mother looked exceedingly ashamed and annoyed; but the father, utterly unconcerned, continued talking of his high spiritual attainments without the slightest recognition of his little son. But his sanctification had suddenly lost its charm in my eyes. Wrapped in prayer and meditation, throwing off all the toil and responsibilities of life, this man seemed too spiritually-minded to notice the actual wants of his family, or give his children the least fatherly attention. He seemed to forget that the greater our love to God, the stronger should be our love and care for those whom he has given us; that the Saviour never taught idleness and abstract devotion, to the neglect of the duties laying directly in our path.

This husband and father declared that the heavenly attainment of true holiness carried the mind above all earthly thoughts. Still he sat at the table and ate temporal food; he was not fed by a miracle, and some one must provide that food, although he troubled himself little about that matter, his time was so devoted to spiritual things. Not so his wife, upon whom rested the burden of the family. She toiled unremittingly in every department of household labor to keep up the home. The husband declared that she was not sanctified, but allowed worldly things to draw her mind from religious subjects.

I thought of our Saviour as a constant worker for the good of others. He said "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The sanctification that he taught was shown in deeds of kindness and mercy, and the love that counteth others better than ourselves.

While at this house a sister of B-----s requested a private interview with me. She had much to say concerning entire consecration to God, and endeavored to draw out my views in regard to that subject. I felt that I must be guarded in my expressions. While talking, she held my hand in hers, and with the other softly stroked my hair. I felt that angels of God would protect

me from the unholy influence this attractive young lady was seeking to exercise over me, with her fair speeches, and gentle caresses. She had much to say in regard to the spiritual attainments of B-----t, and his great faith. Her mind seemed very much occupied with him and his experience. I was glad to be relieved at length from this trying interview.

These persons, who made such lofty professions, were calculated to deceive the unwary. They had much to say of love and charity covering a multitude of sins. I could not unite with their views and feelings; but felt that they were wielding a terrible power for evil. I wished to escape from their presence as soon as possible.

Eld. B-----t, in speaking of faith, said, "All we have to do is to believe, and whatever we ask of God will be given us."

Bro. White suggested that there were conditions specified. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Said he, "Your theory of faith must have a foundation; it is as empty as a flour-barrel with both heads out. True charity never covers up unrepented and unconfessed sins. She only drops her mantle over the faults that are confessed and renounced. True Charity is a very delicate personage, never setting her pure food outside of Bible truth."

As soon as the views of these people were crossed, they manifested a stubborn, self-righteous spirit that rejected all instruction. Though professing great humiliation they were boastful in their sophistry of sanctification, and resisted all appeals to reason. That same afternoon, we visited the house of Brother Collier, where we purposed to hold a meeting in the evening. We supposed this family were in union with those we had left. We asked some questions in reference to those men; but Brother Collier gave us no information. Said he, "If the Lord sent you here, you will ascertain what spirit governs them, and will solve the mystery for us."

B-----s and B-----t both attended the meeting. While I was earnestly praying for light and the presence of God, they began to groan and cry "Amen!" apparently throwing their sympathy with my prayer. Immediately my heart was oppressed with a great weight, the words died upon my lips, darkness overshadowed the whole meeting.

Bro. White arose and said, "I am distressed. The Spirit of the Lord is grieved. I resist this influence in the name of the Lord! O God, rebuke this foul spirit!"

I was immediately relieved, and rose above the shadows. But again, while speaking words of encouragement and faith to those present, their groanings and amens chilled me. Once more Bro. White rebuked the spirit of darkness, and again the power of the Lord rested upon me, while I spoke to the people. These agents of the evil one were then so bound as to be unable to exert their baneful influence any more that night.

After the meeting, Bro. White said to Bro. Collier, "Now I can tell you concerning those two men. They are acting under a Satanic influence, yet attributing all to the Spirit of the Lord."

"I believe God sent you to encourage us," said Bro. Collier. "We call their influence mesmerism. They affect the minds of others in a remarkable way, and have controlled some to their great damage. We seldom hold meetings here, for they intrude their presence, and we can have no union with them. They manifest deep feeling, as you observed tonight, but they crush the very life from our prayers, and leave an influence blacker than Egyptian darkness. I have never seen them tied up before tonight.

During family prayer that night the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I was shown many things in vision. Elders B-----t and B-----s were

presented to me as doing great injury to the cause of God. While professing sanctification they were transgressing the sacred law. They were corrupt at heart and all those in unison with them were under a Satanic delusion and obeying their own carnal instincts instead of the Word of God. These two men exerted a marked and peculiar power over the people, holding their attention and winning their confidence through a baneful mesmeric influence that many who were innocent and unsuspecting attributed to the Spirit of the Lord. Those who followed their teachings were terribly deceived and led into the grossest errors.

I was shown that the daily lives of these men were in direct contrast with their profession. Under the garb of sanctification they were practicing the worst sins and deceiving God's people. Their iniquity was all laid open before me, and I saw the fearful account that stood against them in the great book of records, and their terrible guilt in professing utter holiness, while their daily acts were hateful in the sight of God. Some time after this, the characters of these persons were developed before the people and the vision given in reference to them was fully vindicated.

June 15, 1876

Christ's Teachings

In the life and ministry of Christ he said and did very many things which provoked the self-righteous Jews, and excited their jealousy and hatred. The Jews professed to be more favored of God than any other people upon the earth, and they felt insulted and abused by the pointed, cutting truths uttered by Jesus.

At the feast of the Passover Jesus appeared as a stranger, clad in the humble garments of a Galilean peasant, with no outward badge of authority. His eye took in the scene of the desecrated temple. The lowing of the oxen, the bleating of the sheep, the cooing of the doves, the jingling of the money, the sharp and angry contentions over the merchandise and in the traffic, drowned the voice of prayer in the temple. He looked upon them and, with indignant sorrow, he poured out the money of the changers; he overthrew the tables, and with a whip of small cords, drove the cattle and people out of the court. With majestic authority he commands, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

This language was close and cutting indeed. It was not addressed to the rabble, but to the chief priests, to the teachers of the people, who were defiling the sacred temple for the sake of gain. Indignation was seen in the searching eye and in the stern look of Jesus. His divine power was felt by the guilty, selfish, avaricious masters in Israel, and they fled from before him as the guilty, condemned sinner will flee when, in his terrible, kingly majesty, Jesus will stand as Judge of the world, and proclaim, "Depart, ye workers of iniquity." Many will plead, We have done this and that good work; we have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But again

the terrible sentence is uttered, Depart; I know you not. You have no connection with me, You are workers of iniquity.

Christ, at Jacob's well, laid open the sinful life and character of the woman of Samaria. "Unnecessary, uncourteous," say many. Jesus knew that this was the only way to reach the case. But how many would complain of such a way of saving souls. When the nobleman came to him asking him to heal his son, he met him with a reproof for their unbelief. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Thus was his eager entreaty met. He was not only greatly disappointed, but chagrined. With some impatience, and with a dread that the least delay would result in the death of his son, he said, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus at last graciously granted his request. But how many in these days would have allowed the feelings of their own natural heart to overbear their judgment, and become impatient and unreconciled to Jesus' manner of working? They would have said, "Why pain and seemingly disappoint the father, when he might have healed his son at once with his word." Christ did not feel called upon to explain his motives and purposes to man. He designed that the repulse should expand the feeble faith of the parent, and it had this effect. There were Pharisees and chief priests, elders and scribes, to stand at the out-look and watch with jealousy and envy all that Christ might do, and to question it because it did not come to their prescribed rules.

If our Saviour was thus treated, can his co-laborers who go forth bearing the messages which he gives them expect to be treated better than was their Master? How many blessings Jesus bestowed on the world. How many discouraged, desponding and distressed ones he relieved. His work was to bless and save. He covered his glory with humanity, bringing from Heaven the very best gifts which could be given to man; spoke peace, gave messages of light and hope. But all these gifts were considered as matters of course; the gift was received but the Giver forgotten. They walked in the light with no thought of gratitude to him from whom its beams proceeded. When the

chastisement came in reproof, in warning, or by affliction, to save from apostasy and ruin, then there was a turning upon Jesus with a defiant, stubborn, impenitent resistance which was fearful. And why, says the proud, perverse spirit, must I be crushed by rebuke? Why must I be humiliated? They forget all the light, all the favors previously given, and feel that they are abused because God takes with them the only course which will bring them to a knowledge of themselves, that they may find peace in him through submission, penitence for sin, and confiding trust in God. For this reason God sends to the church the greatest blessing he can give them in a knowledge of themselves. Satan is alluring them to sin that they may be lost; God gives a clear presentation of their sins that they may repent and be saved. The greatest danger of the world is, that sin does not appear sinful. This is the greatest evil existing in the church; sin is glossed over with self-complacency. Blessed indeed are they who possess a sensitive conscience; who can weep and mourn over their spiritual poverty and wanderings from God; who are poor in spirit and can receive the reproof God sends them; and who, with confessions and brokenness of heart, will take their places, all penitent, in humiliation at the cross of Christ. God knows it is good for men to tread a hard and humble path, to encounter difficulties, to experience disappointments, and to suffer affliction. Faith strengthens by coming in conflict with doubt, and resisting unbelief through the strength of Jesus.

They who despise reproof will be left to their own devices.

August 3, 1876

Love to God and Man

The two great principles of the law of God are supreme love to God and unselfish love to our neighbor. The first four commandments, and the last six, hang upon, or grow out of, these two principles. Christ explained to the lawyer who was his neighbor, in the illustration of the man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who robbed him, and beat him, and left him half dead. The priest and the Levite saw this man suffering, but their hearts did not respond to his wants. They avoided him by passing by on the other side. The Samaritan came that way, and when he saw the stranger's need of help, he did not question whether he was of their country, or of their creed, or a relative; but he went to work to help the sufferer because there was work which needed to be done. He relieved him as best he could, put him upon his own beast and carried him to an inn, and made provision for his wants at the expense of his own purse. The Samaritan, said Christ, was neighbor to him who fell among thieves. The Levite and the priest represent a class who manifest an indifference to the very ones who need their sympathy and help. The Samaritan represents a class who are true helpers with Christ, and are imitating his example in doing good. This class Christ represents as commandment keepers, who shall have eternal life.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Here is genuine religion defined. The same consideration that should be given to the widow and fatherless, God requires to be given to the blind and those suffering under the affliction of physical infirmities. Disinterested

benevolence is very rare in this age of the world.

Special instructions were given to the children of Israel in reference to these things:--"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shall fear thy God; I am the Lord. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor; nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark; and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way; and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow; and all the people shall say, Amen."

Professed Christians often disregard the plain, positive teachings of the word of God, and feel no compunctions of conscience. In order to save such, God frequently brings them under the rod of affliction, and places them in similar positions to those who were in need of their help and sympathy, but who did not receive it at their hands.

Jesus said in giving to his hearers an illustration of this subject:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away

into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Here Christ identifies himself with suffering humanity, and plainly impresses upon us all, in his sermon, that indifference or injustice done to the least of his saints is done to him. Here is the Lord's side, and whoever will be on the Lord's side, let him come over with us. In the heavenly records Christ preserves, as done to himself, all acts of mercy and benevolence done for the unfortunate, the lame, the blind, the sick and the needy. On the other hand, a record will be written in the book against those who manifest the indifference of the priest and Levite for the unfortunate, and those who take any advantage of the misfortunes of others and increase their affliction in order to selfishly advantage themselves. God will surely repay every act of injustice, and every manifestation of careless indifference and neglect of the afflicted. Every one will finally be rewarded as his works have been.

September 7, 1876

Wanted, Laborers for the Harvest

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ,

We are living in a most solemn time. Important responsibilities are resting upon us. New fields are being opened for our labor, and the Macedonian cry is coming from every direction: "Come over and help us." Some beg for even a day of labor with them, if they can have no more. Angels of God are preparing ears to hear, and hearts to receive the message of warning. Honest souls are living in our very midst who have never yet heard the reasons of our faith. People are perishing for want of knowledge. Not one-hundredth part is being done that might be done to give the third angel's message to the world. There are those who will be responsible for these souls who have never heard the truth. Many excuse themselves with trivial reasons, for not engaging in the work they might do if they were consecrated to God. They have wrapped their talents in a napkin and buried them in the ground, where they cannot increase.

Young men have lost years of experience wherein they might have been growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. But love of self and love of the world has engrossed their minds to the exclusion of eternal interests. God would have accepted them as laborers years ago, if they had been willing to give themselves unreservedly to his work. Now, when there are doors open everywhere for the entrance of the truth, there are but a few who have sufficient courage and experience to carry it forward in the name of Jesus.

The very ones who should be valuable workmen have wasted these precious years in selfishly following their own inclinations. They have

turned a deaf ear when the Master called them to lift unpleasant burdens, to perform disagreeable duties. Many have little care for the souls for whom Christ died. The Majesty of Heaven submitted to the most cruel humiliation that he might lift degraded man to a state of purity and eternal joy.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." In the death of Christ we see the greatness of God's love for his sinful children. He sacrificed his dear Son to save them from eternal ruin. All Heaven is interested in the salvation of souls. We should be willing and ready to make all sacrifices in order to win souls to Jesus. This would evidence that we are co-laborers with him, that we are faithfully bearing the cross. To shun the solemn responsibilities of our time and position is to weaken the moral powers and enfeeble the spiritual muscle.

The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed by a sense of his incapacity to be a mouth-piece for God to Israel. But he accepted the work, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well-fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the characters of those who trust him implicitly, and give themselves unreservedly to his commands.

The work of saving souls is sacred and all-important. The humble, efficient worker, who obediently responds to the call of God in this direction, may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To feel so great and holy a responsibility is of itself elevating to the human character. It calls into action the highest mental qualities, and their continued exercise strengthens and purifies mind and heart. The influence upon one's own life, as well as upon the lives of others, is incalculable.

He who is called of God to so sacred a work should bend all his energies to its accomplishment. Every other consideration should become secondary to this great object. He should feel the solemn obligations resting upon him, one whom God has honored by choosing to unite him with the angels in the work of ministering to souls and enlightening them with the divine truth.

It is wonderful how strong a weak man may become through faith in the power of God, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. And the timid woman, shrinking and self-distrustful, is transformed to a courageous missionary, valiantly wielding the sword of truth. The hesitating and irresolute, through exercising his abilities in the cause of God, becomes firm and decided. Taking in the great fact that he is called by the Redeemer of the world to work with him for the salvation of man, he dedicates his life to the work. His nature becomes exalted; the mission of Christ opens before him with new importance and glory, and with deep humility he recognizes in himself a co-laborer with the Saviour. No higher office is given to man. No joy can equal the assurance of being an instrument in the hands of God of saving souls. It is a grand thing to look back upon a course of labor all marked with glorious results; to see precious souls progressing in the light through your efforts; to feel that God has worked with and through you in the harvest-field of the world.

Careless spectators may not appreciate your work, or see its importance. They may consider it a losing business, a life of thankless labor and self-sacrifice. But the servant of Jesus Christ sees in it the light reflected from the cross. His sacrifices appear small in comparison with those of his blessed Master, and he is glad to follow in his footsteps. The success of his labor affords him the purest joy, and is the richest recompense for a life of patient toil.

In reviewing the past, the trials and difficulties that have beset him are

not magnified in his mind. The consciousness of duty performed amply compensates for all his sufferings, and the glory of his coming reward clothes the future with the light of Heaven. Glancing over the well-fought field of life, he says with Paul, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But he who accepts the responsibility of teaching the word of God, must expect stern, self-denying work. Some who are only superficially acquainted with the doctrines of our faith, venture indiscreetly before the public in large towns, and, from their ignorance and indiscretion, bring discredit upon the cause.

These young men who so rashly undertake to stand as ministers of God, fail because they lack thoroughness. They acquaint themselves with the reasons of our faith, and gather up the arguments ready-made from the lips or pens of others. They do not carefully study the word of God, and establish themselves firmly on the principles, of Bible truth, line upon line, and precept upon precept. With such a preparation they can boldly meet the opposition of the world. Our ministers are in danger of using only the facts sought out by others, and going no further. They do not themselves dig for truth as for hidden treasures, but become careless and easily satisfied with the researches of others. They need a deep religious experience and knowledge gained for themselves in order to be successful in the important work of the ministry.

Many fail to see the necessity of earnest effort and close connection with Jesus Christ. They do not feel their utter helplessness without the aid of God, and they do not teach the truth with the Spirit and power, because they have it not in their hearts. It requires agonizing prayer to bring our souls into harmony with Christ. The history of our Saviour's conflict in the wilderness

of temptation, his life of self-sacrificing love, his soul-agony in the lonely garden of Gethsemane, the cruelty of the judgment hall, and the agony upon the cross, all combine to teach us a lesson of self-sacrifice, of patience under affliction, of solemn consecration to God, and of fitting preparation for his holy work.

Laborers for God, be not discouraged; when weary and heavy-laden, fly to Christ who has promised you rest. He is the Burden-bearer, he is your strength. Never allow yourself to imagine that you are in yourself sufficient for the exigency of the times; never consider yourself a graduated Christian. Your work is to discipline the mind, to store up knowledge, to perfect character while life lasts. Only thus can you be able to wage successfully the great warfare of life.

Keep the spirit humble as that of a little child. Pride, envy, worldly ambition, cupidity and love of ease must be sacrificed upon the altar of duty. In the simplicity of love, be like those little ones whose angels do always behold the face of our Heavenly Father. But unite with these virtues the courage of a tried warrior. We want faithful Calebs who will raise their voices fearlessly in defense of the right, who are the first to press into the front of the battle and plant the banner of truth in the heart of the enemy's camp.

Jesus calls for young men who will volunteer to carry the truth to the world. Men of spiritual nerve and muscle are wanted, who are able to find work close at hand, because they are looking for it. The church needs new men to give new energy to the ranks, men for the times, and able to cope with its crying errors, who will inspire with fresh zeal the flagging efforts of the few, whose hearts are warm with Christian love, and whose hands are eager to go about their Father's work.

The unsearchable riches of Christ are to be presented to the world in

contrast with the poverty of sin, and the delusive pleasures of the world. Only a heart, brimming with the love of God, only a mind active by constant study of eternal interests, can properly set forth the beauties of the truth of God.

Those who unreservedly give themselves to this work, who faithfully reflect the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, fulfilling their mission with fidelity and love, will be recompensed on earth by the sweet consciousness of duty performed, and, in the bright Hereafter, when the saints come into their inheritance, then the devoted minister of Christ will be welcomed into the joy of his Lord, hearing from the Master's lips: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

September 14, 1876

Incidents at Groveland, Mass

What a scene is before me! It is estimated that twenty thousand people are assembled in this grove. The third train, of fifteen cars, has just arrived. Every seat was filled and every foot of standing room, also the platform and the steps. A sea of human heads is already before me, and still the cars are to come. This is to me the most solemn sight I ever beheld. Hundreds in carriages are driving away because they cannot get within sound of the speaker's voice.

There is one very interesting case at this meeting. It is that of a blind sister who embraced the truth at the camp-meeting last year. After she embraced the Sabbath she had a very earnest desire to read the Bible that is prepared for the blind. But she was about forty years old, and her fingers were not sufficiently sensitive to discern the raised letters. Sister Haskell was her teacher, and these two would sit for hours so engaged in the work that time passed unheeded. But still the difficulty existed. Her fingers were too much calloused to trace the delicate lines of the letters, and she wept bitterly in her disappointment. She carried her troubles to the Lord in prayer, and was comforted and encouraged to persevere in her efforts. Shortly after she suffered a long sickness and during that illness her fingers became so sensitive that she could read successfully. Her joy was beyond expression. With countenance beaming with hope and joy she exalted the truth of the Bible. She prized the precious words of inspiration, and recommended its study to all especially to the young.

I could not but think of those who are blessed with good eyesight and can search the Scriptures for themselves. What an account such will have to give for their neglect of the words of reproof, warning, instruction and

encouragement given in the written word.

There is another sister here, who has recently been converted to our truth. She lives in Boston, but said she could not consent to be baptized in a pool, choosing rather the flowing river. Having seen the appointment of the camp-meeting, she had come alone to attend. She enjoyed the meetings Sabbath very much, but was obliged, on account of the sickness of her husband, to return home Sunday evening, but came on the ground again Monday to receive baptism with the others. This seemed much like sheep hunting for a shepherd.

Many other testimonies were borne of the deepest interest. One sister from the State of Maine who was visiting her niece at Summersville stated that as she was about to return home her niece plead with her to remain longer. She did so, and as the result she had to report that her niece was rejoicing with her in the truth.

If the visits we make our friends are productive of the salvation of souls, we must not be indifferent and silent upon religious subjects, but we should let the precious light God has given us shine forth to others. If the truth is in the heart sanctifying the life, it must be reflected upon those with whom we are brought in contact. The lives of genuine Christians should be living epistles known and read of all men.

The events of this meeting have given me very solemn reflections. The people seem to have an awakening interest to hear for themselves. Angels of God are moving upon hearts. God, in his providence, is opening the way for the message of warning to be given to those who are in darkness. Many who are not of our faith have come on the ground to remain through the entire meeting.

From the very commencement the brethren have manifested a personal

interest, as though the success of the meeting depended upon their course of action. This is as it should be. They have not left all the work for the ministers, but have generally done their work promptly and given their spirited testimonies, thereby adding greatly to the interest of the meeting. Such a willingness on the part of the people to come up to the work is a great encouragement to the servants of God.

October 5, 1876

Camp-Meeting in Indiana

Peru, Ind., September 14, 1876.--The camp-meeting in this place has been one of the best we have attended this season. There was quite a good representation of our brethren, although we learned that many were detained at home because of sickness. The meeting had been in progress two days when we came upon the ground. Sabbath morning the prayer and conference meetings were very interesting. Sabbath forenoon my husband spoke with freedom upon the subject of faith. Luke 12:1.

In the afternoon I spoke to the people upon the barren fig-tree. It stood forth among the leafless trees with its apparently flourishing branches far in advance of all other trees. Christ sought for fruit upon this tree from the topmost bough to the lowest branches, but finding nothing but leaves, he passed an irrevocable sentence of doom upon it.

Christ invests the fig-tree with moral qualities, and makes it the expositor of divine truth that he may teach a lesson to his disciples, and not only to them but to all who should believe on the Word. Many, like the portentous fig-tree, make high profession of godliness, but bear no fruit to the glory of God. They have not responded to the sacred influences which God has given them. Opportunities have been unimproved, blessings have been unappreciated, warnings and reproofs have been rejected. The fostering love and care of the Redeemer has been unrequited, and like the barren fig-tree they stand forth fruitless, having nothing but leaves.

The word seemed to reach hearts. I then invited those who had never identified themselves with the people of God, and backsliders, and those who felt that they must have a new conversion, to come forward. Seventy-five

responded to the call. My husband spoke with great freedom and power to the people, and addressed those who came forward particularly in regard to their having faith in the promises of God. He dwelt upon the simplicity of faith. Opportunity was given for all who wished to speak to relieve their minds. Many testimonies of confession were borne, well wet down with tears. A number stated that this was the first Sabbath they had kept. Others said they were making a start to serve God and had come forward for the first time. Very deep feeling pervaded the meeting. My husband led in prayer, and his faith fastened upon the throne of God. Heaven seemed to be very near. Praying and weeping was mingled, and earnest, agonizing prayer went forth from unfeigned lips. The solemn power of God rested upon the company bowed in humiliation before him. I thought of the day of Pentecost, when the power of God came upon the worshipers like a mighty, rushing wind. I have not witnessed such an exhibition of the manifest power of God for years. There was no wild fanaticism, but a sweet, soft, subduing spirit, bringing the entire company in harmony with Heaven. There were no wild, unintelligible shrieks, but the praise of God was upon almost every lip.

Testimonies were universally borne that they never had realized the blessing of God as upon this occasion. And who could doubt it. Their countenances were all aglow with the reflection of the light beams of the Sun of Righteousness. It was sunshine and rain; tears were bedewing the cheeks that were illuminated by the Sun of Peace. The scene will never be effaced from my memory. The setting sun in his mellow radiance reflected through the opening of the trees directly in the center of the congregation, sifting its gleam of glorifying light upon the happy company who were assembled. The light of the setting sun mingling with the light borrowed of Heaven made this a hallowed spot, a little Heaven below.

We assembled at the stand at half-past two in the afternoon and remained there until half-past six. All felt reluctant to leave the place made so sacred by the presence of God.

Eld. Canright spoke in the evening upon the Sleep of the Dead. He spoke with great clearness and perfect freedom. Sunday morning he again spoke upon the Sabbath question, and many testified that they never heard the subject presented with such clearness. At half-past one my husband took the stand, speaking with freedom upon the reasons of our faith and hope. The gathering was large for the place, and the audience seemed charmed by the new and startling facts of truth brought before them. Men of repute from Peru who listened to the two discourses stated that an overwhelming array of argument had been presented in favor of the Sabbath which had knocked the last prop for the sacred observance of Sunday from beneath them.

At half-past two I spoke upon the subject of Temperance, taking for my text Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The congregation listened with solemn interest as I dwelt upon the neglected duties of mothers in educating and training their children for the better life, and the necessity of fathers acting their part in teaching the children. Many fathers excuse themselves by saying that they have no time to devote to their children. But the time squandered daily in smoking might be made of highest value to their children in giving them important lessons and in becoming acquainted with them. Tobacco and liquor lie at the foundation of a large share of the crime and violence that is polluting our world. I pointed them to Jesus, their Redeemer, who commenced the work of redemption where the ruin began on the part of appetite.

After the meeting closed, Bro. Weber, a man of good repute in the city of Rochester, who attended our camp-meeting in Kokomo two years since, related his interesting experience, dating from that meeting. He stated that he had used tobacco for forty years, commencing its use when a child. His

father and mother used it, and he thought it would cost him his life to give it up. But when I was speaking upon the evils of the indulgence of appetite for tobacco, strong convictions of the sinfulness of this indulgence forced themselves upon him, and he threw his tobacco from him with the determination never to taste or handle it again. He experienced a severe struggle, but through the strength of Jesus overcame the appetite so that it is now very offensive to him. This brother feels deeply grateful to God that he can stand forth, in the strength of his God-given manhood, free from the slavery of appetite.

October 19, 1876

Incidents of the Michigan Camp-Meeting

This is the largest gathering of Sabbath-keepers we have yet seen. Although there has been a great amount of business to be done, it has been accomplished with efficiency and dispatch, no disagreeable hindrances occurring to block the wheels. Very many excellent discourses have been given, presenting to the people the truths so important for this time.

On Thursday, after speaking from the third and fourth chapters of Malachi, we invited those who had made no profession and those who were backslidden and had lost their evidences of God's love for them, to come forward and seek the Lord by confession and repentance. About three hundred accepted the invitation. Opportunity was given them to express their feelings and desires. Many testimonies of confession were made with deep feeling. Fathers and mothers owned to a neglect of duty towards their children in not giving them the care and instruction which it was their duty to give. It touched my heart to hear the many testimonies from the lips of those who were babes in the truth. Some had kept but a single Sabbath, while others had observed two, four, or six. They were rejoicing in the truth, but were not satisfied with their present attainments, and expressed a determination to reach a higher standard.

My mother heart was stirred to see the children pressing in their testimonies, many lifting the cross for the first time. One of these was a boy ten years of age, and I have never seen persons of mature age manifest deeper soul-conflict than this tender child. His face was deadly pale, and indicated the deepest feeling; he had never before spoken on such an occasion, and could say but a few words; he wanted to be a Christian and to be saved in Heaven.

With what pleasure must the angels of God regard the efforts put forth, and the victories gained by these little ones over natural pride and timidity. With what tender care will they guard these lambs of the flock.

It was a solemn sight to see hundreds seeking the Lord with earnest determination. These people were not moving fitfully, but calmly and understandingly. There was a total absence of fanaticism and excitement; no shrieks, and nervous, spasmodic movements. But the Spirit of the Lord rested upon the people, and solemn, earnest prayer was offered to God in behalf of those who were seeking him.

After the meeting closed, a sister took me heartily by the hand, expressing great joy at meeting sister White again. She inquired if I remembered calling at a log house in the woods twenty-two years before. She gave us refreshments, and I left with them a little book, "Experience and Views." She stated that she had lent that little book to her neighbors, as new families had settled around her, until there was very little left of it; and she expressed a great desire to obtain another copy of the work. Her neighbors were deeply interested in it, and were desirous of seeing the writer. She said that when I called upon her I talked to her of Jesus and the beauties of Heaven, and that the words were spoken with such fervor that she was charmed, and had never forgotten them. Since that time the Lord had sent ministers to preach the truth to them, and now there was quite a company observing the Sabbath. The influence of that little book, now worn out with perusing, had extended from one to another, performing its silent work, until the soil was ready for the seeds of truth.

I well remember the long journey we took twenty-two years ago, in Michigan. We were on our way to hold a meeting in Vergennes. We were fifteen miles from our destination. Our driver had passed over the road repeatedly and was well acquainted with it, but was compelled to

acknowledge that he had lost the way. We traveled forty miles that day, through the woods, over logs and fallen trees, where there was scarcely a trace of road. I was feeble, and fainted twice on the way. We had no food. The brother who drove the team, tried to find some water; but there was none fit for use. He made efforts to obtain a little milk from the cows we met on the road; but they were too wild to be approached by a stranger.

As I was fainting with thirst, I thought of travelers perishing in the desert. Cool streams of water seemed to lie directly before me; but as we passed on they proved to be only an illusion. A goblet of water seemed just within my grasp. I eagerly reached out my hand to take it, but it was gone. My husband prayed for me that I might be sustained on that dreary journey. We could not understand why we should be left to this singular wandering in the wilderness.

We were never more pleased than when we came in sight of a little clearing on which was a log cabin, where we found the sister I have mentioned. She kindly welcomed us to her home, and provided us with refreshments, which were gratefully received. As we rested, I talked with the family and left them the little book. She gladly accepted it, and has preserved it until the present time.

For twenty-two years our wanderings on this journey have seemed indeed mysterious to us, but here we met quite a company who are now believers in the truth, and who date their first experience from the influence of that little book. The sister who so kindly administered to our wants is now, with many of her neighbors, rejoicing in the light of present truth and the family have worked their way from poverty to a competency in temporal things. We were sorry to be compelled to refuse the earnest entreaties of the sister and her friends to visit them and speak to the people.

We were interested in meeting quite a number of persons who had been

converted to the truth by visiting the Health Institute as patients. The institute affords a wide field for missionary labor which we fear few appreciate. True, earnest, faithful workers in this branch of the cause will achieve great results.

One sister who was upon the ground had been confined to her bed for several years, being unable to have the charge of her family. She had expended much means, suffering many things of many physicians, but was rather made worse than better. The family became embarrassed financially through the necessary expense attending long sickness. At last, she visited the Health Institute, and was greatly benefited. Though she was at first much prejudiced against the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, her connection with our people, a more intimate acquaintance with them, and a more thorough knowledge of their views, resulted in her embracing the truth. She has recovered health, and has been enabled to take the supervision of her family and endure great taxation. The beams of truth which she received have enlightened her mind and quickened her understanding, until she can say with the psalmist, "Oh, how love I thy law." The light which she and her husband have received, they let shine forth to others. The benefit she received from treatment at the Health Institute has induced many others to visit that institution, of whom quite a number have been led to embrace the truth through the influences which were thrown around them there.

Thus the work moves on. Numerous instances similar to this might be mentioned. The Judgment alone will reveal the great good accomplished by this branch of the work. It may be a powerful agent in the hands of God to bring many souls to the knowledge of the truth, if the workers connected with the institution are consecrated to God.

From the first, the conference meetings were good. There was a readiness to engage in devotional exercises, and the testimonies were characterized by fervor and an earnest determination to progress in the work of overcoming. Sabbath morning, the people were divided into three

companies, each with an appointed leader, and three social meetings were held simultaneously. All were interesting and profitable.

Sabbath afternoon, we spoke on the subject of Christ riding into Jerusalem. The word seemed to reach the hearts of the hearers, and after we closed the discourse, we invited those to come forward who felt that they were sinners, and those who felt that their lives were like the pretentious fig-tree, covered with leaves, but destitute of fruit. Four hundred responded to the invitation.

November 30, 1876

The Sabbath

In the years 1876, 1877, and 1878 Ellen White prepared the chapters for the two books, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volumes II and III, devoted to the "life, teachings and miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ" and to the work of the apostles. These volumes were published in 1877 and 1878. Being judged as matter suitable for the *Signs of the Times*, the missionary journal of the church, most of the content of these two books appeared in articles published from 1876 to 1879, in what at times appeared to be random selection. Some of the chapters appeared in article form even before their book publication.

The publication of these materials began with the issue of November 30, 1876, with an article entitled "The Sabbath," which would later appear as chapter 15 in *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume II. There is evidence that the author as she did her writing had in mind the dual publication, and chose phraseology with the non-Adventist readers in mind.

These articles are all listed in the tables of contents of the respective *Signs* volumes in which they appear, but to avoid duplication of matter currently available elsewhere, and to save space in these volumes of facsimile reprints, the articles are not here reproduced. The wording is identical with the book printings, either the original or in the currently available facsimile reprints.] White Trustees.

Nothing so distinguished the Jews from surrounding nations, and designated them as true worshipers of the Creator, as the institution of the Sabbath. Its observance was a continual visible token of their connection with God, and separation from other people. All ordinary labor for a livelihood or for worldly profit was forbidden upon the seventh day.

According to the fourth commandment the Sabbath was dedicated to rest and religious worship. All secular employment was to be suspended; but works of mercy and benevolence were in accordance with the purpose of the Lord. They were not to be limited by time nor place. To relieve the afflicted, and comfort the sorrowing is a labor of love that does honor to God's holy day.

The work of the priests in connection with the sacrificial offerings was increased upon the Sabbath, yet in their holy work in the service of God they did not violate the fourth commandment of the decalogue. As Israel separated from God, the true object of the Sabbath institution became less distinct in their minds. They grew careless of its observance, and unmindful of its ordinances. The prophets testified to them of God's displeasure in the violation of his Sabbath. Nehemiah says: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals."

And Jeremiah commands them: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers."

But they heeded not the admonitions of the inspired prophets, and departed more and more from the religion of their fathers. At length calamities, persecution, and bondage came upon them in consequence of their disregard of God's requirements.

Alarmed at these visitations of divine punishment, they returned to the strict observance of all the outward forms enjoined by the sacred law. Not satisfied with this, they made burdensome additions to those ceremonies. Their pride and bigotry led them to the narrowest interpretation of the

requirements of God. As time passed they gradually hedged themselves in with the traditions and customs of their ancestors, till they regarded them with all the sanctity of the original law. This confidence in themselves and their own regulations, with its attendant prejudice against all other nations, caused them to resist the Spirit of God, and separated them still farther from his favor.

Their exactions and restrictions were so wearisome that Jesus declared: "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders." Their false standard of duty, their superficial tests of piety and godliness, obscured the real and positive requirements of God. Heart service was neglected in the rigid performance of outward ceremonies. The Jews had so perverted the divine commandments, by heaping tradition upon tradition, that, in the days of Christ, they were ready to accuse him of breaking the Sabbath, because of his acts of mercy upon that day.

The grain was ready for the sickle when Jesus and his disciples passed through the corn fields on the Sabbath. The disciples were hungry, for their Master had extended his work of teaching and healing to a late hour, and they had been without food for a long time. They accordingly began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, rubbing them in their hands, in accordance with the law of Moses, which provides that: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing corn."

But spies were continually upon the track of Jesus, watching for some occasion to accuse and condemn him. When they saw this act of the disciples, they immediately complained to him, saying, "Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day." In this they expressed their own narrow views of the law. But Jesus defended his followers thus: "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was a hungered, he, and they that were with him? how he went into the

house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

If excessive hunger excused David for violating even the holiness of the sanctuary, and made his act guiltless, how much more excusable was the simple act of the disciples in plucking the grain and eating it upon the Sabbath day. Jesus would teach his disciples and his enemies that the service of God was first of all; and, if fatigue and hunger attended the work, it was right to satisfy the wants of humanity, even upon the Sabbath day. That holy institution was not given to interfere with the needs of our being, bringing pain and discomfort, instead of blessing. "The Sabbath was made for man," to give him rest and peace, and remind him of the work of his Creator, not to be a grievous burden.

The work done in the temple upon the Sabbath was in harmony with the law; yet the same labor, if employed in ordinary business, would be a violation of it. The act of plucking and eating the grain to sustain the bodily strength, to be used in the service of God, was right and lawful. Jesus then crowned his argument by declaring himself the "Lord of the Sabbath,"--One above all question and above all law. This Infinite Judge acquits the disciples from blame, appealing to the very statutes they are accused of violating.

But Jesus did not let the matter drop without administering a rebuke to his enemies. He declared that in their blindness they had mistaken the object of the Sabbath. Said he: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." He then contrasted their many heartless rites with the truthful integrity, and tender love that should characterize the true worshipers of God: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-

offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against me."

Jesus was reared among this people, so marked with bigotry and prejudice; and he therefore knew that in healing upon the Sabbath day, he would be regarded as a transgressor of the law. He was aware that the Pharisees would seize upon such acts with great indignation, and thereby seek to influence the people against him. He knew that they would use these works of mercy as strong arguments to affect the minds of the masses, who had all their lives been bound by the Jewish restrictions and exactions. Nevertheless he was not prevented by this knowledge from breaking down the senseless wall of superstition that barricaded the Sabbath, and teaching men that charity and benevolence were lawful upon all days.

He entered the synagogue, and saw there a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees watched him, eager to see what he would do with regard to this case--whether or not he would heal the man upon the Sabbath day. Their sole object was to find cause for accusation against him. Jesus looked upon the man with the withered hand, and commanded him to stand forth. He then asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored whole as the other."

He justified this work of healing the paralytic, as in perfect keeping with the principles of the fourth commandment. But they questioned him: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" Jesus made them the clear and forcible answer, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."

The spies upon our Saviour's words dared not, in the presence of the multitude, answer this question for fear of involving themselves in difficulties. They knew that while they would leave men to suffer and die rather than to violate their traditions by relieving them upon the Lord's day, a brute which had fallen into danger would be at once relieved, because of the loss that would accrue to the owner if he was neglected. Thus the dumb animal was exalted above man, made in the image of God.

Jesus wished to correct the false teachings of the Jews in regard to the Sabbath and also to impress his disciples with the fact that deeds of mercy were lawful on that day. In the matter of healing the withered hand he broke down the custom of the Jews, and left the fourth commandment standing as God had given it to the world. By this act he exalted the Sabbath, sweeping away the senseless restrictions that encumbered it. His act of mercy did honor to the day, while those who complained of him, were, by their many useless rites and ceremonies, themselves dishonoring the Sabbath.

There are ministers today who teach that the Son of God broke the Sabbath and justified his disciples in doing the same. They take the same ground as did the caviling Jews, although ostensibly for another purpose, since they hold that Christ abolished the Sabbath.

Jesus in turning upon the Pharisees with the question whether it was lawful to do good upon the Sabbath day or evil, to save life or to kill, confronted them with their own wicked purposes. They were following upon his track to find occasion for falsely accusing him; they were hunting his life with bitter hatred and malice, while he was saving life and bringing happiness to many hearts. Was it better to slay upon the Sabbath, as they were planning to do, than to heal the afflicted as he had done? Was it more righteous to have murder in the heart upon God's holy day, than love to all men which finds expression in deeds of charity and mercy?

August 9, 1877

Missionary Work at Home

Many are ever restless and disappointed, seeking for some greater work than that which now occupies them. Some mothers long to engage in missionary labor, while they neglect the simplest duties lying directly in their path. The children are neglected, the home is not made cheerful and happy for the family, scolding and complaining are of frequent occurrence, and the young people grow up feeling that home is the most uninviting of all places. As a consequence, they impatiently look forward to the time when they shall leave it, and it is with little reluctance that they launch out into the great world, unrestrained by home influence, and the tender counsel of the hearth-stone.

The parents, whose aim should have been to bind these young hearts to themselves, and guide them aright, squander their God-given opportunities, are blind to the most important duties of their lives, and vainly aspire to work in the broad missionary field.

As I have marked these unhappy, restless spirits, and deplored their power to shadow the lives of others, the thought would arise: What a fearful deception is upon them! How terrible a mistake they are making!

Some of this class pronounce the faithful Christian mother worldly, as they mark how attentive she is to the wants of her husband and children, how zealous in performing the sweet home duties. They sigh because of her lack of spirituality, thinking the labor wasted that goes to make home a place of comfort and happy rest. Their minds fail to understand how the performance of these humble tasks can satisfy the heart.

Jesus made the lowly paths of human life sacred by his example. For thirty years he was an inhabitant of Nazareth. His life was one of diligent industry. He, the Majesty of Heaven, walked the streets, clad in the simple garb of a common laborer. He toiled up and down the mountain steeps, going to and from his humble work. Angels were not sent to bear him on their pinions up the tiresome ascent, or to lend their strength in performing his lowly task. Yet when he went forth to contribute to the support of the family by his daily toil, he possessed the same power as when he wrought the miracle of feeding the five thousand hungry souls on the shore of Galilee.

But he did not employ his divine power to lessen his burdens or lighten his toil. He had taken upon himself the form of humanity with all its attendant ills, and he flinched not from its severest trials. He lived in a peasant's home, he was clothed in coarse garments, he mingled with the lowly, he toiled daily with patient hands. His example shows us that it is man's duty to be industrious, that labor is honorable.

His life, written upon the pages of history, should encourage the poor and the lowly to perform contentedly the humble duties of their lot. Honorable work has received the sanction of Heaven, and men and women may hold the closest connection with God, yet occupy the humblest position in life. Jesus was as faithfully fulfilling his mission when hiding his divinity with the humble occupation of a carpenter, as when employed in healing the sick, or walking upon the white-capped billows to the aid of his terrified disciples. Christ dignified the humble employments of life, by occupying a menial condition, that he might be able to reach the mass of mankind and exalt the race to become fit inmates for the paradise of God.

For a long time, Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, unhonored and unknown, that he might teach men how to live near God while discharging the humble duties of life. It was a mystery to angels that Christ, the Majesty of Heaven, should condescend, not only to take upon himself humanity, but to assume

its heaviest burdens and most humiliating offices. This he did in order to become like one of us, that he might be acquainted with the toil, the sorrows, and fatigue of the children of men, that he might be better able to sympathize with their distresses and understand their trials.

Those who divorce religion from their business are reproved by the example of Jesus. Hidden away among the hills of Nazareth, yet having such claims upon heaven that he could command the entire angel host, he was a simple carpenter, working for wages, and living a godly life in the face of all discouragements.

It requires much more grace and stern discipline of character to work for God in the capacity of mechanic, merchant, lawyer, or farmer, carrying the precepts of Christianity into the ordinary business of life, than to labor as an acknowledged missionary in the open field, where one's position is understood, and half its difficulties obviated by that very fact. It requires strong spiritual nerve and muscle to carry religion into the work-shop and business office, sanctifying the details of every-day life, and ordering every worldly transaction according to the standard of a Bible Christian.

Jesus, in his thirty years of seclusion at Nazareth, toiled and rested, ate and slept, from week to week and from year to year, the same as his humble contemporaries. He called no attention to himself as a marked personage, yet he was the world's Redeemer, the adored of angels, doing, all the time, his Father's work, living out a lesson that should remain for humanity to copy to the end of time.

This essential lesson of contented industry in the necessary duties of life, however humble, is yet to be learned by the greater portion of Christ's followers. If there is no human eye to criticise our work, nor voice to praise or blame, it should be done just as well as if the Infinite One himself were personally to inspect it. We should be as faithful in the minor details of our

business, as we would in the larger affairs of life.

God is testing and proving us by our daily lives, watching the development of our characters, weighing our moral worth. Those who slight the spirit of the word of God in their business life, as carpenters, lawyers, and merchants, are unfaithful in matters of eternal interest, since it is the life that indicates the spiritual advancement, and registers upon the Book of God the unchangeable figures of the future. The angels are mournfully inscribing a fearful record of slighted duties and neglected opportunities against many who make exalted professions. Those who are unfaithful in little things, cannot be entrusted with the true riches of the kingdom.

August 16, 1877

Home Adornment

Many are unhappy in their home life, because they are trying so hard to keep up appearances. They expend largely of means, and labor unremittingly to gain the praise of their associates--those who really care nothing for them or their prosperity. One article after another is considered indispensable to the household appointments, until many expensive additions are made that, while giving a momentary satisfaction to the eye, do not increase the comfort of the family one whit. At the same time, all these things have taxed the strength and patience, and consumed valuable time which might be expended in the service of the Lord.

The precious grace of God is made secondary to matters of no real importance, and while collecting material for enjoyment, they lose the capacity for happiness. They find that their possessions fail to give the satisfaction they had hoped to derive from them. This endless round of labor, and unceasing anxiety to embellish the home for visitors and strangers to admire, never pays for the time and means thus expended. It is hanging about the neck a yoke of bondage grievous to be borne.

In many households, there are four walls and costly furniture, velvet carpets and plate glass mirrors; and this place is wrongly named Home. That sacred work does not belong to the glittering mansion, where the joys of domestic life are unknown. There are spacious parlors, closed from the sweet sunshine and the life-giving air, for fear those choicest gifts of Heaven might tarnish the furniture and fade the carpets. Sunless and damp, these rooms are unlighted and unheated save when visitors are to be entertained. Then the doors are thrown open, and the treasures, too precious for the use and comfort of the family, are devoted to unsympathizing acquaintances.

These rooms are altogether too fine for every-day use, and above all, the children must be strictly excluded from their precincts, for fear of soiling the furniture or curtains. In fact, the children are the last thought of in such a home. They are utterly neglected by the mother, whose whole time is devoted to keeping up appearances. Their minds are untrained, they acquire bad habits, and become restless and dissatisfied. Finding no pleasure in their own homes, but only uncomfortable restrictions, they choose to break away from the household as soon as possible. It does not require expensive furniture and costly tapestry to make children contented and happy in their homes; but it is necessary that the parents give them tender love and careful attention. It is for the parents to take the lead in habits of simplicity, drawing their children from the artificial to the natural life, and binding them to their hearts by the silken cords of affection. Gentle manners, cheerful conversation and loving words, will make home more attractive than any ornaments that can be bought or sold.

There are but few true fathers and mothers in this age of the world, and this is on account of the artificial lives we lead more than from any other cause. We should not be so anxious for external appearances, but labor more for practical comfort throughout every room in the house. Less parade in the parlor, and more time devoted to the training of the children, and to the preparation of simple, wholesome food, and to the general economy and comfort of the household, would make happy hearts and pleasant faces in the home. We should live less for the outside world, and more for members of our own family circle. There should be less display of superficial politeness and affectation toward strangers and visitors, and more of the courtesy that springs from genuine love and sympathy toward the dear ones of our own firesides.

The very best part of the house, and the most comfortable furniture, should be for the use of the family, for the comfort of those who really live

in the house. Such a home would be most attractive to that class of friends who really care for us, whom we could benefit, and by whom we could be benefited. But those guests who are attracted to us by the prospect of sumptuous dinners, and an extravagant luxury of style, are not the ones whose companionship will improve our minds or hearts. We have no moral right to lavish time and bounty upon such visitors, while our precious God-given children are suffering gross neglect.

But it is so flattering to the pride of some persons to exhibit a certain style of living for the benefit of occasional guests that they are willing to sacrifice the daily peace and comfort of life for this empty gratification. The gorgeously embellished mansions, costly furniture and carpets, the toil in serving up dishes for epicurean appetites, the extravagant entertainments which swallow up thousands of dollars, and pompous equipages more for show than comfort, bring no peaceful contentment, because they have no connection with the real joys of life.

As these extravagances fail to satisfy their possessors, they blindly seek to remedy the failure by adding new luxuries, with greater dissatisfaction, and an increase of care and anxiety as a result. Decorations of dress and of houses do not make happy people; but the lowliest dwelling may be beautified, and the poorest family be made rich, by the possession of meekness, kindness, and love. Pleasant voices, gentle manners, and sincere affection that finds expression in all the actions, make even a hovel the happiest of homes, upon which the Creator looks with approbation, unto which angels are attracted, the inmates of which, though they have not "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel," have that which is far better, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price."

August 23, 1877

Home Thoughts

Life is a disappointment and a weariness to many persons because of the unnecessary labor with which they burden themselves in meeting the claims of custom. Their minds are continually harassed with anxiety as to supplying wants which are the offspring of pride and fashion. Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, strikes a direct blow at this engrossing care for the things of this world. He says, "take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'" All the efforts of humanity cannot approach the beauty of Nature. The simple flowers of the field put to shame the robes of royalty. And Fashion, with her endless changes and eccentricities, presents the very opposite of that simple loveliness with which the lilies of the field are clothed, and which Jesus declared exceeds the glory with which Solomon was arrayed.

The expense, the care, and labor, lavished on that which, if not positively injurious, is unnecessary, would go far toward advancing the cause of God if applied to a worthier object. People crave what are called the luxuries of life, and sacrifice health, strength, and means to obtain them. A lamentable spirit of rivalry is manifested among persons of the same class as to who shall make the greatest display in matters of dress and of household expenditure. The sweet word, Home is perverted to mean something with four walls, filled with elegant furniture and adornments, while its inmates are on a continual strain to meet the requirements of custom in the different departments of life.

It is necessary to give due regard to the clothing, to the table, and to the

pursuits by which we gain a livelihood; but there is danger of carrying this zeal to an extreme. In the days of Noah they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying, selling, and building, till the flood came and destroyed the people who had been so overzealous in the things of this world that they forgot God, and became abominable in his eyes. It was lawful for men to eat and drink, plant and build, marry and give in marriage, in the days of Noah; but the sin was in carrying these lawful things to extremes, to utterly fill their mind with them to the exclusion of all noble thoughts. Depravity, violence, and all manner of sin was the result. The great danger of these days is in devoting too much time to merely temporal matters, and making it the great aim of life to provide for the temporal wants, many of which are perverted and unnatural. In order to gratify a weak and sinful pride, people sacrifice comfort, peace, and the love of God.

Happiness is not found in empty show. The more simple the order of a well-regulated household, the happier will that home be. The courtesies of every-day life, and the affection that should exist between members of the same family, do not depend upon outward circumstances. Much of the restless longing and seeking for "that which profiteth not" is due to wrong training in youth. Each child in the family should have a part of the home burden to bear, and should be taught to perform his task faithfully and cheerfully. If the work is portioned out in this way, and the children grow up accustomed to bearing suitable responsibilities, no member of the household will be overburdened, and everything will move off pleasantly and smoothly in the home. A proper economy will be maintained, for each one will be acquainted with, and interested in, the details of the home.

In some families there is too much done. Neatness and order are essential to comfort, but these virtues should not be carried to such an extreme as to make life a period of unceasing drudgery, and to render the inmates of the home miserable. In the houses of some whom we highly esteem, there is a stiff precision about the arrangement of the furniture and

belongings that is quite as disagreeable as a lack of order would be. The painful propriety which invests the whole house makes it impossible to find there that rest which one expects in the true home. It is not pleasant, when making a brief visit to dear friends, to see the broom and the duster in constant requisition, and the time which you had anticipated enjoying with your friends in social converse, spent by them in a general tidying-up, and peering into corners in search of a concealed speck of dust or a cob-web. Although this may be done out of respect to your presence in the house, yet you feel a painful conviction that your company is of less consequence to your friends than their ideas of excessive neatness.

In direct contrast to such homes was one that we visited during the last summer. Here the few hours of our stay were not spent in useless labor, nor in doing that which could be done as well at some other time; but were occupied in a pleasant and profitable manner, restful alike to mind and body. The house was a model of comfort, although not extravagantly furnished. The rooms were all well lighted and ventilated and every one, including the bed-rooms, was furnished with an open grate that the occupants might enjoy the healthful warmth and glow of an open fire, which is of more real value than the most costly adornments. The parlors were not furnished with that precision which is so tiresome to the eye, but there was a pleasing variety in the articles of furniture. The chairs were mostly rockers or easy-chairs; not all of the same fashion, but adapted to the comfort of the different members of the family. There were low, cushioned rocking-chairs, and high, straight-backed ones; wide, capacious lounging-chairs, and snug little ones; there were also comfortable sofas; and all seemed to say, Try me, Rest in me. There were tables strewn with books and papers. All was neat and attractive, but without that precise arrangement that seems to warn all beholders not to touch anything for fear of getting it out of place.

The proprietors of this pleasant home were in such circumstances that they might have furnished and embellished their residence expensively, but

they had wisely chosen comfort rather than display. There was nothing in the house considered too good for general use, and the curtains and blinds were not kept closed to keep the carpets from fading and the furniture from tarnishing. The God-given sunlight and air had free ingress, with the fragrance of the flowers in the garden. The family were, of course, in keeping with the home; they were cheerful and entertaining, doing everything needful for our comfort, without oppressing us with so much attention as to make us fear that we were causing extra trouble. We felt that here was a place of rest. This was a Home in the fullest sense of the word.

The rigid precision which we have mentioned as being a disagreeable feature of so many homes is not in accordance with the great plan of Nature. God has not caused the flowers of the fields to grow in regular beds, with set borders, but he has scattered them like gems over the greensward, and they beautify the earth with their variety of form and color. The trees of the forest are not in regular order. It is restful to eye and mind to range over the scenes of nature, over forest, hill and valley, plain and river, enjoying the endless diversity of form and color, and the beauty with which trees, shrubs, and flowers, are grouped in nature's garden, making it a picture of loveliness. Childhood, youth, and age can alike find rest and gratification there.

This law of variety can be in a measure carried out in the home. There should be a proper harmony of colors, and a general fitness of things in the furnishing of a house; but it is not necessary to good taste that every article of furniture in a room should be of the same pattern in design, material, or upholstery; but, on the contrary, it is more pleasing to the eye that there should be a harmonious variety.

But whether the home be humble or elegant, its appointments costly or the reverse, there will be no happiness within its walls unless the spirit of its inmates is in harmony with the Divine will. Contentment should reign within the household.

August 30, 1877

The Duties of a Mother

The Christian mother, to a very great extent, has it within her power to secure to her children good constitutions, sound morals, and correct views of the duties and responsibilities of life. Thousands of mothers are today ignorant of the laws of health and morality, and utterly reckless in the management of their children. Thousands are ruined for life and rendered worthless to society through neglect of proper training in early youth. A failure of health prevents the cultivation and development of the mental faculties, the talents lie dormant in consequence, and the world loses the benefit of them. A knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of nature would have preserved the healthful action of body and mind and given to humanity the blessing of many a life now wasted in uselessness. Through the inefficiency of parents, much good is lost, to the world, and God is robbed of the glory he should receive through the proper direction of youthful talent and energy.

Mothers are not thoroughly qualified to discipline and educate the minds of the young, unless they have that knowledge of God by which they can conscientiously train their children for the highest usefulness in this life and for the future immortal life. In the education of her children, the mother needs the wisdom which God alone can give her. She also needs health and its accompaniment of calm nerves, clear judgment, and sound reasoning powers. She will then have decision as well as gentleness, firmness as well as love, and will be able to hold the reins of guidance with a firm yet patient hand. She should cultivate that quiet dignity and independence of character which is necessary to her sacred life-work, and the proper conducting of her household. The customs and habits of the world in regard to the training of children should not turn a Christian mother from her course. In no case

should she sacrifice her ideas of right because she sees many mothers yielding their scruples in order to gratify the inclinations of their children for questionable amusements, idleness, or a style of dress calculated to foster vanity and injure the health.

Indulgence of wrong desires and gratification of the animal passions are the order of the day in this age of the world. Youth is surrounded with the fascinations of pleasure and the seductive temptations of sin. For these reasons a great and important responsibility rests upon the Christian mother. It is hers, in a measure, to rectify the growing evils of the world by rearing her children in such a manner that they will take a firm stand for the right and cast their influence on the side of virtue. But the mother who submits her God-given womanhood to the slavery of fashion wastes, in useless labor and frivolity, time and energy which should be devoted to her sacred calling. She cannot feel a sense of her solemn responsibility to God and humanity. Satan has invented manifold temptations to divert the minds of mothers from their most important work. The matter of dress holds the larger share of women in the veriest bondage. The study of fashion-plates is pursued with untiring zeal, and is followed up by an endless round of cutting, fitting, stitching, ruffling, pointing, and plaiting, to arrange for vain display. All this costs time, money, and concentration of mind, for which no equivalent is returned. The mental powers are dwarfed for want of proper cultivation, and wretchedly abused by being almost wholly bent upon the object of preparing raiment for the body, while their children are on the way to ruin.

Many mothers are much more concerned as to the dress and adornment of their children than they are for their behavior and the proper direction of their minds. They will spend precious time in ruffling and trimming the garments of their little ones, while those who are to wear them are running in the streets, subject to the influence of vile associates and breathing in the atmosphere of vice. The hours that should be devoted to prayerful communion with them and a careful superintendence of their employments

and amusements are worse than wasted in ornamenting the little suits which will serve to add the evil of vanity to the faults already acquired. A mother who prizes the approval of God and who is controlled by heavenly influences will not dare to waste her precious time, strength, and money, in arranging her own and her children's dress to meet the claims of custom. Fashion-loving mothers are daily giving their children lessons in devotion to dress, which they will never unlearn in after life. They are sowing seeds in those tender minds which will ere long bear fruit. "Sad will the harvest be!" "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is the mother's duty constantly to educate her mind and heart for the grave duties devolving upon her, that she may successfully meet her increasing family cares. She should study the peculiarities in the temperaments of her children, and vary her discipline to suit their different dispositions; thus she will be able to mold their minds in the right shape. The usual management of children at the present time tends to weaken their moral power. They are allowed to be idle, and their active young minds, seeking employment, stumble into evil ways. They are not taught self-denial and prompt obedience, therefore they grow up selfish and incapable of taking of the earnest work of life. The example of most parents is demoralizing to the children, who naturally look to them for a pattern. If the parents are swept into the strong current of the world and follow its practices regardless of right or wrong, time or expense, certainly no better can be expected of their children. The lessons of precept and example given by parents to their children should tend to fit their characters for the higher, immortal life. They are thus qualified also for the greatest usefulness in this world. God has placed us here not to live for our own amusement, but to do good, to bless humanity, to prepare for heaven. Every violation of moral obligation, with its burden of result, must be met and accounted for hereafter.

Especially are the mother's moments priceless; her work will be tested in the solemn day of accounts. Then it will be found that many of the failures

and crimes of men and women have resulted from the ignorance and gross neglect of those whose duty it was to guide their childish feet in the right way. Then it will be found that many who have blessed the world with the light of genius and truth and holiness, owe the staunch principles and integrity that were the mainspring of their usefulness and success to the careful religious training of a praying Christian mother.

September 6, 1877

Proper Education

The importance of early educating the young to the practical duties of life cannot be over estimated. Many parents who are wealthy do not feel the importance of giving their children an education in practical duties, as well as in the sciences. They do not feel the necessity, for the good of their children's minds and morals, and for their future usefulness, of giving them a thorough understanding in useful labor. This is due their children, that, if misfortune should come, they could maintain noble independence, having a knowledge how to use their hands. If they have a capital of strength, they cannot be poor, even if they have not a dollar. Many, who in youth are in affluent circumstances, may be robbed of all their riches, with parents and brothers and sisters dependent upon them for sustenance. Then how important that the youth be educated to labor, that they may be prepared for any emergency. Riches are indeed a curse when the possessors let them stand in the way of their sons and daughters obtaining a knowledge of useful labor, that they may be qualified for practical life.

Those who are not compelled to labor, frequently do not have active exercise sufficient for physical health. Young men, for want of having their minds and hands employed in active labor, will acquire habits of indolence, and will frequently be obtaining, what is to be more dreaded, a street education, lounging about stores, smoking, drinking, and playing cards.

The young ladies will read and excuse themselves from active labor, because they are in delicate health. Their feebleness is generally the result of their lack of exercising the muscles. They may think they are too feeble to do housework, but will work at crochet and tatting, and preserve the delicate paleness of their hands and faces, while their care-burdened mothers toil hard

in washing and ironing their garments. These daughters transgress the fifth commandment. They do not honor their parents. But the mother is most to blame. She has indulged and excused her daughters from bearing their share of household duties, until work becomes distasteful to them, and they love, and enjoy, delicate idleness. They will eat, and sleep, and read novels, and talk of the fashions. Their lives are useless.

Poverty, in many cases, is a blessing; for it prevents youth and children from being ruined by inaction. The physical should be cultivated and properly developed, as well as the mental. The first and constant care of parents should be that their children may have firm constitutions that they may be sound men and women. It is impossible to attain this object without physical exercise. Children, for their own physical health and moral good, should be taught to work, even if there is no necessity as far as want is concerned. If they would have virtuous and pure characters, they must have the discipline of well-regulated labor, which will bring into exercise all the muscles. The satisfaction children will have in being useful, of denying themselves to help others, will be the most healthful pleasure they ever enjoyed. Why should the wealthy rob themselves and their dear children of this great blessing?

Parents, inaction is the greatest curse that ever came upon you. Your daughters should not be allowed to lie in bed late in the morning, sleeping away the precious hours lent them of God to be used for the best purpose, and for which they will have to give an account to God. The mother is doing her daughters great injury in bearing the burdens the daughters should share with her for their own present good and future benefit. The course many parents have pursued in allowing their children to be indolent, and to gratify a desire for reading romance, is unfitting them for real life. Novel and story-book reading are the greatest evils that youth can indulge in. Novel and love-story readers always fail to make good, practical mothers. They live in an unreal world. They are air castle builders, living in an imaginary world. They

become sentimental, and have sick fancies. Their artificial life spoils them for anything useful. They are dwarfed in intellect, although they may flatter themselves that they are superior in mind and manners. Exercise in household labor will be of the greatest advantage to young girls.

Physical labor will not prevent the cultivation of the intellect. Far from this. The advantages gained by physical labor will balance them, that the mind shall not be overworked. The toil will then come upon the muscles, and relieve the wearied brain. There are many listless, useless girls who consider it unladylike to engage in active labor. But their characters are too transparent to deceive sensible persons in regard to their real worthlessness. They will simper and giggle, and are all affectation. They appear as though they could not speak their words fairly and squarely, but torture all they say with lisping and simpering. Are these ladies? They were not born fools, but were educated such. It does not require a frail, helpless, overdressed, simpering thing to make a lady. A sound body is required for a sound intellect. Physical soundness and a practical knowledge in all the necessary household duties, are never a hindrance to a well-developed intellect, but highly important for a lady.

All the powers of the mind should be called into use, and developed, in order for men and women to have well-balanced minds. The world is full of one-sided men and women, because one set of the faculties are cultivated, while others are dwarfed from inaction. The education of most youth is a failure. They over-study, while they neglect that which pertains to practical business life. Men and women become parents without considering their responsibilities, and their offspring sinks lower in the scale of human deficiency than they themselves. Thus we are fast degenerating. The constant application to study, as the schools are now conducted, is unfitting youth for practical life. The human mind will have action. If it is not active in the right direction, it will be active in the wrong. And in order to preserve the balance of the mind, labor and study should be united.

A portion of the time each day should be devoted to labor, that the physical and mental may be equally exercised.

September 13, 1877

The Mother's Work

No work can equal that of the Christian mother. She takes up her work with a sense of what it is to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How often will she feel her burden's weight heavier than she can bear; and then how precious the privilege of taking it all to her sympathizing Saviour in prayer. She may lay her burden at his feet, and find in his presence a strength that will sustain her, and give her cheerfulness, hope, courage, and wisdom in the most trying hours. How sweet to the care-worn mother is the consciousness of such a friend in all her difficulties. If mothers would go to Christ more frequently, and trust him more fully, their burdens would be easier, and they would find rest to their souls.

Jesus is a lover of children. The important responsibility of training her children should not rest alone upon the mother. The father should act his part, uniting his efforts with those of the mother. As her children, in their tender years, are mostly under her guidance, the father should encourage and sustain the mother in her work of care by his cheerful looks and kind words. The faithful mother's labor is seldom appreciated. It is frequently the case that the father returns from his business to his home, bringing his cares and perplexities with him. He has no cheerful smile for home, and if he does not find everything for his accommodation, and to meet his ideas, he expresses his disappointment in a clouded brow and censoring words. He does not take into the account the care the mother must have had with the restless children, to keep everything moving smoothly. Her children must have her time and attention, if they are brought up, as the apostle directs, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The word of God should be judiciously brought to bear upon the

youthful minds, and be their standard of rectitude, correcting their errors, enlightening and guiding their minds, which will be far more effectual in restraining and controlling the impulsive temperament than harsh words, which will provoke to wrath. This training of children to meet the Bible standard will require time, perseverance, and prayer. This should be attended to if some things about the house are neglected.

Many times in the day is the cry of, Mother, mother, heard, first from one little troubled voice and then another. In answer to the cry, mother must turn here and there to attend to their demands. One is in trouble, and needs the wise head of the mother to free him from his perplexity. Another is so pleased with some of his devices he must have his mother see them, thinking she will be as pleased as he is. A word of approval will bring sunshine to the heart for hours. Many precious beams of light and gladness can the mother shed here and there among her precious little ones. How closely can she bind these dear ones to her heart, that her presence will be to them the sunniest place in the world. But frequently the patience of the mother is taxed with these numerous little trials, that seem scarcely worth attention. Mischievous hands and restless feet create a great amount of labor and perplexity for the mother. She has to hold fast the reins of self-control, or impatient words will slip from her tongue. She almost forgets herself time and again, but a silent prayer to her pitying Redeemer calms her nerves, and she is enabled to hold the reins of self-control with quiet dignity. She speaks with calm voice, but it has cost her an effort to restrain harsh words and subdue angry feelings, which, if expressed, would have destroyed her influence, which it would have taken time to regain.

The perception of children is quick, and they discern patient, loving tones from the impatient, passionate command, which dries up the moisture of love and affection in the hearts of children. The true Christian mother will not drive her children from her presence by her fretfulness and lack of sympathizing love. As the parents wish God to deal with them, so should

they deal with their children. Our children are only the younger members of the Lord's family, intrusted to us to educate wisely, to patiently discipline, that they may form Christian characters, and be qualified to bless others in this life, and enjoy the life to come.

Many parents do not strive to make a happy home for their children. The pleasantest rooms are closed for visitors. The pleasant face is put on to entertain visitors. Smiles are lavished upon those who do not prize them, while the dear members of the family are pining for smiles and affectionate words. A sunny countenance and cheerful, encouraging words will brighten the poorest home, and be as a talisman to guard the father and the children from the many temptations that allure them from the love of home to the dram-shop, or scenes of amusement which lead away from purity and morality.

But the work of making home happy does not rest upon the mother alone. Fathers have an important part to act. The husband is the house-band of the home treasures, binding by his strong, earnest, devoted affection the members of the household, mother and children, together in the strongest bonds of union. It is for him to encourage, with cheerful words, the efforts of the mother in rearing her children. The mother seldom appreciates her own work, and frequently sets so low an estimate upon her labor that she regards it as domestic drudgery. She goes through the same round day after day, week after week, with no special marked results. She cannot tell, at the close of the day, the many little things she has accomplished. Placed beside her husband's achievement, she feels that she has done nothing worth mentioning. The father frequently comes in with a self-satisfied air, and proudly recounts what he has accomplished through the day. His remarks show that now he must be waited upon by the mother, for she has not done much except take care of the children, cook the meals, and keep the house in order. She has not acted the merchant, bought nor sold; she has not acted the farmer, in tilling the soil; she has not acted the mechanic;--therefore she has

done nothing to make her weary. He criticises and censures and dictates as though he was the lord of creation. And this is all the more trying to the wife and mother, because she has become very weary at her post of duty during the day, and yet she cannot see what she has done, and is really disheartened. Could the veil be withdrawn, and father and mother see as God sees the work of the day, and see how his infinite eye compares the work of the one with that of the other, they would be astonished at the heavenly revelation. The father would view his labors in a more modest light, while the mother would have new courage and energy to pursue her labor with wisdom, perseverance and patience. Now she knows its value. While the father has been dealing with the things which must perish and pass away, the mother has been dealing with developing minds and character, working, not only for time, but for eternity. Her work, if done faithfully in God, will be immortalized.

The votaries of fashion will never see or understand the immortal beauty of that Christian mother's work, and will sneer at her old fashioned notions, and her plain, unadorned dress; while the Majesty of heaven will write the name of that faithful mother in the book of immortal fame.

November 29, 1877

The Mother's Duty--Christ her Strength

He who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," still invites the mothers to lead up their little ones to be blessed of him. Even the babe in its mother's arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the earnest faith of that praying mother. The first and most urgent duty which the mother owes to the Creator is to train the children which he has given her for the Saviour. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."

Infant children are a mirror for the mother, in which she may see reflected her own habits and deportment, and may trace even the tones of her own voice. How careful then should be her language and behavior in the presence of these little learners who take her for an example. If she wishes them to be gentle in manners and tractable, she must cultivate those traits in herself.

When children love and repose confidence in their mother, and have become obedient to her, they have been taught the first lessons in becoming Christians. They must be obedient to, and love and trust Jesus as they are obedient to, and love and trust their parents. The love which the parent manifests for the child in right training and in kindness faintly mirrors the love of Jesus for his children.

In view of the individual responsibility of mothers, every woman should develop a well-balanced mind and pure character, reflecting only the true, the good, and the beautiful. The wife and mother may bind her husband and children to her heart by an unremitting love, shown in gentle words and courteous deportment, which, as a rule, will be copied by her children.

Politeness is cheap, but it has power to soften natures which would grow hard and rough without it. Christian politeness should reign in every household. The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, and a willingness to do by others as we would like them to do by us, would annihilate half the ills of life. The principle inculcated in the injunction, "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another," is the corner-stone of the Christian character.

God designed that we should be tolerant of one another, that those of varied temperaments should be associated together, so that by mutual forbearance and consideration of one another's peculiarities, prejudices should be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Diversities of temperament and character are frequently marked in families; where this is the case there should be a mutual recognition of one another's rights. Thus all the members may be in harmony, and the blending of varied temperaments may be a benefit to all. Christian courtesy is the golden clasp which unites the members of the family in bonds of love, becoming closer and stronger every day.

Many a home is made very unhappy by the useless repining of its mistress, who turns with distaste from the simple, homely tasks of her unpretending domestic life. She looks upon the cares and duties of her lot as hardships, and that which, through cheerfulness, might be made not only pleasant and interesting, but profitable, becomes the merest drudgery. She looks upon the slavery of her life with repugnance, and imagines herself a martyr.

It is true that the wheels of domestic machinery will not always run smoothly; there is much to try the patience and tax the strength. But while mothers are not responsible for circumstances over which they have no control, it is useless to deny that circumstances make a great difference with mothers in their life-work. But their condemnation is when circumstances are

allowed to rule, and to subvert their principle, when they grow tired and unfaithful to their high trust, and neglect their known duty.

The wife and mother who nobly overcomes difficulties, under which others sink for want of patience and fortitude to persevere, not only becomes strong herself in doing her duty, but her experience in overcoming temptations and obstacles qualifies her to be an efficient help to others, both by words and example. Many who do well under favorable circumstances seem to undergo a transformation of character under adversity and trial; they deteriorate in proportion to their troubles. God never designed that we should be the sport of circumstances.

Very many husbands and children who find nothing attractive at home, who are continually greeted by scolding and murmuring, seek comfort and amusement away from home, in the dram-shop, or in other forbidden scenes of pleasure. The wife and mother, occupied with her household cares, frequently becomes thoughtless of the little courtesies that make home pleasant to the husband and children, even if she avoids dwelling upon her peculiar vexations and difficulties in their presence. While she is absorbed in preparing something to eat or to wear, the husband and sons go in and come out as strangers.

While the mistress of the household may perform her outward duties with exactitude she may be continually crying out against the slavery to which she is doomed, and exaggerate her responsibilities and restrictions by comparing her lot with what she styles the higher life of woman, and cherishing unsanctified longings for an easier position, free from the petty cares and exactions that vex her spirit. She little dreams that in that widely different sphere of action to which she aspires trials full as vexatious, though perhaps of a different sort, would certainly beset her. While she is fruitlessly yearning for a different life she is nourishing a sinful discontent, and making her home very unpleasant for her husband and children.

The true wife and mother will pursue an entirely opposite course from this. She will perform her duties with dignity and cheerfulness, not considering that it is degrading to do with her own hands whatever is necessary for her to do in a well-ordered household. If she looks to God for her strength and comfort, and in his wisdom and fear seeks to do her daily duty, she will bind her husband to her heart, and see her children coming to maturity, honorable men and women, having moral stamina to follow the example of their mother.

There is no chance work in this life; the harvest will determine the character of the seed that has been sown. Mothers may neglect present opportunities, and let their duties and burdens fall upon others, but their responsibility remains the same, and they will reap in bitterness what they have sown in carelessness and neglect.

Mothers, you are developing character. Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you in love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers, and render you the assistance which you need in your life-work. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith and charity are the elements of the Christian character. These precious graces are the fruits of the Spirit. They are the Christian's crown and shield. The highest day-dreaming and most exalted aspirations can aim at nothing higher. Nothing can give more perfect content and satisfaction. These heavenly attainments are not dependent upon circumstances, nor the will or imperfect judgment of man. The precious Saviour, who understands our heart-struggles and the weakness of our natures, pities, and forgives us our errors, and bestows upon us the graces which we earnestly desire.

Jesus knows the burdens of every mother's heart. He is her best friend in every emergency. His everlasting arms support the God-fearing, faithful mother. That Saviour who, when upon earth, had a mother that struggled

with poverty and privation, having many anxious cares and perplexities in rearing her children, sympathizes with every Christian mother in her labors, and hears her earnest prayers. That Saviour who went a long journey for the purpose of relieving the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman whose daughter was possessed by a devil, will do as much for the afflicted mother of today, in blessing her children, as he did for the suppliant in that case.

He who gave back to the widow her only son, as he was being carried to the burial, is touched today by the woe of the bereaved mother. He who gave back to Mary and Martha their buried brother, who wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, who pardoned Mary Magdalene, who remembered his mother, when he was hanging in agony upon the cross, who appeared to the weeping women after his resurrection, and made them his messengers to preach a risen Saviour saying, "Go tell my disciples that I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God," is woman's best friend today, and ready to aid her in her need if she will trust him.

If Jesus is woman's friend and helper, the husband, and father of her children, should never feel it beneath his dignity to encourage and sympathize with the mother in her cares, and assist in bearing her burdens. He should feel the sin and littleness of adding to her trials by bitter words. He should be liberal-minded and generous toward her, not watching with a critic's eye every little neglect on her part, or failure to meet his peculiar ideas.

Christ respected and honored woman. There is not an instance in his entire life wherein by word or act he gave the least encouragement to speak or think disparagingly of woman, or gave the impression that she was not to be respected and honored equally with man. The Majesty of Heaven is not a stranger to the troubles that perplex the mother, or the burdens that weigh upon her aching heart.

In order to be a good wife and mother it is not necessary that the woman's nature should be utterly merged into that of her husband. Every individual being has a life distinct from all others, an experience differing essentially from theirs. God does not want our individuality lost in another's; he desires that we shall possess our own characters, softened and sanctified by his sweet grace.

He wants to hear our words fresh from our own hearts, and not another's. He wants our yearning desires and earnest cries to ascend to him, marked by our own individuality. All do not pass through the same exercises of mind, and God calls for no second-hand experience. Our compassionate Redeemer reaches his helping hand to us just where we are. Though Jesus has ascended to Heaven he has not lost his sympathy for you, mothers, but looks with tender love upon those whom he came to redeem.

December 6, 1877

Home Duties of the Father

While we have dwelt upon the importance of the mother's work and mission, we would not lightly pass over the duty and responsibility of the husband and father in the training of his children. His efforts should be in harmony with those of the God-fearing mother. He should manifest his love and respect for her as the woman he has chosen and the mother of his children.

Many husbands do not sufficiently understand and appreciate the cares and perplexities which their wives endure, generally confined all day to an unceasing round of household duties. They frequently come to their homes with clouded brows, bringing no sunshine to the family circle. If the meals are not on time, the tired wife, who is frequently housekeeper, nurse, cook, and housemaid, all in one, is greeted with fault-finding. The exacting husband may condescend to take the worrying child from the weary arms of its mother that her arrangements for the family meal may be hastened; but if the child is restless, and frets in the arms of its father, he will seldom feel it his duty to act the nurse, and seek to quiet and soothe it. He does not pause to consider how many hours the mother has endured the little one's fretfulness, but calls out impatiently, "Here, mother, take your child." It is not his child as well as hers? Is he not under a natural obligation to patiently bear his part of the burden of rearing his children?

In most families there are children of various ages, some of whom need not only the attention and wise discipline of the mother, but also the sterner, yet affectionate, influence of the father. Few fathers consider this matter in its due importance. They fall into neglect of their own duty, and thus heap grievous burdens upon the mother, at the same time feeling at liberty to

criticise and condemn her actions according to their judgment. Under this heavy sense of responsibility and censure, the poor wife and mother often feels guilty and remorseful for that which she has done innocently or ignorantly, and frequently when she has done the very best thing possible under the circumstances. Yet when her wearisome efforts should be appreciated and approved, and her heart made glad, she is obliged to walk under a cloud of sorrow and condemnation, because her husband, while ignoring his own duty, expects her to fulfill both her own and his to his satisfaction, regardless of preventing circumstances.

He feels that his wife belongs to him, and is subject to his order and dictation, and liable to fall under his disapprobation. Who gives him this right of dictation and condemnation? Does the law of God, which commands him to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself? Does he find it among the injunctions of the apostles, who exhort: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them"? No, there is no moral or religious defense for such an unjust authority.

Domestic duties are sacred and important, yet they are often attended by a weary monotony. The countless cares and perplexities become irritating, without the variety of change and cheerful relaxation, which the husband and father frequently has it in his power to grant her if he chose, or rather if he thought it necessary or desirable to do so. The life of a mother in the humbler walks of life is one of unceasing self-sacrifice, made harder if the husband fails to appreciate the difficulties of her position, and to give her his support.

But to return to the father who has so unconcernedly resigned the fretful child to its mother. How is his time employed while she is doing the double duty of preparing the meal and quieting the child? Frequently he may be seen, his feet elevated to a level with his head, reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar. Tobacco, then, is his solace. There are his children, of various ages, and of restless, nervous temperament, transmitted to them by

the tobacco or liquor-using father. But, after giving those children their stamp of character by his own morbid appetite and selfish indulgence, he shirks the responsibility of training them, and of correcting the faults which they have received as a legacy from him.

Fathers should unbend from their false dignity, deny themselves, some slight self-gratification in time and leisure, in order to mingle with the children, sympathizing with them in their little troubles, binding them to their hearts by the strong bonds of love, and establishing such an influence over their expanding minds that their counsel will be regarded as sacred.

The average father wastes many golden opportunities to attract and bind his children to him. Upon returning home from his business he should find it a pleasant change to spend some time with his children. He may take them into the garden, and show them the opening buds, and the varied tints of the blooming flowers. Through such mediums he may give them the most important lessons concerning the Creator, by opening before them the great book of nature, where the love of God is expressed in every tree, and flower, and blade of grass. He may impress upon their minds the fact that if God cares so much for the trees and flowers, he will care much more for the creatures formed in his image. He may lead them early to understand that God wants children to be lovely, not with artificial adornment, but with beauty of character, the charms of kindness and affection, which will make their hearts bound with joy and happiness.

Parents may do much to connect their children with God by encouraging them to love the things of nature which he has given them, and to recognize the hand of the Giver in all they receive. The soil of the heart may thus early be prepared for casting in the precious seeds of truth, which in due time will spring up and bear a rich harvest. Fathers, the golden hours which you might spend in getting a thorough knowledge of the temperament and character of your children, and the best method of dealing with their young minds, are too

precious to be squandered in the pernicious habit of smoking, or in lounging about the dram-shop.

The indulgence of this poisonous stimulant disqualifies the father to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The directions given by God to the children of Israel were that the fathers should teach their children the statutes and precepts of his law, when they rose up, and when they sat down, when they went out, and when they came in.

This commandment of God is too little heeded; for Satan, through his temptations, has chained many fathers in the slavery of gross habits, and hurtful appetites. Their physical, mental, and moral powers are so paralyzed by these means that it is impossible for them to do their duty toward their families. Their minds are so besotted by the stupefying influences of tobacco or liquor that they do not realize their responsibility to train their children so that they may have moral power to resist temptation, to control appetite, to stand for the right, not to be influenced to evil, but to wield a strong influence for good.

Parents by a sinful indulgence of perverted appetite often place themselves in a condition of nervous excitability or exhaustion, where they are unable to discriminate between right and wrong, to manage their children wisely, and to judge correctly their motives and actions. They are in danger of magnifying little matters to mountains in their minds, while they pass lightly over grave sins. The father who has become a slave to abnormal appetite, who has sacrificed his God-given manhood to become a tobacco inebriate, cannot teach his children to control appetite and passion. It is impossible for him to thus educate them either by precept or example. How can the father whose mouth is filled with tobacco, whose breath poisons the atmosphere of home, teach his sons lessons of temperance and self-control? With what dignity can he exhort them to shun the wine-cup, when he himself has fallen beneath the tempter's power, and is bound by an appetite that has

no foundation in nature? He is in no condition to rouse moral courage and independence in the young.

When we approach the youth who are acquiring the habit of using tobacco, and tell them of its pernicious influence upon the system, they frequently fortify themselves by citing the example of their fathers, or that of certain Christian ministers, or good and pious members of the church. They say, "If it does them no harm, it certainly cannot injure me." What an account will professed Christian men have to render to God for their intemperance! Their example strengthens the temptations of Satan to pervert the senses of the young by the use of artificial stimulants; it seems to them not a very bad thing to do what respectable church-members are in the habit of doing. But it is only a step from tobacco using to liquor-drinking; in fact the two vices usually go together.

Thousands learn to be drunkards from such influences as these. Too often the lesson has been unconsciously taught them by their own fathers. A radical change must be made in the heads of families before much progress can be made in ridding society of the monster of intemperance.

If tobacco is what it is often claimed to be, a nerve-quieter, instead of a nerve-paralyzer; if it is such a solace to men that they require it just before eating, just after eating, and most of the time between; if it is so great a comforter that large amounts should be expended upon it, and many hours of precious time devoted to indulging in its use,--then why should not women use it? Would it not be as beneficial to them as to their fathers, husbands and brothers? Women have cares and perplexities to soothe, and, viewed from the standpoint of the tobacco inebriate, they are sustaining great loss, and practicing a useless self-denial, in refraining from the luxury which affords their husbands and sons so much comfort and strength.

If men cannot maintain their energy and spirits without this stimulus,

what martyrdom do women constantly practice in letting it alone! The very fact that women do live and bear the heaviest burdens of mind and body without its aid, and that the best men conscientiously refrain from using it, is evidence that tobacco-using is a necessity to no one, but simply a habit which enslaves its victim in a terrible bondage.

God forbid that woman should degrade herself to the use of a filthy and besotting narcotic. How disgusting is the picture which one may draw in the mind, of a woman whose breath is poisoned by tobacco. One shudders to think of little children twining their arms about her neck, and pressing their fresh, pure lips to that mother's lips, stained and polluted by the offensive fluid and odor of tobacco. Yet the picture is only more revolting because the reality is more rare than that of the father, the lord of the household, defiling himself with the disgusting weed. No wonder we see children turn from the kiss of the father whom they love, and if they kiss him seek not his lips, but his cheek or forehead, where their pure lips will not be contaminated.

December 20, 1877

Noah's Time and Ours

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

In how short a time from the first sin of Adam did sin increase and spread like the leprosy. It is the nature of sin to increase. From generation to generation sin has spread like a contagious disease. Hatred of God's law, and as the sure result hatred of all goodness became universal. The world was in its infancy, yet after sin was first introduced it soon became fearful in its proportions until it deluged the world. God who created man and gave him with an unsparing hand the bounties of his providence was slighted and despised by the recipients of his gifts. He was dishonored by the beings he had created. But notwithstanding sinful man forgot his benevolent Benefactor, God did not slight and turn away from him and leave him to perish in his violence and crime without setting before him his wickedness and the result of the transgression of his law. He sent him messages of warning and entreaty. He pointed out definitely his danger if he continued in his rebellion.

God, whom men had slighted and dishonored and whose gracious love and benevolence they had abused, still pitied the race and in his love provided a refuge for all who would accept it. He directed Noah to build an

ark and at the same time preach to the inhabitants of the world that God would bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy the wicked. If they would believe the message and prepare for that event by repentance and reformation they should find pardon and be saved. God did not remove his spirit from man without warning him of the sure result of his course in transgressing his law. He gave the message to Noah to be given to the people. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." A continual resistance and contempt of the entreaties and warnings from God through his servant Noah, would separate them from God, and the result would be infinite mercy and love would cease its pleadings. The Spirit of God continued to strive with rebellious man until the time of God had specified had nearly expired, when Noah and his family entered the ark and the hand of God closed the door of the ark. Mercy had stepped from the golden throne no longer to intercede for man.

Notwithstanding God was working to draw man to himself by the conviction of his Holy Spirit, man in his rebellion was drawing away from God, and continually resisting the pleadings of infinite love.

Noah stood up nobly in the midst of a world who were disregarding God and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to crimes and violence of every kind. Noah the faithful preacher of righteousness unflinchingly and courageously preached to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned that generation to repent, to believe the warning message and find refuge in the ark. What a spectacle to the world as Noah stands forth connected with God, by his obedience in contrast to the world. Numbers was not on the side of right. The world was arrayed against God's justice and his laws. Men of science and of philosophy used their talents and abilities to oppose the message of God. Satan, when tempting Eve to disobey God, said to her, "Ye shall not surely die." Great men, worldly, honored, and wise men, repeat the same story. "Ye shall not

surely die," and that God's threatenings are for the purpose of intimidating and will never be verified. You need not be alarmed, such an event as the world's being destroyed by God who made it, and punishing the beings he has made will never take place for this is not in accordance with science and philosophy. Be at peace, fear not, Noah is crazy, he is the wildest fanatic.

How simple and childlike amid the unbelief of the world, was the faith of Noah. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. His faith was perfected by his works. He gave to the world an example in believing just what God had said. He commenced under the directions of God to construct the ark, an immense boat, on dry ground. Multitudes came from every direction to see this strange sight, the ark, and to hear the earnest, fervent words of this singular man who seemed to believe every word he uttered. His message was to him a reality. A power attended the words of Noah, for it was the voice of God to man through his servant. Some were deeply convicted and would have heeded the words of warning, but there were so many to jest and ridicule the message of entreaty and warning to repentance that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, refused to reform, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are as reckless, and will go to such lengths in sin as those who have once had light, who have been convicted and resisted the Spirit of God. Amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, Noah distinguishes himself by his holy integrity and unwavering obedience. He is singular indeed. He was one in the world, but not one of the world. Noah made himself the object of contempt and ridicule by his steadfast adherence to the words of God. He obeyed God without a questioning doubt. What a marked contrast to the prevailing unbelief and universal disregard of God's law. While the voice of God, through Noah, is making itself heard in entreaties and warnings in condemnation of sin and iniquity, Satan was not asleep, he was mustering his forces. He engages his host with gigantic energies to make through his sophistry, cruelties and oppression the words of warning from the servant of

God of none effect. Evil seems to gain the day. Noah was tested and proved, opposition met him from the great men of the world, from philosophers and men of science, so-called, who tried to show him that his message could not be true; but his voice was not silenced, one hundred and twenty years the words of warning continued to be heard in earnest tones, and were sustained by his energetic work upon the ark. The world might have believed if they would. Had they believed the message of warning, and repented of their evil deeds and submitted to be obedient to God, the Lord would have turned aside his wrath as he did from Nineveh. God's Spirit was striving with the people to lead them to accept and believe the truth, but Satan's suggestions were also heeded, their own wicked hearts were more inclined to harmonize with the sophistry of the father of lies than with the pleadings of infinite love. They manifested their indifference and contempt of the solemn warnings of God in doing the same as they had done before the warning had been given. They continued their gluttonous feasts, their festivities, eating and drinking, planting and building, in reference to the advantage to be gained by them in the far future and they went to greater lengths in wickedness and defiant disregard of God's requirements to testify to one another that they had no fear of God and his commands.

In Noah's day all men were not in the fullest sense heathen idolaters. Many had a knowledge of God and of his law, but in their grand works of sculpture, in their works of art, they professed to be honoring God by representing him in the works of their own hands in the similitudes which they had made of God. These works of art were worshiped as God and the Creator was forgotten. The class who professed a knowledge of God were the ones who had the greatest influence and took the lead in making of none effect his word spoken to them by Noah. They not only rejected the message of the faithful preacher of righteousness themselves, but like their master the devil they sought every means in their power to prevent others from believing and being obedient to God. To every one comes their day of trial and of trust. While Noah was sounding the note of warning of the coming

destruction of that generation was their day of opportunity and privilege to become wise unto salvation. But they gave their minds to the control of Satan rather than God, and he deceived them as he did our first parents. He set before them darkness and falsehood in the place of light and truth. They accepted the sophistry and lies of Satan because the most acceptable to them, and the most in harmony with their corrupt lives, while truth, which would have saved them, was rejected as a delusion. Noah to them was regarded as a fanatic, and they did not humble their hearts before God, but continued their disobedience and wickedness the same as if God had not spoken to them through Noah. But Noah stood like a rock amidst the tempest. He was surrounded with every species of wickedness and moral corruption; yet his faith wavered not. Undaunted he stood, the faithful messenger of God amid the scoffs and jeers of the world, an unbending witness of God. His meekness and his righteousness was shining brightly in contrast to the revolting crimes, intrigue and violence continually practiced. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while his solemn warning voice for one hundred and twenty years fell upon the ears of the inhabitants of that generation in regard to events, which, as far as human wisdom was concerned, would be impossible to transpire. The world before the flood reasoned that for centuries the laws of nature had been fixed. The recurring seasons had come in their order. The rivers and brooks had never yet passed their boundaries, but had borne their waters safely to the proud sea. Fixed decrees had kept the waters from overflowing their banks. But these reasons did not recognize the Hand that had stayed the waters, saying, thus far shalt thou go and no farther. As time passed on without any apparent change in nature men began to be reassured whose hearts had trembled at times with fear. They felt secure in their unbelief. They reasoned then as men reason now, as though nature was above the God of nature, and her ways were so fixed that God himself could not change them, thus making in the minds of the world God's messages of warning a delusion, a grand deception, reasoning that if the message of Noah was correct nature would be turned out of her course of order.

The days of Noah, Christ tells us, were as the days prior to his appearing in the clouds of heaven. Noah's day prefigures the present age. The world's Redeemer, who knew best the history of the past, is the true prophet of the characters of the future. Human nature in Noah's day uninfluenced by the Spirit of God is the same in our age. Jesus in his assertions and representations recognizes Genesis as the words of inspiration. Many admit the New Testament to be divine, while they show no special regard for the Old Testament scriptures; but these two grand books cannot be divorced. Inspired apostles who wrote the New Testament are continually carrying back the minds of the searchers of Scriptures to the Old. Christ carries the minds of all generations, present and future, to the Old Testament. He refers to Noah as a literal person who lived; he refers to the flood as a fact in history; he shows the specification of that generation, as characteristics of this age. The Truth and Life has anticipated the questioning and doubts of men in regard to the Old Testament by pronouncing it divine.

December 20, 1877

Home Duties of the Father

Few fathers are fitted for the responsibility of training their children. They, themselves need strict discipline that they may learn self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. Until they possess these attributes they are not capable of properly teaching their children. What can we say to awaken the moral sensibilities of fathers, that they may understand and undertake their duty to their offspring? The subject is of intense interest and importance, having a bearing upon the future welfare of our country. We would solemnly impress upon fathers, as well as mothers, the grave responsibility they have assumed in bringing children into the world. It is a responsibility from which nothing but death can free them. True the chief care and burden rests upon the mother during the first years of her children's lives, yet even then the father should be her stay and counsel, encouraging her to lean upon his large affections, and assisting her as much as possible.

The father's duty to his children should be one of his first interests. It should not be, set aside for the sake of acquiring a fortune, or of gaining a high position in the world. In fact, those very conditions of affluence and honor frequently separate a man from his family, and cut off his influence from them more than anything else. If the father would have his children develop harmonious characters, and be an honor to him and a blessing to the world, he has a special work to do. God holds him responsible for that work. In the great day of reckoning it will be asked him: Where are the children that I intrusted to your care to educate for me, that their lips might speak my praise, and their lives be as a diadem of beauty in the world, and they live to honor me through all eternity?

In some children the moral powers strongly predominate. They have

power of will to control their minds and actions. In others the animal passions are almost irresistible. To meet these diverse temperaments, which frequently appear in the same family, fathers, as well as mothers, need patience and wisdom from the divine Helper. There is not so much to be gained by punishing children for their transgressions, as by teaching them the folly and heinousness of their sin, understanding their secret inclinations, and laboring to bend them toward the right.

The hours which many fathers spend in smoking should be improved in studying God's plan of government, and gathering lessons from those divine methods. The teachings of Jesus unfold to the father modes of reaching the human heart, and impressing upon it important lessons of truth and right. Jesus used the familiar objects of nature to illustrate and intensify his meaning. He drew lessons from every-day life, the occupations of men, and their dealing with one another.

The father should frequently gather his children around him, and lead their minds into channels of moral and religious light. He should study their different tendencies and susceptibilities, and reach them through the plainest avenues. Some may be best influenced through veneration and the fear of God; others through the manifestation of his benevolence and wise providence, calling forth their deep gratitude; others may be more deeply impressed by opening before them the wonders and mysteries of the natural world, with all its delicate harmony and beauty, which speak to their souls of Him who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all the beautiful things therein.

Children who are gifted with the talent or love of music many receive impressions that will be life-long, by the judicious use of those susceptibilities as the medium for religious instruction. They may be taught that if they are not right with God they are like a discord in the divine harmony of creation, like an instrument out of tune, giving forth discordant

strains more grievous to God than harsh, inharmonious notes are to their own fine musical ear.

Many may be reached best through sacred pictures, illustrating scenes in the life and mission of Christ. By this means truths may be vividly imprinted upon their minds, never to be effaced. The Roman Catholic church understands this fact, and appeals to the senses of the people through the charm of sculpture and paintings. While we have no sympathy for image worship, which is condemned by the law of God, we hold that it is proper to take advantage of that almost universal love of pictures in the young, to fasten in their minds valuable moral truths, to bind the gospel to their hearts by beautiful imagery illustrating the great moral principles of the Bible. Even so our Saviour illustrated his sacred lessons by the imagery found in God's created works.

It will not do to lay down an iron rule by which every member of the family is forced into the same discipline. It is better to exert a milder sway, and when any special lesson is required, to reach the consciences of the youth through their individual tastes, and marked points of character. While there should be a uniformity in the family discipline, it should be varied to meet the wants of different members of the family. It should be the parents' study not to arouse the combativeness of their children, not to excite them to anger and rebellion, but to interest them, and inspire them with a desire to attend to the highest intelligence and perfection of character. This can be done in a spirit of Christian sympathy and forbearance, the parents realizing the peculiar dangers of their children, and firmly, yet kindly, restraining their propensities to sin.

The parents, especially the father, should guard against the danger of their children learning to look upon him as a detective, peering into all their actions, watching and criticising them, ready to seize upon and punish them for every misdemeanor. The father's conduct upon all occasions should be

such that the children will understand that his efforts to correct them spring from a heart full of love for them. When this point is gained, a great victory is accomplished. Fathers should have a sense of their children's human want and weakness, and his sympathy and sorrow for the erring ones should be greater than any sorrow they can feel for their own misdeeds. This will be perceived by the corrected child, and will soften the most stubborn heart.

The father, as priest and house-band of the family circle, should stand to them as nearly in the place of Christ as possible--a sufferer for those who sin, one who, though guiltless, endures the pains and penalty of his children's wrongs, and, while he inflicts punishment upon them, suffers more deeply under it than they do.

But if the father exhibits a want of self-control before his children, how can he teach them to govern their wrong propensities? If he displays anger or injustice, or evidence that he is the slave of any evil habit, he loses half his influence over them. Children have keen perceptions, and draw sharp conclusions; precept must be followed by example to have much weight with them. If the father indulges in the use of any hurtful stimulant, or falls into any other degrading habit, how can he maintain his moral dignity before the watchful eyes of his children? If indulgence in the use of tobacco must be made an exception in his case, the sons may feel justified in taking the same license. And they may not only use tobacco because father does, but may gradually glide into the habit of taking intoxicating liquor on the plea that it is no worse to use wine or beer than tobacco. Thus, through the influence of the father's example, the son sets his feet in the path of the drunkard.

The dangers of youth are many. There are innumerable temptations to gratify appetite in this land of plenty. Young men in our cities are brought face to face with this sort of temptation every day. They fall under deceptive allurements to gratify appetite, without the thought that they are endangering health. The young frequently receive the impression that happiness is to be

found in freedom from restraint, and in the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures and self-gratification. This enjoyment is purchased at the expense of the physical, mental, and moral health, and turns to bitterness at last.

How important, then, that fathers look well after the habits of their sons, and their associates. And first of all he should see that no perverted appetite holds him in bondage, lessening his influence with his sons, and sealing his lips on the subject of self-indulgence in regard to hurtful stimulants.

Man can do much more for God and his fellow-man if he is in the vigor of health than if he is suffering from disease and pain. Tobacco-using, liquor-drinking, and wrong habits of diet, induce disease and pain which incapacitate man for the use he might be in the world. Nature, being outraged, makes her voice heard, sometimes in no gentle tones of remonstrance, in fierce pains and extreme debility. For every indulgence of unnatural appetite the physical health suffers, the brain loses its clearness to act and discriminate. The father, above all others, should have a clear, active mind, quick perceptions, calm judgment, physical strength to support him in his arduous duties, and most of all the help of God to order his acts aright. He should therefore be entirely temperate, walking in the fear of God, and the admonition of his law, mindful of all the small courtesies and kindnesses of life, the support and strength of his wife, a perfect pattern for his sons to follow, a counselor and authority for his daughters. He should stand forth in the moral dignity of a man free from the slavery of evil habits and appetites, qualified for the sacred responsibilities of educating his children for the higher life.

January 3, 1878

Noah's Time and Ours

The character of the people before the flood as given by the unerring pen of inspiration is explicit. And God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man for that he also is flesh. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Here the faithful historian with an inspired pen draws the portrait of Noah's day, when we are told that the heart of man was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

The nature of man unrenewed by grace is not changed in our day from what it was in Noah's time. Christ has said a similar state of things would be prior to his second coming as existed before the flood. In the days of Noah men followed the imagination of their own hearts, and the result was unrestrained crime and wickedness. The same state of things will exist in this age of the world. But will not some of the learned, the honored of the world, accept the message of warning in these last days? Will the world as a majority perish in the general impending ruin? How was it in Noah's day? as it was then Christ has said it should be. Of that vast population there was only eight persons who believed the message of Noah and obeyed God's word. In the world today the majority choose the broad road to death because the way of life is too narrow for them to walk in with their dishonesty, avarice, pride and iniquity. Now, as in the days of Noah, the overwhelming majority are opposed to the saving truth and are fascinated with lying fables.

Many now are convicted, and God's Spirit is striving with them, but they will not heed the invitations of mercy. Men who make high profession of wisdom and of godliness transgress the law of God without compunctions of conscience. One marked feature of Noah's day was the intense worldliness of the inhabitants. They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, not that these things were of themselves sins, but they were, although lawful in themselves, carried to a high degree of intemperance. The appetite was indulged at the expense of health and reason. This constant indulgence of their sinful desires corrupted them and defiled the earth under them. The same evils intensified exist in our world today. Men are blind to reason and the result of indulging perverted appetite. The world is the god of nine-tenths of professed Christians. The indulgence of appetite is carried to the greatest excess. Tobacco, wine, liquor and opium are added to the list of a feverish stimulating diet.

Professed followers of Christ are today eating and drinking with the drunken while their names stand in honored church records. The gratification of perverted appetite leads directly to the indulgence of unholy passions. Many feel under no moral obligation to curb the appetite or the base passions. They are slaves to perverted appetite. They are not living for the future life. They are rushing on as did the inhabitants of the world in Noah's day, living for this present existing world regardless that their deeds of the present every day life casts its shadow forward in the future, and the retribution will be in accordance with their works. They are as disobedient today in reference to God's laws as they were in Noah's time. While in the world they will not keep separate from its pollutions but will be of the world, notwithstanding God has expressly forbidden this union with the world.

As in Noah's day, philosophers and men of science see nature's laws but cannot carry their wisdom higher and see beyond these laws nature's Lawgiver. Wise worldly men seek to practically reason out or theorize in regard to nature without taking the God of nature into the account. Many will

resist God's warnings and array themselves against his law because their sinful life cannot harmonize with the pure principles of God's moral government. They consider it too hard work to reform their lives, therefore they endeavor to make the law of God meet their low standard of morals. It was God's purpose in sending Noah to warn the world that the people should see their sins and awaken to a sense of their crimes and great wickedness and be alarmed and fear and repent that God might pardon and save them.

As the time of Christ's second appearing draws near, the Lord sends his servants with a warning message to the world to prepare for that great event. As the world have been living in transgression of the law of God, in mercy he sends a message of warning to arouse their attention and hold before them the law of God as a mirror into which they can look and discover the defects in their moral character. If they will at once make earnest efforts to remedy these defects, by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, they will be pardoned through the merits of his blood, for this is the only hope of the transgressor of the law of God. But as in the days of Noah, there is with the majority a total disbelief of the testimony God has in mercy sent to warn the world of her coming destruction.

When Noah proclaimed the solemn message, yet an hundred and twenty years the judgments of God in a flood of water should destroy the world and its inhabitants, men would not receive it, so it is at the present time. Those who warn the transgressors of law to repent and turn to their allegiance for the Lawgiver is coming to punish the disobedient, will plead and entreat and warn the majority in vain. Peter describes the attitude of the world in reference to the last message: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being

overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

The men of Noah's time, in their philosophy and worldly wisdom, thought God could not destroy the world with a flood, for the waters of the ocean could not be sufficient for this. But God made the philosophy and science of men foolishness when the time had fully come to execute his word. The inspired pen describes the earth as standing out of the water and in the water. God had his weapons concealed in the bowels of the earth to compass her destruction. And when the great men and the wise men had reasoned before the world of the impossibility of its destruction by water, and the fears of the people were quieted, and all regarded Noah's prophecy as the veriest delusion, and looked upon Noah as a crazy fanatic, God's time had come. He hid Noah and his family in the ark, and the rain began to descend, slowly at first; the jeers and scoffings did not cease for a time, but soon the waters from heaven united with the waters of the great deep; the waters under the earth burst through the earth's surface, and the windows of heaven were opened, and man with all his philosophy and so-called science, finds that he had not been able in his worldly wisdom to comprehend God. He found too late that his wisdom was foolishness; that the Lawgiver is greater than the laws of nature. The hand of omnipotence is at no loss for ways and means to accomplish his purposes. He could reach into the bowels of the earth and call forth his weapons, waters there concealed, to aid in the destruction of the corrupt inhabitants of the old world. But let us all bear in

mind that those who perished in that awful judgment had an offer of escape.

The faithful Noah had spoken to them the words of God, assuring them if they would repent of their sins and believe the testimony of warning they might find a shelter in the ark and be saved from the destructive storm that was soon coming. As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. Water will never destroy the earth again, but the weapons of God are concealed in the bowels of the earth which he will draw forth to unite with the fire from heaven to accomplish his purpose in the destruction of all those who would not receive the message of warning and purify their souls in obeying the truth and being obedient to the laws of God. The voice of warning is now being heard inviting the people to escape and find refuge, not in the ark but in Jesus Christ. How will the warning be treated? Christ tells us just as it was received in the days of Noah. Thousands will deride the message of mercy and salvation, and turn aside, one to his merchandise, another to his farm, and give little or no attention to these things. They will be occupied with eating, drinking, and dressing, planting and building as in the days of Noah, as though no sound of alarm had ever saluted their ears.

The same reasoning will be heard today from worldly-wise men, from the unfaithful watchmen in the pulpits, "My Lord delayeth his coming, all things remain as they were from the beginning. You have no need to be alarmed, there is to be a thousand years of temporal millennium before Christ will come. All the world will be converted. Peace, peace; you should pay no regard to these fanatics, who are only alarmists." The world generally will despise prophecy and abuse those who speak to them the words of God, rebuking their sins and calling them to repentance. Timothy writes: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;

having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. What a picture is here drawn by the apostle in regard to the days, just prior to the coming of the Son of man." The millennial glory that is predicted by the false shepherds of today does not harmonize with the words of the inspired apostle. The question is asked, When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?

The deceived shepherds, deceiving their flocks in their turn, are the ones whose voices are heard prophesying the conversion of the world crying peace, and safety. The inspired apostle assures us we may look for wickedness to be continually increasing as the end approaches. The description given by Timothy of the sins to be found among those who have a form of godliness is sufficient to place the students of the Bible on their guard that they be not deceived in regard to the true state of things in our world by the syren songs of the sleepy shepherds crying peace and safety when destruction is just ready to burst upon the world. While Satan is working to quiet the fears and consciences of men, he is making his last master stroke to retain his power over a world which he sees is about to pass from his grasp--He has come down in great power working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His lying wonders will deceive many.

Philosophers and men of science will endeavor by their reasoning to show that the world cannot be destroyed by fire. They will plead that it is inconsistent with the laws of nature. But the God of nature, the maker and controller of nature, can use the works of his own hands to serve his purpose. Those who would be loyal to the God of heaven will not allow that interpretation of prophecy which will do away the force of the lesson God designed the prophecy should convey. As the contemporaries of Noah laughed to scorn that which they termed fear and superstition in the preacher of righteousness, so will the solemn messages of warning be ridiculed in our day.

January 17, 1878

Christ's Promises to the Disciples

The hearts of the disciples were troubled at the words of their Master who had said that all his faithful followers would be offended because of him that same night. In their affection and care for their Saviour it seemed to them a hard saying. Peter especially was grieved that Jesus should not accept his assurance of fidelity under all circumstances. But the Saviour knew the test that awaited his little flock, so soon to be left without a shepherd. He knew the agony that awaited him in the garden, that on the morrow he was to pass through the mockeries of a trial in the judgment hall, to be followed by his crucifixion. He knew that no sleep would refresh his weary frame until he closed his eyes in death.

But his loving heart was drawn out in sympathy for his disciples who were to endure a fearful trial in his betrayal and death upon the cross. The grief of the Son of God was not for himself but that his disciples were to be left without his presence to comfort and strengthen them. It had been impossible for them to comprehend the terrible scenes they were now entering upon, and their very ignorance of what was before them, notwithstanding his statements in regard to the future, moved the Saviour's compassionate heart. He read the peculiar character of each disciple, knowing who were in greatest danger of being overcome by temptation. But this knowledge did not bring one word of harshness or rebuke from his lips; their very weakness bound his companions to his heart in bonds of sympathy and love. His great anxiety was to shield his followers from suffering and from the abandonment of unbelief. He addressed them in these words:

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told

you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Doubting, questioning Thomas feels called upon to express his discouragement and unbelief: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus mildly and patiently instructed his doubting disciples in the way of life:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Jesus would have him understand that the Father had been revealed in the Son--in his teachings that reflected the wisdom of Heaven, and in his works that showed the power of Omnipotence.

Philip perceiving but dimly the meaning of his Lord said to him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Philip, and also the other disciples were filled with apprehension and doubt, and they desired that Jesus should give them a last convincing proof of his divinity by showing them the Father. Christ appeared in the disguise of humanity as a servant. But those who were partakers of his divine nature had eyes to perceive his divinity, the glory of which had upon special occasions, flashed through his human disguise, revealing indeed the Father. Sad indeed was it that one of his disciples who had been his companion, and witnessed his mighty works, had so failed to discern the character of his Saviour as to ask him for another sign. Jesus looked upon him with mild reproach:

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father,

and the Father in me or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

All that men were able to witness of God had been revealed to them in Christ, and had their spiritual perception been what it should have been they would have discerned in him the Father. Jesus, now about to remove his powerful presence from his disciples, promised that they should do greater works even than he had done. He was soon to stand by his Father's side as the Advocate of men, to plead in their behalf, and he promised to do whatsoever they should ask in his name, that the Father might be glorified in the Son. "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Precious promise to the needy and sorrowful. When the Spirit was afterward poured out upon the disciples wonderful results followed through the gifts which Christ had just promised them. He continued: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

Jesus had been the teacher and counselor of his disciples, their pitying friend. Now, when about to leave them, he assured them that he would in no case forsake them, but would be clothed with power, and would become their Friend and Advocate in the presence of the Father, to present any petition they might offer in the name of his Son. He promised them a comforter when his personal presence was taken from them. The disciples did not

comprehend at the time, the full meaning of their Master's words; but afterward, in their religious experience, they cherished the precious promise and presented their petitions to the Father in the name of Jesus.

That promise given by Jesus to his disciples was for the benefit of all who should comply with the conditions of Christ to the end of time. God is omnipotent, and man may be strong to accomplish his purpose while he has the promise of divine help in every emergency. God's power is hidden from the unbelieving; his ways and purposes are not understood by them. "The world knoweth him not." But mighty victories are gained through the prayers of the obedient children of God, presented in the name of Jesus. The secret of the success of the people of God is connection with him in prayer, and humble obedience of his requirements. Jesus urged upon his disciples the necessity of obeying the commandments he had given them if they would abide in his love. The comfort promised to his followers was on this condition.

God's blessing was never withheld from his obedient people. The wrath of God was brought upon the Jews by their disobedience of his law. Many persons contrast the freedom found in Christ with what they regard as the severe requirements of the law of God. Their words and example say to the world, Christ is so lenient and forgiving that we need not be particular to keep to the strict letter of the law. They slide away from their allegiance in a loose reckless manner, doing the works of Satan, while professing to love the Lord. Yet Jesus positively declared in his last conversation with his disciples, that those who love him will keep his commandments. In the Old Testament entire obedience is required in order to secure blessings, and entire obedience is also required in the New Testament as the conditions of receiving the approval of God. Obedience of the divine requirements is the demonstration of our faith, and the test of our love and discipleship. Professing theories, and observing forms will not answer the requirements of God. The vital principle of love is kept active through obedience. "Except your righteousness exceed

the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

All through his ministry Jesus impressed upon his followers the necessity of obeying the law, and his own life was a demonstration of its principles, and now, as his time of agony and trial approaches, his mind, instead of dwelling upon himself, turns to his disciples, and he seeks to impress upon them the lesson of obedience. The Savior when about to leave his disciples promises to manifest himself to those who love him and keep his commandments: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

"Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"

The Savior patiently explains his former words: "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Here is the mystery of godliness: Christ revealed by his Spirit to those who love him. When he should pass from the world he would be unknown by those who love the world and obey not the requirements of God. But the highest form of truth was presented to the disciples in the fact that the Savior would be discovered by those who love and walk in the light, while he is hidden from those who do not accept the light. Every step in the life of faith and consecration is additional knowledge of the world's Redeemer. Though no longer personally with his disciples, Jesus takes the hand of the faithful and becomes their Guide through all the dangers and trials of life's journey. Jesus continued:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my

peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." The Savior encouraged his disciples with the assurance that when he was no longer with them his Spirit would refresh their memories, so that the words which he had spoken to them would be imprinted on their hearts, to be afterward given to all nations, tongues and kindred on earth. The Savior settled his peace upon his disciples as a legacy, and exhorted them not to be overwhelmed with anguish, for they should enjoy that peace which is a mystery to the world.

He led their minds from the great loss they would soon sustain, to the advantages they would gain by his leaving them. He told them that the Father was greater than himself, that he would stand by the Father's side as the friend of his followers, to speak in their behalf. He is acquainted with human nature and the tendencies of the human heart, and promises to unite his petition with theirs, that the comforter, the spirit of truth might abide with them and shine forth in their lives and works, winning many to Christ. This promise has been the comfort and stay of millions who have since followed Jesus in humble obedience.

Through the strength of Jesus men may be made strong; through his love they may become lovely in character. He would have his followers understand that they cannot go to the people of the world for sympathy and comfort in their religious difficulties and trials; because the spirit of the truth is not discerned by them.

Our Savior had one more work to do in evidence of his own complete obedience to the Father. It was to die for the world. Said he: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing

in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." His hour was fast approaching; and he with his disciples passed on his way to Gethsemane. Many times had he traveled these paths on messages of love and mercy; and he had lately passed that way in triumph hailed by the glad acclamations of thousands as Him that cometh in the name of the Lord.

January 24, 1878

Last Talk with the Disciples

Mount Olivet had been our Saviour's favorite resort for retirement and prayer after his day's work of teaching was done. At the foot of the mount was the garden named Gethsemane, and to this he now made his way. It was night, but the moon was shining brightly and revealed to Jesus a flourishing grapevine. He uses this as a symbol of his union with his followers:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." As the Father had life in himself so had the Son. The branches of a vine detached from its parent stalk, withers and dies, is lifeless and fruitless. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." The Jewish nation was a fruitless branch, and was therefore to be separated from the living vine, which was Christ Jesus, and the Gentiles were to be engrafted upon the stalk to become a living branch, partaker of the life that nourished the true vine. The branch was to be pruned and purged that it might be more fruitful.

Jesus in view of his removal from his disciples is filled with anguish; yet he knows that this separation will cause them to be more firmly connected with the living vine, and yield a rich harvest of fruit. He exhorts them: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in

you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." When the sinner has repented of his sins, and is united to Christ, as the branch is engrafted on the vine, a deep and earnest love pervades his being which death cannot quench. The nature of the man is changed and he is a partaker of the divine nature. He loves the things which Christ loves, and hates that which He hates. His desires are in harmony with the will of God. He treasures up the words of Christ, and they abide in him. The life-giving principle of the Saviour is communicated to the Christian. Just so the little rod, leafless, and apparently lifeless is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, drinks life and strength from it till it becomes a flourishing branch of the parent stalk.

The condition of this union is plainly specified: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The commandments of the Father are the commandments of the Son. In this union with Christ, finite man, dependent and worthless, is exalted by a connection with the Infinite, even as the engrafted branch draws nourishment from the vine which results in the production of fruit. The follower of Christ derives from him wisdom, strength and righteousness. Without Christ he cannot be reconciled to God, whose law he has transgressed. Without Christ he is unable to subdue a single sin or overcome the smallest temptation. The soul united to Christ as the branch to the vine is accepted of God through the merits of his Son, and becomes an object of the Father's special care. Christ says, "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman." Man, by his union to the Infinite One through Jesus Christ, will be fruitful of good works. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Jesus continues:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you,

and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." The joy of the Christian is not found in transgression of the law of God, but in obedience of all its precepts. None are in slavery and bondage to the law but those who transgress it. Obedience produces love to God and man--the two great principles of the law of God. This obedience and this love brings fullness of joy to the disciples of Jesus. He still impresses upon them the importance of carrying forward the work which he has begun, and bearing fruit to the glory of God.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The Saviour instructed his disciples not to expect the commendation of the world. The world hated the Majesty of Heaven before it hated his followers. Those who are of the same spirit with the world enjoy its smiles and approbation; but the humble disciples of Christ will suffer opposition. But this opposition met by the Christian will be of the highest value to him if it drives him to Jesus for sympathy and comfort. Such opposition will develop staunch elements of character and virtues that shine brightest in adversity. Faith, patience and Heavenly-mindedness, with confidence in God are the perfect fruit that blossoms and matures in the shadow of adversity.

Christ the Master was hated and persecuted, and his followers should

expect no better portion in this life. In these days the churches that profess the name of Jesus, yet are built up with lifeless forms, and full of popular sins and error, escape the condemnation of the world. But a people that unite to condemn sin, repress iniquity, cherish the truth of Christ and obey the commandments of God must endure the rebuffs and persecutions of the world.

"Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." The Saviour instructed his disciples to look for the opposition of the world. He declared that they should be brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake; and whosoever might destroy the lives of the disciples would be so far deceived by the adversary as to think they were doing God service. Every indignity and cruelty which the ingenuity of man and the zeal of Satan could devise would be visited upon the followers of Christ. But, in all these trials, they were to remember that their Master and Guide had endured like reproach and contumely, and were to press on in his footsteps, keeping the prize of eternal life in view, and striving to win more souls to Christ.

Jesus wished to impress upon his disciples the importance of their position, as those who had accompanied him in his travels, beholding his wonderful works and hearing his words of wisdom. Said he to them: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." These faithful witnesses of Christ were to execute their mission with a wisdom and energy equal to the importance of the truth to which they were to testify. The history of those men and the evidence which they were to record were to be the study of men through all ages. Tremendous results were to be realized from the words of Jesus to his few humble disciples.

They were the chosen repositories of the truth of God. They were

witnesses of the Father's acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God. At the baptism of Christ they had heard the voice of the Father proclaiming: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." On the mount of transfiguration they had beheld the excellent glory clothing the Saviour with the brightness of the sun. They had seen the Heavenly messengers conversing with the Saviour, and heard again the voice of God declare: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." In the temple, only a few hours before, they had again heard the Father exalt and glorify his Son. That which these favored disciples had seen and felt and heard in regard to the Redeemer they were commissioned to testify for the benefit of humanity through all time. And, by living faith, men must lay hold of Christ through the evidence of these chosen witnesses of his divinity, and power unto salvation.

Jesus carefully opened before his disciples the events which would transpire after his death, forewarning them that when persecution should overtake them they might not become discouraged and apostatize from their faith to avert suffering and dishonor. Said he: "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." What tenderness and sympathy these words express! He forbore to crowd their minds with truths that were difficult for them to comprehend. He led them gently on to understand the great subjects with which he wished to entrust them, and which they were to deliver to the world.

Jesus also refrained from wounding their feelings as much as possible. He could have, in a more definite manner, informed them concerning the Jewish service--that sacrificial offerings were no longer accepted by God, and that the light of God's presence no longer blessed the temple. But they were not yet strong enough to hear these things. A fearful test awaited them in the crucifixion of their Lord; and Jesus gently prepared their minds for this event, and for his absence from them. After his resurrection he would more clearly reveal to them his mission to the world and his approaching ascension to his Father. They would then be better able to understand and appreciate

these great and solemn facts.

Jesus plainly stated to the disciples that he had left the presence of his Father to come unto the world; that he was about to leave the world and return to the presence of his Father. The disciples thereupon expressed their faith that Jesus had indeed come from God. The Saviour then assured them that the time was approaching when they would be scattered each one seeking his own safety, and their Master would be left alone; yet not alone, for his Father would not forsake his Son. Jesus warned his followers of the future that they might be in some measure prepared for the events that awaited them. He encouraged them to look to him and trust in him when the opposition of the world like a dark storm met them in the accomplishment of their mission. He fortified their minds with hope, and reliance in his example: Be of good cheer I have overcome the world.

This should be the Christian's consolation. Christ, as man's representative, has overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. So by the Saviour's help may the children of men overcome all the powers of evil. Jesus was about to be separated from his little band of followers. He had but a little time in which to comfort and instruct them, and his farewell counsel was rich in sympathy and truth. Exceeding precious to his disciples were these last moments passed in the presence of their beloved Master. Like a consecrated high priest, Jesus now poured forth the burden of his soul to his Father in such a petition for his church as the angels had never before heard. This prayer was deep and full, broad as the earth, and reaching highest heaven. He presented his humanity before the throne of God. With his human arm he encircled the children of Adam in a firm embrace, and with his strong divine arm he grasped the throne of the Infinite, that he might unite earth to heaven, and finite man with the Infinite God.

January 31, 1878

The Duty of Christians

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Here is a promise to us on condition of obedience. If we will come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean he will receive us. Here are the conditions of our acceptance with God. We have something to do ourselves. Here is a work for us. We are to show our separation from the world. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. It is impossible for us to be friends of the world and yet be in union with Christ. But what does this mean: to be friends of the world? It is to unite hands with them, to enjoy what they enjoy, to love that which they love, to seek for pleasure, to seek for gratification, to follow our own inclinations. We do not in following inclination have our affections upon God; we are loving and serving ourselves. But here is a grand promise: "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Separate from what? The inclinations of the world, their tastes, their habits; the fashions, the pride, and the customs of the world. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you." In making this move, in showing that we are not in harmony with the world, the promise of God is ours. He does not say perhaps I will receive you; but, "I will receive you." It is a positive promise. You have a surety that you will be accepted of God. Then in separating from the world you connect yourself with God; you become a member of the royal family; you become sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; you are children of the heavenly King; adopted into his family, and have a hold from above; united with the infinite God whose arm moves the world. What an exalted privilege is this to be thus favored, thus honored of God; to be called sons

and daughters of the Lord Almighty. It is incomprehensible; but still with all these promises and encouragements there are many who question and hesitate. They are in an undecided position. They seem to think that if they were to become Christians, there would be a mountain of responsibilities to be borne in religious duties and Christian obligations. There is a mountain of responsibility, a life-time of watchfulness, of battling with their own inclinations, with their own wills, with their own desires, with their own pleasures; and as they look at it, it seems like an impossibility for them to take the step, to decide that they will be children of God, servants of the Most High.

By this I am reminded of an incident I once read, of an aged gentleman who had been broken down by hard labor yet was seeking some employment by which he could obtain means. A nobleman who had a hundred cords of wood to cut, was informed of the wish of the old gentleman. He told him that if he would cut the wood he should have one hundred dollars for the job. But the old gentleman replied, No, he could never do that. It was impossible. He was an old man, and not able to undertake such a job. "Well," said the nobleman, "we will make a different bargain. Can you cut one cord today? if so, I will give one dollar." The bargain was made, and the cord of wood was cut that day. "Now," said the nobleman, "you may cut another cord tomorrow;" and another cord was cut the next day; and thus the whole job was accomplished. In one hundred days the work was completed, and the laborer was in just as good health as when he commenced the work. He could take it cord by cord, but when presented to him in one large job the accomplishment of it seemed impossible.

This well represents the cases of many who are undecided. They have a desire to be Christians, yet the responsibilities of a Christian life seem so great to them that they fear they will make a failure, are almost certain they can never reach the mark if they make the attempt. But when it is taken into consideration that it is not for them to see the end of the Christian's journey;

it is not for them to comprehend and accomplish it at once. Only one day at a time with its burdens and responsibilities is presented to us. Yes, dear friends, dear youth, tomorrow is not yours. It is the duties of today that you are to perform. If you resolve to be on the Lord's side, and come out from among the world, and be separate, and choose to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, to leave the ranks of the enemy, the service of sin and of Satan, make up your mind to always do present duty. Take hold of the duties of today, realizing that the Lord has claims upon you, that you are responsible to your Creator; these claims are to be met only a day at a time. In the strength of God take hold believing that you can overcome for that one day. That day must be commenced with watchfulness and prayer. Learn to give your heart's best affections to God. Signify in noble work and in your conversation that you love your heavenly Father. Let him apportion to you your work.

The Christian life is a battle and a march. It is to work for today and not for tomorrow. It is to do the duties of today; it is, when you rise in the morning, to think, now I am wholly dependent upon God, and I will ask him to take care of me; and when I ask him to take care of me today, I believe that he will do so. I will lay my burden of care, and my troubles at the feet of Jesus, and he will gather them up. You must trust in his love; and if he has given you a small work, take that up, and do it today; and if you have been faithful in doing that little work today, tomorrow you will be capable of bearing a greater responsibility, and of doing a greater work; and he will give you a greater work and responsibility to bear on the morrow.

To every one there is given talents of influence; and how many have an unconscious influence which is daily exerted on those around us. If this influence is saving, if it is gathering with Christ, in the day of final accounts it will tell to our advantage; but if we are exerting an influence which leads souls from God, from the truth, a scattering influence which separates from God, and heaven, we are paving the way, the broad way that leads to death.

There are only two roads; one leads to heaven, the other to death and hell. Every one has a work to do. Every one of us, that have reasoning powers, knows that there is a God. As we look at the heavens above, upon the earth beneath with its stately trees, shrubs and every opening bud and blooming flower we know there is a God, a Creator. The glories of the moon and stars in the firmament, the clouds tinted with gold and silver, and the heavens spanned with the beautiful rainbow, speak to us of the goodness, mercy and love of God. All these things are evidences of his care for us. He loves us, oh! so dearly. That love is incomprehensible. It is as high as the heavens, and as broad as the world. A love that is immeasurable. This love that we can trace in every cloud, in every tree, shrub, and vernal branch, in everything our eyes behold, is seeking a place in our hearts. God is love; and oh! what love he has revealed to us in giving his Son to die for us. How can we be indifferent to the claims God has upon us? How can we devote our God-given time, the hours of probation granted us here in which to prepare for a higher and immortal life, to thinking of ourselves, of our appearance, in allowing pride to take possession of our hearts when we consider the infinite price that has been paid for our redemption?

We want an arm to lean upon in the hours of affliction that can sustain. We want such an arm to rely upon when the earth shall reel to and fro, and be removed as a cottage. We want to know then that God is our father, that our life is hid with Christ in God. Every one of you need this assurance. The students at our school need this assurance. Some will soon return to their homes. How many of them have come to this school without a hope in Christ? How many have given their hearts to him since they have been attending our college? How many are still in a position of indecision, sometimes inclined to be wholly on the Lord's side, and then again draw back for the very reasons I have mentioned, the responsibilities and duties devolving upon the Christian? These seem so great that they hesitate and remain undecided.

But how many of you, should another year roll round from today, will be alive? Many may be snatched away in a few months. Here was one of your number, Brother Morrison, who came here to attend our college and become able to enter the gospel ministry, and a few weeks has ended his career in this life. Only a few weeks and you followed him to his grave in Oakhill cemetery, there to rest until the morning of the resurrection.

How long is the extent of your life? Who of you have the assurance that you will live until the next term of school? How many of you have any surety of your life? But if you had a life-time before you, if you knew that you should live your three-score years and ten, what is that little span of life? Is it too much for you to give to God? What do you give to him? What does he require? Does he require you to give anything that is for your interest or happiness to retain? Oh no. What are the claims that God has upon you? It is, my son, or my daughter, give me thine heart. It is to come out from among the world, and to be separate, "and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you." Who is the "I?" It is the great "I AM;" he who holds the worlds in his hands; he who gives you life, and gives you health. "And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Oh what a relationship is this! How can any feel as though they were making a sacrifice, to be adopted into the family of the King of kings; the Lord who reigns in the heavens; know you not that it is the highest exaltation to become children of God, "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?"

Ever since I was eleven years old I have been in the service of this heavenly King. I can speak from experience. He has asked me to give him nothing that was for my best interest to retain. Precious Jesus; precious Saviour; I love him; and I love his service. Oh! that my poor name can be registered in the Lamb's book of life. Let it stand there; let it be honored among the holy angels; let it remain there when this earth shall pass away; and when the King of kings shall come in his majesty, and in his glory, to

take his faithful ones to himself, oh, let my name then be among the ransomed. Let it be among the names of those who shall have the crown of glory upon their brows. Let me have a home with the dear Redeemer, and with an immortal tongue, praise him. Upward to God is the soul's adoration. Oh, glorious prospect, to be among the ransomed in the kingdom of glory.

But here we have duties to perform. God has given us our work. There are none of us who should feel because we do not have a great work to do, that there is no special responsibility resting upon us. Dear friends, it is your duty to do the little things right in your pathway, to fulfill your part in the college where you are, and among your associates; and to speak a word for your Master wherever you are; it is to put away vanity; it is to put away frivolity; it is to overcome pride; it is to put away selfishness, and to seek earnestly for the meekness of Christ.

Jesus left his majesty, his glory, and high command, and came to our earth, suffered for our sins, and for our sake became poor. He died that you, through his poverty might be made rich. He was a man of sorrows, and was acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. When such an infinite price has been paid for us, shall we shrink at the thought, that perhaps we shall not devote so much time to personal adornment, to dress and to display? Shall we shrink at the idea that we must devote our time, our hearts, and our holiest affections to God?

I inquire of you again, what does he ask you to give? He asks you to give to him a sin-polluted soul, that he may wash it with his own blood; that he may cleanse it; that he may refine, elevate, and ennoble it; and at last, that you may enjoy the society of the heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. You must put away pride and selfishness. Do you hesitate to yield your selfishness? Will it make you happy to retain it? The most unhappy persons

in the world are those who are selfish, and filled with pride and vanity. It is these things you are to give up. Let it be the language of your heart, "I will give myself to thee just as I am. I will come just now." But some say, "I am afraid I shall not live a Christian life." And for fear that you will not live a Christian life you are not going to make an effort.

Can you not venture out upon the promises of God? Christ has said not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the notice of your heavenly Father; and even the hairs of your head are numbered. Now, will not he that is able to do this, help you when you ask him to give you grace that you may follow in the path of obedience? Will he not give you that strength, that wisdom, and knowledge that shall lead you to follow in his footsteps?

You are seeking to obtain an education. How many of you who are before me may have it laid upon you to be ambassadors for Christ, called to point souls to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world? How many of you will bear the burdens, and responsibilities as ministers of the gospel? You must render an account to God for the talents he has given you. Are you going to devote these talents, your ability, to God? If not, your education will only sink you lower at last; because you are gaining more and more knowledge, and you are not putting that knowledge to a good account. You are perverting it. But God is able to do great things for you. He says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Come out from among the world; let not your aspirations be for the things of this world; for there is something higher after which you may aspire; there are higher attainments which demand your attention. The things of this world perish, are corruptible, and pass away, but there are things that will never perish, things that are eternal; and for these you may aspire. You cannot be loving the things of this world, and taking hold upon God and heaven at the same time. Are you afraid that if you become Christians, the world will look upon you with derision? Do you fear their taunts and their jeers? Jesus bore it before you; he, "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He who created the world, our Redeemer, our Saviour, bore it before you.

But what if you should have all the honor and the applause that the world could give you, what then? Let disease take hold of your mortal frames, can this honor and applause, and the praise of men relieve you of one pang? Can it relieve you of one distress? Can it be of the least advantage to you in healing you of your maladies? It cannot. But what does the Father say? "I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." He will connect you with himself, crown you with glory and honor, immortality and eternal life. This honor, that you can seek for with a surety of obtaining, will never perish. Do you seek gold, the riches of this world? We read that the streets of the city are paved with pure gold, and that the gates of the city are of gold set with pearls. The riches obtained here may be consumed. There are many ways in which you may be robbed of your earthly treasure. Christ says: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." There no thief shall approach; no moth or rust shall corrupt. Thus, if you lay up your treasures there, you will have an imperishable treasure which you can be in no danger of losing.

And now I would say to these, my friends, I have the deepest interest that you should give your hearts to God; that you may be strong in the cause of serving him. You need him for your friend; he will be a friend, indeed. You may come to your earthly friends with burdens; they may sympathize with you, but cannot relieve you; but here is a friend to whom you may come with your troubles and trials who is always ready not only to sympathize with you, but to bear your burdens. He knows all the difficulties of the way, for he has passed through them; and he is touched with the feelings of your infirmities. This great High Priest, who is in the heavens, is pleading in your behalf. He loves you; and when you come to him with your griefs, your sorrows, and your troubles he will listen to you. He will hear your prayers, and answer your petitions. When you pour out your heart before him, then

his great heart of love is opened to you, and he will be touched with your griefs and your sorrows. And now I would inquire of the young here tonight, How many want Christ as their Saviour, and their Redeemer? How many want to make a decided move to live for God? How many of the youth who have attended our school, or any here who have backslidden from God, want to renew their covenant with him, want to yield their pride, and to get rid of their selfishness? How many will come to their Saviour this very evening? "Behold I stand at the door," says Christ, "and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Gracious invitation! Jesus is at the door seeking admittance. Will you open to him? Will you let him take possession of your heart? Will you give him your affections?

Now, I wish to say to the youths, and to any who want to start to serve God; here at this very meeting say: I will give myself to God; I will leave the paths of sin, and I will try to be a Christian. Let those who have backslidden, and have not the evidence that they are the children of God, come forward, and we will unite with you in presenting your cases before God in prayer. We want the deep movings of the Spirit of God. We want you to take Jesus with you as you go to your homes. We want you to have a knowledge of Christ, and come to him. We want you to give your hearts to the Lord, and serve and obey him.

February 7, 1878

Battle Creek College

Remarks by Mrs. E. G. White, at Goguac Lake, June 26, 1877.

Our Saviour, frequently, when he was giving his lessons of instruction to his disciples, took them without inclosed walls and led them by the lake-side and in the groves; and here he gave them illustrations by the objects in nature; and with these he bound up the sacred lessons of instruction which were to be immortalized in their minds. As they would look upon the shrubs and the flowers, the rocks and barren soil, the mountains and hills, the sower and the reaper; and as they would look upon the flowers in glowing beauty around them, the lessons of instruction given by their divine Lord were repeated to them. When we look upon these lofty trees and upon the lake and the boats that are going out and coming in upon the water we can remember that Christ beckoned for a fisherman's boat, and he entered into Simon's, and asked him to thrust out a little from the land. He there gave important lessons which were to be immortalized and handed down to us; and which were to reach unto the end of the world. As we view the lake today, and the boats upon the waters, these lessons which Christ gave are repeated to us.

Said the Saviour of the world: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Who gave to the beautiful flowers their delicate tints and their varied colors? Was it not that God which has given us everything that is lovely and beautiful in our world? Our heavenly Father who has surrounded us with everything that is glorious in nature is a God of love. He is a lover of the beautiful. He says: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed, with his costly robes of gold and silver, in garments which could

bear comparison to these flowers of loveliness in their natural simplicity. Solomon is seated upon a throne of ivory, its basement is of gold, the steps are of gold flanked with six golden lions. Everything surrounding him is attractive. All his eye rests upon is magnificent. His eye rests upon expansive gardens, stretching away in the distance, beautiful and adorned with trees and shrubs to resemble the loveliness of paradise. The most rare and expensive birds of the richest plumage have been transported from every clime, and with their varying notes and bright songs, are flitting from bough to bough, while youths, the most lovely, clad in gold and silver dress, are seeking to amuse and divert the mind of the greatest monarch that ever sat upon an earthly throne. Many envied the popularity and abundant glory of Solomon, thinking that of all men he must be the most happy. But amid all that glory of artificial display the man envied is the one to be most pitied. His countenance is dark with despair. All the splendor about him is but to him mockery of the distress and anguish of his thoughts as he reviews his misspent life in seeking for happiness through indulgence and selfish gratification of every desire. He wails out his disappointment in these words: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." We may learn the lesson in the sad life of Solomon that riches and high intellectual attainments will not be sufficient for a happy life. Learning, and ability, and outward display without the sanctifying power of true godliness, will not bring contentment, peace, and happiness.

You have your youthful strength, your strong, ardent, impetuous temperaments which if guided aright will make you men and women of influence. If you bring your talents early as a consecrated offering to God he will accept you. If connected with the source of all purity, nobility and holiness, your lives will represent the spotless purity of this lily, diffusing a fragrance grateful and pleasant to all with whom you associate.

Dear youth, cultivate natural simplicity. Consider and learn from the flowers of the field the lesson Christ has sought to impress upon your mind

and heart. You may devote the golden hours of your probation in studying your outward appearance. You may neglect the most essential work of your life in failing to secure the inward adorning, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. You may devote time, money and much thought to outward display, and after all your anxious care, you will not bear comparison to one of these flowers for attractive loveliness in their natural simplicity.

Here is the pure and lovely lily growing among the filth of ponds and lakes, striking down its curiously channeled stem, and gathering to itself only those properties that shall develop into this pure, fragrant lily. Every one admires this emblem of purity. Your lives, dear students, may resemble this lily.

As Christ offered his prayer to his Father he uttered these words. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world but keep them from the evil." The world is a land of emptiness: It is a world good and beautiful of itself but man has become so sensual and depraved so embittered against God that the earth itself groans under the weight of accumulated guilt, you must cultivate firm principle in the midst of surrounding infidelity, hypocrisy, pride, and profligacy. You must be Bible students and carry Bible rules into your every day life. In no case allow knavery deception and dishonesty to beguile you from your simplicity. Be it your constant study how you will best attain and cherish that which God values, the ornament of purity and meekness, that the world will be better for your having lived in it. Like the pure lily you need faith's penetrating root descending beneath the outward things which do appear to gather spiritual strength to invigorate and give purity and goodness to the life. The study of the Bible, the hours of secret communion with God, meditation upon heavenly themes will develop into purity of character resembling the spotless lily. The life of God in the soul is Christ in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life. This springing up into life will refresh all who connect with you. If your character

is such that God can approve, it will be a complete Christian character filled with grace that is not assumed, but that has a natural growth. If your affections are obedient unto Christ your motives pure, there will be in your life, in your every day deportment, lessons of instruction to all around you. You will be living epistles known and read of all men. Your connection with God will lift you above every thing that has a debasing tendency, your pure and uncorrupted life will be ever pointing your school-mates and old associates upward to God and heaven saying to them you must seek peace and purity and happiness from above. Jesus is the source of your comfort strength and fortitude, amid vexation, trials and grievous temptations. The leaves of some trees and flowers seem naturally to gather dust which adheres to them, and mars their color and beauty. This is the case with many youths they do not see the necessity of vigilant watchfulness and earnest prayer to keep themselves pure, and their Christian character is always dingy. They need to wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Young men and young women while you are attending school you may be gathering to yourselves only those things which shall tend to the perfection of character, or you may gather to yourselves the habits, customs and practices of the world; love the things which they love, which shall have a corrupting influence upon the life and character, and you will forfeit your right to eternal life. Which shall it be? Our heavenly Father, the Giver of life, would draw us from the artificial to the natural simplicities. "Consider," says Christ, "the lilies of the field, how they grow;" and again he says, "If God so clothed the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" If our heavenly Father has taken such special care for that which has to be cut down and cast into the oven, then how much greater is his care, his love and his attention for those who are formed in his image!

Young men and young women you may make any thing of yourselves

that you please. You may attain to excellence and perfection of character; you may go through this world without being stained and blackened with the sins that taint and corrupt it; and when you are brought in contact with the evil of this world, you may escape them if you choose. Christ will be to you a special help in every time of need. But in order for you to develop characters which Heaven shall approve; it is necessary that you connect with God. Will you consider these lilies which I hold in my hand, emblem of purity and loveliness? Here in this flower is an expression of the love of God. Satan is never at rest; he is an interested spectator of all your actions. He will present before the inexperienced youth, things which on the surface appear attractive, to allure them from their integrity, and corrupt their morals. Christ's voice is heard saying to them, Consider the lilies of the field, learn from them the value of natural simplicity. God speaks to you through his created works. Will you listen to his voice? Will you become acquainted with God in nature?

We can discern his love to us in giving us all these things in nature. We can see it in the lovely flowers in the valleys and on the surface of the lake. Anywhere, everywhere, we may read expressions of God's love in the opening buds and blooming flowers. As God has given us these things of beauty and purity how much more will he delight to give us an eternal inheritance. He wants you to come into that position where he may grant you the gift of immortality. He has given you the gift of his Son, the greatest gift that Heaven could bestow; and now if you connect with God, if you connect with heaven, you may, in the name and strength of Jesus develop symmetrical characters; characters that are spotless as the pure lily that opens its blossom on the bosom of the lake. I invite you to take hold of heaven's blessings and then you can have a right hold upon the earth. I invite you to look up through nature to nature's God. Let these things teach you the love of God, and the care that he has for those formed in his image. (Concluded next week.)

February 7, 1878

Light

Jesus had said to the Pharisees: "This is your condemnation, that light has come into the world; and men choose darkness rather than light." In every age of the world, the majority have rejected the light that has shone forth to illuminate the darkness of error. According to the unbelief and prejudice with which men, in spite of convincing evidence, oppose the truth, is the intensity of their hatred of those who cherish it. In proportion to the light given will be the condemnation of those who reject it. Said Jesus:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." The friends of Christ's truth will ever be persecuted by a time-serving generation. They will be termed enthusiasts and fanatics by the enemies of reform. The burning truths of God's word, condemning sin, and admonishing to righteousness are not palatable to the wrong-doer. Every true follower of Christ should have the spirit of a martyr, being ready to sacrifice any and everything rather than forfeit the favor of God.

The life of Christ was the embodiment of purity; and for this very reason he was hated. His righteousness stood forth in such marked contrast with that of the Pharisees that he was a continual reproach to them. Jesus said to his disciples: "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Many in this age may say that if they had lived when Christ was upon earth they would not have insulted and rejected him, but would have gladly accepted of his salvation. Yet those very persons doubt the power of the Saviour, and hesitate to believe his truth. The evidences that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour of men have increased with every successive generation, and yet millions refuse to believe on him, and accept the relief he offers their guilty souls. Jesus comes to those who are groaning under affliction, and offers to bear their grief, but they turn from him and hug their cankering cares to their hearts. He comes to those who are disappointed, whose hopes of this world have been crushed, and promises to give them peace and happiness if they will put their trust in him; but they shut their hearts against his sympathy and refuse to be comforted. Sad indeed will be the fate of those who reject the Redeemer notwithstanding the accumulated evidence in his favor.

The sin of the Jews was very great; but those in our day who have before them the history of Christ upon earth, and his rejection by the Jews sin in a far greater degree. They have the testimony of the followers of Jesus through the period of nearly two thousand years. They have far greater light than had the Jews. All other errors are trifling compared with the sin of rejecting Christ. To turn from him is to reject infinite truth, love and righteousness, and to close the door of the heart to all heavenly illumination, and to welcome darkness and despair. To accept him is light, peace and joy.

February 14, 1878

Battle Creek College

Remarks by Mrs. E. G. White, at Goghuac Lake, June 26, 1877.
(Concluded.)

We would say to the students who are soon to return to their homes, we hope they will make continual advancement in the knowledge of God, and in his fear. An education that is obtained merely in book knowledge is a very deficient education. An education in the things of God, a correct knowledge of God, combined with all the knowledge that you may obtain from books will give you symmetrical characters. As the students return to their homes, we hope they will carry Jesus with them; and that they will have the fear of God before them. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Here is a principle which reaches deep beneath the surface, taking hold of the thoughts and actions of the entire man. He is required to be constantly guarded, a faithful sentinel over the citadel of the soul, prepared to meet and resist every thought and action which will dishonor his heavenly Father. A compliance with this injunction of the apostle will bind and hold in restraint every unlawful passion, and will make self-control an absolute necessity to the Christian. Economy, industry, energy, and everything which will strengthen and develop noble qualities and powers will be cultivated. The Divine power combined with human effort will give to all perfect and entire victory. Every believing mind will be filled with conscious power. The language of the soul will be: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Such youth, and only such, can stand before the world with symmetrical characters.

Solomon prayed to God for wisdom. The Lord said, because he had not asked for temporal riches or for worldly honor, he should have not only the

blessing of wisdom, but riches and honor also. One who has heavenly wisdom is prepared to make a right use of the talents and means which God has given him. All the talents and ability he may possess will not lead him to forget the Giver. There is danger of some of these dear youth being self-deceived, as was the young man who came to Jesus, and in all self-confidence inquired: "Good Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Said the Searcher of all hearts: If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments. Exultingly the young man replied: All these have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? How earnestly, and with what elation of soul he said this. But Jesus looked pityingly upon this deceived young man and said: "Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." This practical test unfolded to the deceived young man his supreme selfishness. His deficiency of character spoiled all his virtues. It was a fatal deficiency, for he turned away from Christ, from the heavenly inducement, rather than to comply with the conditions.

We have hope that when you shall return to your homes and mingle in society, and are surrounded with temptations, when you shall meet with difficulties and obstacles, when self-denial is called for, when self-sacrifice is required, that you will be connected with God, and maintain a Christian fidelity of character; that you will be like the pure lily, only gathering to yourselves the good and refusing the bad. You can all do this if you will. Every one of you may have moral power; every one of you may have grace and strength to become victors on your own account, in the name of the One who has conquered for you, and has ascended up on high to represent your case to the Father. Man's representative pleads in heaven in our behalf; and we want that the youth who have given their hearts to God will so live that Christ can freely present their cases before the Father. We hope that those who have just entered the school of Christ will continue to be learners. "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." There are many who cease to be learners in

Christ's school after they have received the ordinance of baptism. They appear more like graduates. "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." How natural for many to love to teach, but who will not be taught. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Who so easily taught as a child; who so willing and ready to believe? God looks with love upon the confiding simplicity of children. Duties in our homes, in the college, and in the church, may be regarded as drudgery; but in proportion as these duties are blended with the love of God they are made cheerful and pleasant. The simple faith and trusting confidence of the child is necessary to be possessed by the learner in the school of Christ.

After the baptism of Christ he bowed upon Jordan's banks, and heaven never listened to such a prayer as he then and there uttered. And in answer to that prayer, the light and glory of God flashed forth from his throne and descended as a dove and rested upon him. Immediately from the Infinite One came a voice, saying: "This is my beloved Son." Here, heaven was opened to man; earth was connected with heaven through our Representative, and finite man with the Infinite God. Heaven was opened to you, dear youth; and you need not to feel that the heavens above you are brass. God testified to his Son in his own voice that He accepted Him; and in accepting the representative of the race he signifies to man that he will accept him through His Son if we comply with the conditions laid down in his word. The steps requisite in conversion are repentance, faith and baptism. And then after these steps are taken, the life of prayer is essential to maintain the Christian life, and to seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth, you cannot stop at baptism and feel that you have graduated. Your Christian life is only entered upon, the formation of Christian character is yet before you, you have just entered the school of Christ, and need to continue to learn of him.

You are to continue to be instructed in the school of Christ, having the heart open to receive the heavenly knowledge that will be imparted unto you;

and thus you will grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. There is a final examination that is to take place in reference to your probationary time in this world which is of vital interest to every one of us. There will in that day be no indifferent spectators. Every one will have a part to act, and will have intense interest to pass that ordeal with heavenly honors. All will have an opportunity to educate themselves while in this world, that they may be fitted to stand the grand review which must shortly take place. If you make efforts in one term at our college, and through negligence on your part fail to stand the examining test, you may console yourselves with the hope to redeem your failure in the following term. But if in the vital interest of your soul's salvation you neglect to learn the lessons necessary to stand the test of the great examination to come, there will be no second privilege and opportunity granted. It is now or never that you must perfect Christian character. There will be no following term that you may enter the school of Christ to redeem abused privileges and lost opportunities. It is of the highest importance that in the great examination to come you can stand in the merits of your heavenly Redeemer by having gained the victory in His name.

We have been having an exhibition of talent here today, but the grand review of character is to take place by and by. Jesus would have us learn in His school that we may become intellectual Christians. He would have us learn of Him that we may grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth, that we may be qualified to talk intelligently upon the things of God, repeating the lessons of the cross of Christ. We have heard speeches from the stand today from you which have done credit to both students and teachers. We are anxious that those who are learning in the school of Christ should have willing hearts and ready tongues, that they may speak the praise of God, and tell, in their language and deportment, the advancement they have made in the divine life. You want to make your mark high, and progress every day. Every day you want to obtain knowledge how to successfully control self. You want to obtain knowledge how to gain new victories. The Christian warfare is a battle and a march. Take Christ with you in everything you do;

take Him with you at your homes, and wherever you go; and if Jesus is with you, if you have His presence and His love, you have a heavenly Companion, a heavenly Guest.

Think not that the Christian's life is one that takes away from you all pleasure. It opens to us fountains of pleasures that it is impossible for us to measure. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Take away from me everything that this world can give, but do not take away my connection with Heaven. I love my Saviour; and I want every one of these youth to love him. I want you to prepare for the final examination, when every man shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Who will be acquitted in that day? To whom will it be said: "Well done, good and faithful servant?" Who in that day will hear the words: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" How many who are present on this occasion will listen to those words which are richer than any music that ever fell upon human ear? And who, then, will have the crown of glory placed upon their brow? Who will bear in their hand the palm branch of victory, and the harp of gold?

We want you to swell the triumph of "Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and that lives again, a triumphant conqueror." We want to see every one of you with your laurels of honor that you shall cast at the feet of your Redeemer; and then touch your golden harps, and fill all heaven with the melodious strains, and songs of praise to the Lamb. Talk not to me of the pleasures of earth. I have my eye fixed upon the immortal inheritance, and it has eclipsed all that is beautiful, all that is lovely, and all that is attractive in this world. I want heaven. I must have the eternal weight of glory. Will you strive with me to obtain heaven? Will you triumph with me in that day when God makes up his jewels? God grant that we may all be there; that every one of us may tread those streets that are paved with gold;

that we may enter the pearly gates of the holy city, and that we may go no more out forever.

February 21, 1878

The Barren Fig Tree

Jesus spent the entire night in prayer, and in the morning, while returning again from Bethany, he passed a fig orchard. He was hungry, "And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it."

It was not the season for ripe figs, except in certain localities; and on the elevated height of Olivet it might truly be said, "the time of figs was not yet." It is the nature of the fig tree that before the leaves open the growing fruit appears; so it would follow that upon a tree covered with leaves one would expect to find well matured figs. The tree which Jesus saw was beautiful to look upon, but upon a thorough searching of its branches, he found that its appearance was deceitful, for it bore "nothing but leaves." In order to teach his disciples an impressive lesson, he used the fig tree as a symbol, and invested it with moral qualities and made it the medium by which to teach a divine truth.

The Jews stood forth distinct from all other nations, professing perfect allegiance to the God of heaven. They had been specially favored by him, and they claimed a greater piety than any other people, while in reality they were sinful, corrupted by the love of the world and the greed of gain. Boasting of their godliness and knowledge, yet full of hypocrisy and cruelty, and ignorant of the requirements of God, they were like the barren fig tree that spread its pretentious branches aloft, luxuriant in appearance, and beautiful to the eye, but upon which Jesus found "nothing but leaves."

The preceding day had been one of the highest importance, embracing the triumphal entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, and closing with the cleansing of the temple by the dispersion of the traffickers from its sacred precincts, and Christ's healing of the sick. The sentence pronounced and executed upon the fig tree was the last symbolic action relating to the future destruction of Jerusalem. As Christ on the mount overlooked the doomed city, his tender sympathetic tears flowed, and he uttered the yearning cry of a broken heart because of rejected love. He looked upon Jerusalem with suffering tenderness, and spoke these words with a voice of inexpressible sorrow, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house [no longer the house of the most high God] is left unto you desolate."

The Jewish religion with its magnificent display of temple, sacred altars, sacrificial pomp, mitred priests and impressive ceremonies, were but a superficial covering under which pride, oppression and iniquity held sway. The leaves were abundant and beautiful, but the tree bore no goodly fruit. The next morning as they passed by the same orchard, the disciples saw that the fig tree which Jesus cursed was withered and blasted from root to branch. Jesus presented to his disciples the true condition of the Jews in this striking figure of the barren fig tree; and, as the tree withered beneath the Saviour's blighting curse, and stood forth sear and blasted, dried up by the roots, so should all pretentious hypocrites be brought low.

The other trees in the fig orchard were also destitute of fruit; but their boughs were leafless, therefore they raised no expectations and caused no disappointment. These leafless trees represented the Gentiles, who made no boasts of superior piety. In them the words of the scripture finds an application, "the time of figs was not yet." But while the Jews in proud self-confidence stood forth assuming superiority to all others, the Gentiles were

in a measure feeling their want and weakness, and longing for a better day, a clearer and more certain light to guide their wandering footsteps.

The Jews had listened to the voice of God, as he proclaimed his law from Sinai, and God had selected them, and claimed them as his people; but they had not made the most of their opportunities. He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and delivered them from the oppression of the Egyptians; and when the children of Israel were camped before the Red sea, and the army of Pharaoh pursued them, he divided the waters and they passed through on dry land; While their enemies that followed after them, perished. And so they passed through Jordan at the taking of Jericho, when God miraculously opened the path for them through the waters, and how mightily he wrought for them at the city! They could never have repayed God for the blessings which he had given them had they done their best in his service; but there was an utter failure on their part. And when the very best gift that Heaven could give, was sent to them, the gift of Jesus Christ, they would not accept it. Pride and ambition, love of applause and display, had so hardened their hearts, and blinded their minds that they could not discern Jesus Christ in the Man of Nazareth.

The Jewish nation were outwardly religious, priding themselves upon their sacred temple, the pomp of priests and the imposing ceremonies of the morning and evening services, gorgeous synagogues and sacrificial offerings. Here were abundant leaves, beautiful and bright, to cover the hollow hypocrisy, malice, and oppression at the heart of all this vain display. The Jews were privileged with the presence of Christ manifested in the flesh. This inestimable blessing which God bestowed upon them should have called forth their devout acknowledgments. But in blind prejudice they refused the mercies offered them by Jesus. His love was lavished upon them in vain, and they regarded not his wondrous works. Sorrow fled at his approach; infirmity and deformity were healed; injustice and oppression shrunk ashamed from his rebuke; while death and the grave humbled

themselves in his presence and obeyed his commands. Yet the people of his choice rejected him and his mighty miracles with scorn. The majesty of Heaven came unto his own, and his own received him not.

The judgment pronounced upon the barren fig tree not only symbolizes the sentence passed upon the Jews, but is also applicable to the professed Christians of our time, who have become formal, selfish, boasting and hypocritical.

The irrevocable sentence passed upon the Jewish nation, and its consequent downfall and ruin was symbolized by the doom of the barren fig tree. It is not always easy to detect the sincere, genuine Christian from the counterfeit. But when brought to the test like the barren fig tree they are found diverse in character although the external appearance may deceive the eye. False and true devotion bear so close a resemblance to each other that it may be difficult for human wisdom to distinguish the difference between them. But the eye of the Infinite looks beneath the external and discerns the pretenders from the real, unmask the hypocrite and discovers the difference between the cumberers of the ground and the fruit bearers. Fruit bearing Christians who are making the most of their God-given opportunities and privileges, will imitate the example of Christ in good works and unselfish deeds.

The mass of professors are symbolized by the apparently flourishing fig tree making pretensions to godliness but blessing no one by their precious fruits. The pen of inspiration pictures before us this class. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

Just such a state of things exists in our day. There are many who make proud boasts of godliness, answering the description of the apostle, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof in their fruitless lives. Christ's search for fruit in them reveals nothing but leaves. Pride, display, vain glory, selfishness and oppression are concealed beneath the green foliage. Everything has been done for them that the Majesty of heaven in his wisdom can do, but like the Jews they pervert and abuse their sacred privileges, and are satisfied to be fruitless cumberers of the ground, no better than worldlings as far as good works are concerned. But the worldlings are in a more favorable condition before God because they make no pretension to true godliness. They are not hypocritical pretenders. They do not put on the outer foliage to screen and mask their utter absence of the sanctifying grace of God. It is sad to acknowledge that the daily lives of many who profess to be followers of Christ deny in their unsanctified words and actions the very religion they profess. The jewel of truth and integrity is not in them; therefore, they have not Christ formed in them the hope of glory. They have no connection with God. We are not required to exclude ourselves from the active duties of life and sever all connection or intercourse with the world in order to be Christians; for in thus doing we shall not follow the example of Christ. He was in the world and yet not of the world. He was a worker for the good of those in the world. He left the glory that he had with his Father and clothed his divinity with humanity, and humbled himself to meet the necessities of man to become personally acquainted with the temptations and frailties of man, that he might know how to succor those who should be tempted.

Christ in his sermon on the Mount represented the lives of Christians as the salt of the earth. Without the preserving, sanctifying influence of the Christian's words and actions the world would be altogether corrupt, and fit for the immediate sentence of justice that was pronounced upon the fruitless fig tree. True faith will have connected with it a working power. The

Pharisees excluded themselves from the world exalted their own piety above every other people, and the world was no better for their living in it. But, and if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted. Christ rebuked this exclusiveness in stating the true position of the Christian in the world: "Ye are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, neither do men light a candle and put in under a bushel but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It is the good works of the Christian that contain the precious influence to preserve the world. It is good works which stand in marked contrast with the degenerate polluting influence of the world that it reveals the true enormity of sin. The moral power of good works is ever pointing the sinner upward to God and to heaven. It is not words and profession that the world need now as much as the savor of good works. Christians should have power to press back the moral darkness that threatens to enshroud the world like the pall of death. This they may do if they are connected with God. In the strength of the Lord we may do much in becoming channels of light. Jesus comes to each of us expecting fruit. Shall we disappoint his earnest search and will he find in our lives nothing but leaves? I earnestly plead with all professors of godliness to learn a lesson from the parable of the barren fig tree. Let the fruit appear in your lives in deeds of mercy to your fellow man, and in humble sincere devotion to God, showing the mark of distinction between you and the world by the fruit you bear unto righteousness. Said Christ, It is my Father's good pleasure that ye bear much fruit.

It is not enough for us to be merely in the attitude of waiting for our Lord, leaving sinners to be unwarned and unprepared for that great event. Christ requires of us to be vigilant workers while waiting for his appearing. Working and waiting is the attitude he would find us in. A life of quiet prayerful meditation is not all that Jesus expects of us. He expects fruit, exemplifying in our lives the virtues of true godliness, not only being good but doing good. The soul must be consecrated by its surrender to God in

perfect obedience to his requirements, keeping all of his commandments.

The fruits which grow upon the Christian tree will be seen in letting the light of truth which God has caused to shine upon us sanctify our lives and thus shine forth in works of righteousness, having a saving influence upon the world. The fruit Jesus is searching to find in his professed followers is the graces of his spirit developed in our lives in unselfish acts of mercy, and disinterested benevolence, and love for those he came to the world to save. In this way we can best testify that we are working the works of Christ, and that we have the spirit of our divine Lord who went about doing good. The responsibilities of each Christian is proportionate to the talents entrusted. Christ's true followers will be fruit bearing trees. Very many professed Christians act as though they were in the world to do nothing but to please themselves. They do not consider that Jesus, their pattern, pleased not himself, that self-denial and self-sacrifice characterized his life, and it must characterize their lives, or they will in the day of God be found wanting.

In the doom of the fig tree, Christ demonstrated how hateful in his eyes are hypocrisy and hollow pretense. Ever pitiful to the truly penitent, ever ready to receive them and to heal their maladies, he thus evidenced that the open sinner is in a more favorable condition before God than professing Christians who bear no fruit to his glory.

February 28, 1878

Never Yield the Sabbath

We are in receipt of a number of letters from different individuals, who are believers in our faith, asking advice upon the matter of keeping the Sabbath. In their cases, the injunction of the fourth commandment apparently conflicts with their ideas of duty or necessity in other respects. One sister in particular is in much anxiety of mind as to her duty. She is the support of her aged parents, and could easily maintain them in comfort if she pursued her work upon the Sabbath. She therefore asks if the fifth commandment is not as binding upon her as the fourth, and that if, in keeping the latter, she should fall short, in her estimation, of the requirements of the fifth commandment, would she not be justified in disregarding the fourth? We deeply sympathize with these tried ones in their perplexity and distress, and have endeavored to write a few words of encouragement and advice to them and others who are suffering under similar trials.

We would say to all who are thus anxious in regard to their duty, Upon no consideration are you excusable in violating the fourth commandment. It is no violation of the Sabbath to perform works of necessity, as ministering to the sick or aged, and relieving distress. Such works are in perfect harmony with the Sabbath law. Our great Exemplar was ever active upon the Sabbath, when the necessities of the sick and suffering came before him. The Pharisees, because of this, accused him of Sabbath-breaking, as do many ministers today who are in opposition to the law of God. But we say, Let God be true, and every man a liar who dares make this charge against the Saviour.

Jesus answered the accusation of the Jews thus, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have

condemned the guiltless." He had already declared to them that he had kept his Father's commandments. When he was accused of Sabbath-breaking in the matter of healing the withered hand, he turned upon his accusers with the question, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" In summing up his answer to the questioning of the Pharisees he said, "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Here Christ justified his work as in perfect harmony with the Sabbath law. Ministers who profess to be ambassadors of Christ, yet assert that he did not regard the Sabbath day, and thus endeavor to justify themselves in disregarding it, make the same accusation against Christ as did the Pharisees. They certainly select poor company in those caviling Jews who persecuted the Redeemer.

It may not be convenient for you and many others to keep the Sabbath day holy by refraining from worldly business; but God has not left this matter to our choice; we are not at liberty to mold our principles according to our circumstances. His requirements are positive; they are, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not; "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work," etc.

The fifth commandment is sacred; but if you should transgress any of the first four precepts of the decalogue, wherein is revealed the duty of man to his Creator, you would not be in a favorable position for the sacred observance of the last six commandments which specify the duties of man to his fellow man. To break any one of the commandments which specify the duty of man to God is to violate the principles of the entire law. The pen of inspiration records that he who offends in one point is guilty of offense in all. Thus, should the Sabbath of the fourth commandment be disregarded, and man prove recreant to the claims of God upon him, will this disobedience prepare him to fulfill the requirements of the law which specifies his duty to his earthly parents? Will his heart be fitted through transgression of a plain precept of Jehovah upon the first table of stone, to keep the first precept on

the second table. We are required, by this commandment, to honor our parents, and we are unnatural children if we do not obey this precept. But if love and reverence are due our earthly parents how much more is reverence and love due our heavenly Parent.

We take the position that the fifth commandment is binding upon the son and daughter, although they may be old and gray-headed. However high or humble their station in life they will never rise above or fall below their obligation to obey the fifth precept of the decalogue, that commands them to honor their father and mother. Solomon, the wisest and most exalted monarch that ever sat upon an earthly throne, has given us an example of filial love and reverence. He was surrounded by his courtly train, consisting of the wisest sages and counselors, yet, when visited by his mother, he laid aside all the customary ceremonies attending the approach of a subject to an oriental monarch. The mighty king, in the presence of his mother, was only her son. His royalty was laid aside, as he rose from his throne and bowed before her. He then seated her on his throne, at his right hand.

Those who have been taught to obey and honor their earthly parents will the more readily yield to the claims of their heavenly Parent, and honor the Creator of man and of the world. The fifth commandment is the only one of the six to which a promise is annexed: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This carries us forward to the period when the saints shall possess the kingdom under the whole heavens, in the renewed earth.

Special blessings are also promised to those who honor and keep holy the day which God has sanctified and blessed; and, in giving us the ten commandments, our wise and merciful Father has not enjoined their observance upon us, and yet made it necessary that, in keeping one, we should break another of those holy precepts. If the requirements of parents from their children involves their breaking the law of God, there should be

no question in regard to duty. God's claims are imperative. The son or daughter should respectfully say to the parent, I love and honor you, my earthly parents; but I love and fear God more. His commands must be obeyed at any cost to myself. In thus standing true to principle the child does not dishonor his parents in the Bible sense. The purity and firmness of his principles may be the means of bringing unbelieving parents to realize the high claims which God has upon them. Should this be the case will he not have shown in the fullest sense that he has attained the Bible standard of honoring his parents?

Should he fail in bringing the parents he loves to acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment, still the child has met the requirements of God if he has faithfully done his duty, in meekness and love, to his parents; if he has shown them the utmost respect, caring for them in temporal things, as well as spiritual, yet remained firm in his adherence to the commands of God, notwithstanding their opposition. There is no more effectual way of proving our obedience to the fifth commandment, than that of manifesting our reverence for all God's holy laws.

Sacrilegious minds and hearts have thought they were mighty enough to change the times and laws of Jehovah; but, safe in the archives of heaven, in the ark of God, are the original commandments, written upon the two tables of stone. No potentate of earth has power to draw forth those tables from their sacred hiding-place beneath the mercy-seat. The fourth precept of the decalogue remains unchanged, holding the same claims upon man, as when the ten commandments were thundered, amid smoke and flame, from the holy mount.

We observe the equity of God's requirements in the fourth commandment: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." The Sovereign of heaven and earth gives us six days for our own use, and reserves only one for

himself, and upon that he places his blessing, and sanctifies it. He requires man to sacredly observe that day, not using it for his own worldly advantage or pleasure. It is the tribute God requires men to render him for the benefits he has given them.

We should spend a portion of the Sabbath in religious meditation, and in considering the blessings and wonders of God in his created works, manifested alike amid the rugged mountain scenery, where mountain top rises above mountain top, where terrible ravines, and rocks broken apart by the earthquakes, and the lightnings, bear the unmistakable marks of One who has trodden the mountains in his anger; and in the softer aspect of nature, where the lofty trees, the babbling brooks, the green grass and tinted flowers express the love of the Infinite God. When we behold rugged mountains, the lesson of Sinai should be repeated to us, and we should contemplate that scene when Jehovah spake his law in the hearing of all the vast army of Israel.

The foundation of the Sabbath was laid in Eden, and it is to be perpetuated through all time and eternity. The sin of Adam caused his expulsion from Eden. Fearful indeed was the curse pronounced upon the transgressor of the law of God. While we deplore the sin and fall of Adam, let us beware of following his example of disobedience. Thank God that the Sabbath institution was not included in the blessings lost with Eden. That sacred institution does not rest upon vain speculation; the authority and evidence sustaining it are strong and irresistible; Infidelity may assail it, yet it remains incontrovertible.

God in mercy has sent light and messages of warning to the world in reference to his law which has been trampled upon. There is a people who reverence and fear God, and who respond to his messages of warning, who repent of their transgression of the law of God, and, through faith in the merits of Christ, receive pardon for their transgression. God, through his

prophet commends, and gives precious promises to those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord: "And they that be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

The prophet here refers to the breach made in the law of God, by the breaking down of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This precept has been made waste by the man of sin; and the professed Christian world has accepted a day which he has substituted for the sanctified Sabbath of the Lord. Shall we be of the number who are repairing the breach made in the law of God? or shall we be of the number who receive the mark of the beast, by observing the human institution rather than the divine, thus nourishing the child of papacy?

We do not write thus because we suppose you ignorant of the evidences of the Sabbath, and the binding claims of the entire law of God; but we desire to refresh your minds, that you may become established in the present truth.

Those who have accepted unpopular truth have always been obliged to make great sacrifices. Persecution has fallen heavily upon some. We have the lives of the apostles as our ensamples; but above all we have the life of Christ our great Exemplar presented before us. The beloved disciple tells us he was banished to the isle of Patmos, "For the word of God, for the testimony of Jesus Christ." While on that desolate island, to his unspeakable joy, his dear Master and Lord stood before him, the very one with whom he had walked and talked when they were together in the world, upon whose bosom he had learned, whose great heart of love had beat beneath the pressure of his head, whose sufferings he had witnessed, and whose visage had been marred more than the sons of men.

The Saviour was revealed to John, not in his humiliation, but in his

majesty, as he now is, and as he will be revealed when he shall come in his glory. John saw not a Saviour on the cross, not a man of sorrows, but the glorified Son of God, clothed in a garment of light, and girded with a golden girdle. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet like brass when it gleams in a furnace. The sound of his voice was like the sound of many waters; and his countenance shone like the sun in its noon-day splendor.

The world may not appreciate our faith; they may laugh and sneer at our peculiarities of belief; we may be derided for not following the customs of the world. The word of God declares that the world knows us not, because it knew him not. But when Christ comes to earth again he will appear glorious as John saw him to be; and we have the precious promise that "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." We must look away from the difficulties of our present position, and fasten our eyes on the glories of our heavenly home, taking courage at the prospect of that bright future when we shall see Christ as he is, and be made like unto him.

John found in his solitude and exile that the Lord had not forgotten him. From this we may learn that God is a shield and helper in every emergency, to those who believe and trust in him. When surrounded by difficulties, dangers, and discouragements, we must not yield faith and principle, but cherish every precious ray of light granted us, and be true to our God given responsibilities.

You who are perplexed and afflicted, look up and be encouraged. Commit your ways in faith to the sympathizing Redeemer. He has identified his interests with yours, and is afflicted in your affliction. He will help you bear your burdens. Never give up the Sabbath. Hold fast the sanctified day, and the promises which God has attached to its observance. Is it reasonable to suppose that God would make you more prosperous in transgressing his law than in rendering cheerful obedience to it? How easily could his hand hedge up the way which Satan now presents to you in such a flattering light.

God promises his Israel that if they will keep his statutes and his laws he will bless them in their houses, in their fields and in all their undertakings; but if they disobey his holy statutes his curse will fall upon them. May God help you to understand that he who feeds and cares for the ravens will not forget his children.

March 7, 1878

The Law from Sinai

When the children of Israel left Rephidim they pursued their journey, winding up a narrow opening through the bold granite rocks of the desert mountains. They gradually ascended higher and higher, until there opened before them a wide extended plain, enclosed by granite ridges and mountain peaks towering toward the heavens. Horeb's range stood before them in somber majesty, its rocky crags towering aloft directed the eyes of the travelers heavenward. Awful, silent grandeur reigned over all. What a contrast was this scene to the busy activity of Egypt! Here there was nothing to distract the mind, nothing to speak to the senses but the stern granite pinnacles pointing toward heaven. God had commanded Moses to bring his people to this place of natural solitude and sublimity, that they might hear his voice, and receive the statute book of heaven.

Fifty days previous to this the pillar of fire had lighted the path through the Red Sea that God had miraculously opened before the marching multitudes of his people. They had since then made their way slowly onward through the desert; and God, by his miraculous power, had wrought for them in their necessity. When they were parched with thirst they had murmured against God, forgetful of what he had done for them; but God did not forget them, he gave them water from the flinty rock, and rained down bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger; and, through his providence, taught them lessons of faith in his power.

The whole congregation of Israel now encamped in the plain, in full view of Mount Horeb. Then followed the days of preparation for the great scene which was to make a most vivid impression upon their minds. The Lord gave Moses express directions in regard to this preparation which must

be made by his people. "And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow; and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai." The people were required to refrain from worldly care, and to cultivate devotional thoughts to put away their sins, to be free from all personal uncleanness, and to cherish an abiding sense of the holiness of God whose voice they were soon to hear.

God commanded Moses to put bounds around the mount, that no man or beast should touch it, for God was to sanctify the mount by his presence, and the contact of sinful man with that divine presence would result in the instant death of the former. The people moved about, making these solemn preparations with subdued deportment, and hushed voices, while their eyes were instinctively drawn toward the rugged heights of Mount Horeb. They obeyed the directions of Moses with alacrity, waiting to hear the words of God spoken through him, telling them what next they should do.

The camp was now alive with subdued excitement and expectancy. At length the trumpet is lifted to the lips of Moses, and the word peals forth, Let all the people come now and meet with God! The trumpeters, who have been waiting for this signal, take up the sound and repeat the command all along the line, wakening the resounding echoes of the mountains. The people obey the summons, and hurry from their tents with pale and anxious faces. They gather around the mount, and stand with bated breath, in solemn awe. Every murmur is hushed until the stillness is painful. Suddenly the mighty pealing of a trumpet is heard from the mount, followed by terrific thunder and lightning, while an earthquake shakes the mountain from base to summit, and, from the black and terrible cloud hanging over it like a pall, issues smoke and fiery flames.

The deafening thunder reverberates from mountain top to mountain top, and seems to roll with awful power down the sides of Mount Horeb, and

resound throughout the earth. It appears to the people that the mountain will be shattered into fragments and fall upon and cover them. The Hebrews fall prostrate to hide from their eyes the mystery and grandeur of the mount as it groans and trembles under the footsteps of the God of heaven. Wives cling to their husbands and children to their parents in terror, many begging to be removed from the fearful scene. Long concealed sins were there confessed in broken utterances, and repentance and humility softened the hearts and subdued the spirits of the most hardened and reckless.

The Lord now calls to Moses. He answers to the call. Then the Lord bids him come up to him into the mount. The eyes of all are turned toward their leader. Will he dare to go? Moses did not hesitate to obey, but with calm and trustful faith, passed up the quivering mountain with slow and solemn steps, amid smoke and flame, and is lost to the sight of the astonished people, while the mount remained shrouded in darkness, and volumes of thunder rolled down its quaking sides. At length Moses descends the mount.

The scene increases in awful grandeur as God speaks forth his holy law. At length the people instinctively retreat from the mount leaving Moses standing alone. The majesty and terror of this scene brings vividly before our minds the solemn events of the judgment, when the Prince of heaven shall come the second time, and the loud voice of the trumpet shall resound from one end of the earth to the other, penetrate the prison house of death, and break the sleep of the dead, who shall come forward to receive according to the deeds done in the body.

The Hebrews in terror cried to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and let not the Lord speak to us lest we die." They did not discern their Advocate with the Father, standing between him and sinful man, and claiming the erring people of Israel as the purchase of his own blood. They did not recognize in the voice that caused them such terror the voice of the angel that had conducted their travels from Egypt to Sinai.

Many can only discern in Sinai's God a Sovereign, Legislator, and Judge; but he has also given us there a true portrayal of his character as a loving as well as a just Father in this record, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

The Sovereign of the world has made known, in the ten commandments, the principles that should govern mankind. He requires the implicit obedience of his subjects, and if they refuse this, they are disloyal to the God of heaven. Two mighty principles are declared in those ten precepts. On the first table of stone were inscribed the four precepts showing the duty of man to God; and on the second table were the six showing the duty of man to his fellow man. Christ, who spoke the law, declared that all the law and the prophets hang upon the two chief commandments that illustrate those two great principles. They contain in brief the whole duty of man, to love God supremely and to love his neighbor as himself.

The law of the ten commandments, given in awful grandeur from Sinai, can never be repealed while the heavens and the earth remain. All enlightened law and government had its origin in those ten words of the Almighty. Those who speak slightingly of the moral code are blinded by sin, and are on the side of the great rebel, who has ever been at war with the law of God which is the foundation of his government in heaven and on earth. When God issues a proclamation that men are guiltless if they cease to love him, to reverence his name, and to keep holy his Sabbath--then, and not till then will the law of God be abrogated.

God requires of his subjects obedience, not to nine-tenths of the law, but

to every one of the ten precepts. They are like the links of a chain; if one is broken the chain is of no value. The violation of one commandment makes us commandment breakers; and we must yield willing obedience to all the precepts of Jehovah if we would be true commandment-keepers, for "He that offendeth in one part is guilty of all."

Those who profess to be ministers of God, yet teach the people that God's holy law has no longer any claims upon them, are working directly against Christ. They say to the sinner, You are no longer under the terror of Sinai, and the bondage of the law; only come to Jesus, and believe in him and you will be saved. But how can these teachers define sin to their hearers? The apostle Paul gives us this definition, "Sin is the transgression of the law. What shall we say then, is the law sin? Nay, I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. For without the law sin was dead; for I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived and I died, wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

David exclaims, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." David had transgressed the law, and the law held him a prisoner until he repented of his sin, and was pardoned through faith in the virtue of the promised Redeemer. There is no power in the law to remove a single defect, nor to save the sinner from the consequence of his transgression. But when the sinner is convicted by the light of the law, then he has a work to do: Repentance toward God because of transgression of his law, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, the sinners substitute and surety. Then pardon and free salvation may be his. But Jesus Christ will never save any one who has a knowledge of the law of God, yet lives in transgression of it.

Christ came to earth to maintain and exalt the divine law, by himself suffering the penalty of sin, and to thereby evidence that God will in no wise clear the guilty. Many claim that the law of God is done away with; but

Christ said: "Until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The ceremonial law of sacrificial offerings, pointing to Christ, ceased at the death of Christ, but his mission to earth was to vindicate the supreme law of God, not to annul it. If this latter could have been done, the Son of God need not have died to redeem sinful man. But because the law of God was as changeless as his character, it was necessary in order to preserve the authority of the universal Sovereign, and at the same time save man from the consequences of his transgression, that Jesus Christ should die, a sinless offering for a sinful world. The death of Christ therefore testifies to the immutability of God's law.

Many accept nine of the commandments, but are troubled about the fourth. They see no fault in the first, which commands that we should have no gods before the Infinite One, neither in the second, which prohibits image-worship, nor in the third which provides against the profanation of God's name. But the fourth seems difficult for them to comprehend; and they inquire why the world at large, and the churches do not observe the seventh day, and especially why the ministers do not teach its observance from their pulpits.

Ministers decide to accept a papal institution in the place of the day which God sanctified and blessed, rather than to be singular from the world, and incur the inconveniences resulting from such a reform. But their disloyalty does not excuse others in showing disrespect to the God of heaven, by trampling upon the sanctity of the day he has set apart for man to observe.

The fourth commandment is the only one that defines who is the living God. It points us back to creation, and to Eden: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed and sanctified the seventh day." Thus this precept bears the signet or seal of the Creator. The fourth commandment occupies a central

position in those regulations which define man's duty to God, and to his fellow men. It is the golden link which unites finite man to the Infinite God. What authority has man to flout at or object to this prominent precept more than to any one of the other nine?

The specific rules for the government of the social and religious life of the Hebrews, were given to Moses for the Israelites, and embraced the principles of the ten commandments. But those commandments themselves spoken by the voice of God in hearing of all the people, and engraven on the two tables of stone, were given for the benefit of all mankind, and were to endure through all time. Because the transgression of the fourth commandment is so general, does not lessen the sin of the transgressor. God holds man responsible for the observance of every one of his precepts.

Because the professed teachers of the people declare that the Sabbath law is no longer binding upon man, shall we lay aside our Bibles to accept their statement? Shall we trust our souls to the ministers? Can they answer for us in the day of God? When Christ announced that he was the Anointed One, if the Jews had searched the Scriptures for themselves, to ascertain if his words were true, they would not have been wrapped in error and bigotry. But they believed what the priests and rulers told them, that Christ was an impostor, and darkness closed about them. We do not wish to place ourselves in a position similar to that of the unbelieving Jews. We would follow the injunction of our Saviour: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

The transgressor of the divine law will be in a fearful position in the day of God. No tears or prayers, or reformation can justify him before the Almighty. There is but one name given under heaven and among men that can save the sinner from the condemnation of the law. The name of Jesus is efficacious to the sinner during his probation. Jesus never broke the law of his Father; he honored and magnified it, and bore its curse for us.

Repentance toward God, and simple faith in the blood of Christ, and obedience to the law of God will save the sinner; for Christ will then impute to him his righteous character. But the blood of Christ will never atone for a sin unrepented and unconfessed.

Oh that the people would seek wisdom for themselves, and consider the great truths of God's word! Their eternal interests are involved in these matters, and none can afford to make a mistake. All our difficulties and questioning doubts will depart, if we but accept Christ as our teacher, and learn wisdom of him.

March 14, 1878

The Law and the Gospel

When the Jews rejected Christ they rejected the foundation of their faith. And, on the other hand, the Christian world of today who claim faith in Christ, but reject the law of God are making a mistake similar to that of the deceived Jews. Those who profess to cling to Christ, centering their hopes on him, while they pour contempt upon the moral law, and the prophecies, are in no safer position than were the unbelieving Jews. They cannot understandingly call sinners to repentance, for they are unable to properly explain what they are to repent of. The sinner, upon being exhorted to forsake his sins, has a right to ask, What is sin? Those who respect the law of God can answer, Sin is the transgression of the law. In confirmation of this the apostle Paul says, I had not known sin but by the law.

Those only who acknowledge the binding claim of the moral law can explain the nature of the atonement. Christ came to mediate between God and man, to make man one with God by bringing him into allegiance to his law. There was no power in the law to pardon its transgressor. Jesus alone could pay the sinner's debt. But the fact that Jesus has paid the indebtedness of the repentant sinner does not give him license to continue in transgression of the law of God; but he must henceforth live in obedience to that law.

The law of God existed before the creation of man or else Adam could not have sinned. After the transgression of Adam the principles of the law were not changed, but were definitely arranged and expressed to meet man in his fallen condition. Christ, in counsel with his Father, instituted the system of sacrificial offerings: that death, instead of being immediately visited upon the transgressor, should be transferred to a victim which should prefigure the great and perfect offering of the Son of God.

The sins of the people were transferred in figure to the officiating priest, who was a mediator for the people. The priest could not himself become an offering for sin, and make an atonement with his life, for he was also a sinner. Therefore, instead of suffering death himself, he killed a lamb without blemish; the penalty of sin was transferred to the innocent beast, which thus became his immediate substitute, and typified the perfect offering of Jesus Christ. Through the blood of this victim, man looked forward by faith to the blood of Christ which would atone for the sins of the world.

If Adam had not transgressed the law of God, the ceremonial law would never have been instituted. The gospel of good news was first given to Adam in the declaration made to him that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and it was handed down through successive generations to Noah, Abraham, and Moses. The knowledge of God's law, and the plan of salvation were imparted to Adam and Eve by Christ himself. They carefully treasured the important lesson, and transmitted it by word of mouth, to their children, and children's children. Thus the knowledge of God's law was preserved.

Men lived nearly a thousand years in those days, and angels visited them with instruction directly from Christ. The worship of God through sacrificial offerings was established, and those who feared God acknowledged their sins before him, and looked forward with gratitude and holy trust to the coming of the Day Star, which should guide the fallen sons of Adam to heaven, through repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus the gospel was preached in every sacrifice; and the works of the believers continually revealed their faith in a coming Saviour. Jesus said to the Jews: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

It was impossible, however, for Adam, by his example and precepts to stay the tide of woe which his transgression had brought upon men. Unbelief crept into the hearts of men. The children of Adam present the earliest example of the two different courses pursued by men with regard to the claims of God. Abel saw Christ figured in the sacrificial offerings. Cain was an unbeliever in regard to the necessity of sacrifices; he refused to discern that Christ was typified by the slain lamb; the blood of beasts appeared to him without virtue. The gospel was preached to Cain as well as to his brother; but it was to him a savor of death unto death, because he would not recognize, in the blood of the sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ the only provision made for man's salvation.

Our Saviour, in his life and death, fulfilled all the prophecies pointing to himself, and was the substance of all the types and shadows signified. He kept the moral law, and exalted it by answering its claims as man's representative. Those of Israel who turned to the Lord, and accepted Christ as the reality shadowed forth by the typical sacrifices, discerned the end of that which was to be abolished. The obscurity covering the Jewish system as a veil, was to them as the veil which covered the glory upon the face of Moses. The glory upon the face of Moses was the reflection of that light which Christ came into the world to bring for the benefit of man.

While Moses was shut in the mount with God, the plan of salvation, dating from the fall of Adam, was revealed to him in a most forcible manner. He then knew that the very angel who was conducting the travels of the children of Israel was to be revealed in the flesh. God's dear Son, who was one with the Father, was to make all men one with God who would believe on, and trust in him. Moses saw the true significance of the sacrificial offerings. Christ taught the gospel plan to Moses, and the glory of the gospel, through Christ, illuminated the countenance of Moses so that the people could not look upon it.

Moses himself was unconscious of the beaming glory reflected upon his face, and knew not why the children of Israel fled from him when he approached them. He called them to him, but they dared not look upon that glorified face. When Moses learned that the people could not look upon his face, because of its glory, he covered it with a vail.

The glory upon the face of Moses was exceedingly painful to the children of Israel because of their transgression of God's holy law. This is an illustration of the feelings of those who violate the law of God. They desire to remove from its penetrating light which is a terror to the transgressor, while it seems holy, just, and good to the loyal. Those only who have a just regard for the law of God can rightly estimate the atonement of Christ which was made necessary by the violation of the Father's law.

Those who cherish the view that there was no Saviour in the old dispensation, have as dark a vail over their understanding as did the Jews who rejected Christ. The Jews acknowledged their faith in a Messiah to come in the offering of sacrifices which typified Christ. Yet when Jesus appeared, fulfilling all the prophecies regarding the promised Messiah, and doing works that marked him as the divine son of God; they rejected him, and refused to accept the plainest evidence of his true character. The Christian church, on the other hand, who profess the utmost faith in Christ, in despising the Jewish system virtually deny Christ, who was the originator of the entire Jewish economy.

March 21, 1878

The Sins of the Pharisees

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." The scribes and Pharisees claimed to be invested with divine authority similar to that of Moses. They assumed to take his place as expounders of the law and judges of the people. As such they claimed all deference and obedience from the people. But Jesus admonished his hearers to observe and do that which the priests taught according to the law, but not to follow their example, for they neglected the duties which they taught others to observe.

The Saviour made it plain to all that he held no personal grievance against the scribes and Pharisees, notwithstanding their abuse of him; but he openly condemned their characters and acts as directly opposed to their teachings, and therefore not to be imitated. Said he, "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." The Pharisees enjoined a multitude of minute regulations having their foundation in tradition, and unreasonably restraining personal liberty of action.

God forbade the eating of unclean beasts, not to exercise an arbitrary authority, but to preserve the life and health of his people. In order for them to retain their faculties of mind and body, it was necessary that their blood should be kept pure, by eating simple, healthful food. He therefore specified the animals least objectionable for food. The leading Jews who delighted in teaching and in administering the law, carried the prohibitions of God to unreasonable lengths, making life a burden of ceremonies and restrictions.

They carried the regulations of eating and drinking so far that the mind was kept on a continual strain in discriminating between what was considered clean and unclean, and in following out the multitude of injunctions imposed by the priests. All the water was strained lest the presence of the smallest speck or insect might render it unclean, and therefore unfit to use. They were in constant fear of infringing upon customs and traditions which were taught to them as portions of the law.

The Pharisees by their endless round of forms, fastened the minds of the people upon external services to the neglect of true religion. They failed to connect the thought of Christ with their ceremonies, and, having forsaken the fountain of living water, hewed out for themselves broken cisterns that could hold no water.

The priests, scribes and rulers not only rejected Christ themselves but took the most unfair means to prejudice the people against him, deceiving them by false reports and gross misrepresentations. Said Jesus: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." These words, condemning this sin of the Pharisees, are applicable to all who follow their example. In all ages of the world truth has been unpopular; its doctrines are not congenial to the natural mind. The cold professor, the bigot and hypocrite are not willing to accept that which searches the heart, and reproves the life. Some ministers turn the ears of the people from truth unto fables, stopping at nothing that will help to carry out their purpose. They even stoop to pervert the words and malign the characters of those who receive and love the precious truths of God, and labor to bring others to a knowledge of them.

The Saviour pronounced a woe on those who, imitating the great rebel, compass all difficulties to make one proselyte. Said he, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one

proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Those whom he addressed would resort to any species of deception in order to gain influence with the people, and prevent them from believing and obeying the truth. The Saviour declared of them: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it." These cutting words were applied to those who made the highest pretensions to godliness, and who regarded all other nations as contemptible in the sight of God.

Just such zealous adversaries of the truth are met in our day. They leave no means untried to subvert the minds and consciences of men. They originate falsehoods, and find plenty ready to believe them. They have taken step after step away from the light into darkness, until the light has become darkness to them. They possess a determined zeal, which savors of honesty, and appears to many as such. They are willing to make great sacrifices and endure rebuffs for the sake of attaining their object, returning again and again to the same point, seeking to turn souls away from the divine truth unto superstitions and fables. These pious pretenders come as angels of light, professing deep experience in the things of God, while they are doing the work of Satan. Those whom they succeed in gaining become even worse than themselves; such is the downward road to ruin. Jesus says of this latter class, "Ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The Saviour continued: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, who say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it he is guilty. Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" The priests interpreted the

requirements of God to meet their false and narrow standard. They presumed to make nice distinctions between the comparative guilt of various sins, passing over some lightly, assigning as an excuse that the end justified the means, while errors of perhaps less consequence were treated as unpardonable. These blind guides so confused the minds of their followers in regard to sin and the proper standard of holiness, that they were destined to eventually perish with their leaders.

The Pharisees took upon themselves the responsibility of deciding concerning the burdens and duties of others according to the judgment of their own carnal minds. They accepted money from persons in return for excusing them from their vows, and in some cases, crimes of an aggravated character were passed over in consideration of large sums of money paid to the authorities by the transgressor. At the same time these hypocritical priests were exact in the matter of sacrifices and ceremonies, as if it were possible for cold forms to blot out the unrepented sins of their daily lives.

The Lord said unto Samuel, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." No outward service, even in that which is required by God can be a substitute for an obedient life. The Creator desires heart service of his creatures.

God has said through Hosea, "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against me." The many sacrifices of the Jews and the flowing of blood to atone for sins for which they felt no true repentance was ever repugnant to God. He spoke through Micah saying, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my

transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doeth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Costly gifts and a semblance of holiness cannot win the favor of God. He requires for his mercies a contrite spirit, a heart open to the light of truth, love and compassion for our fellow men and a spirit refusing to be bribed through avarice or self-love. The priests and rulers were destitute of these essentials to God's favor, and their most precious gifts and gorgeous ceremonies were an abomination in his eyes.

The Pharisees built expensive monuments to the dead prophets, pretending to deplore the sins of their fathers in rejecting, persecuting and slaying the chosen servants of God. At the same time they were burning with rage against the greatest prophet the world had ever seen, simply because he revealed and reproved their sins. They not only manifested the same spirit of hatred which had actuated their fathers, but were doing ten-fold worse than they in opposing and plotting against the divine Son of God.

These men whom Jesus exposed in so unsparing a manner should be a warning to those who reject the light of truth. They had gone step by step into darkness, rejecting the evidences that Jesus was the true Messiah, until the obscurity of their minds was so great that they called righteousness sin and sin righteousness. They evinced the same malice that actuated Satan against Christ in heaven, and for the same reason, because of the superior goodness of the Son of God. They were indeed the children of Satan. They condemned the acts of their forefathers in persecuting the prophets, and assumed to be the representatives of those holy men of God who died for their faith; they built the tombs of the prophets and garnished their sepulchers, and said one to another, If we had lived in those days we should not have been partakers with those who shed the blood of God's servants, yet at the same time they were planning to destroy the Son of God, and would

not have hesitated to imbrue their hands in his blood if they had not feared the people.

The condition of the Pharisees should be a lesson to the Christian world of the present day. It should open their eyes to the power of Satan to deceive human minds when they once turn from the precious light of truth, and yield to the control of the enemy. Many who make exalted professions today are following in the track of the Pharisees. They zealously cherish the memory of the prophets, even as the Pharisees were zealous in building and decorating their tombs. They declare that, had they lived in the days when Christ was upon the earth, they would have gladly received his teachings and obeyed them. But if these very persons had been placed in a similar position with the Jews, they would have done no better than they who crucified the Saviour.

Unpopular truth is no more acceptable to Pharisaical, self-righteous hearts today than when Christ walked the earth, a man among men.

If Christians were to be tested now as were the Jews at the first advent of Christ, few would accept him wrapped in his garment of humanity, living a life of humiliation and poverty. The Christian world can accept Messiah as a King at the right hand of God in heaven, but their hearts reject a Saviour of humility and self-sacrifice; they shrink from the cross of Christ, even as did the haughty Pharisees. Few indeed imitate the example of Jesus, and follow his teachings in their daily lives. He has exhorted his disciples to follow in his foot-steps. Many are in as great blindness concerning the plan of salvation as were the Pharisees, who professed obedience to God while they rejected Him who came to work out their salvation, that their efforts to gain a righteous character should have virtue with God through the sinner's Advocate and substitute.

If man sacrifices righteous principles and truth because he can thus

avoid persecution and trial in this life, he may obtain the friendship of the world, but will lose the favor of God. He barter his eternal welfare for trifling considerations. But he that obeys the requirements of Christ, neither looking nor planning for his own convenience, preferring even to sacrifice his temporal life rather than turn from the light of truth will secure the reward of the future immortal life. Jesus has said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

May 9, 1878

Sanctification through the Truth

We who profess to keep the commandments of God, are not beyond the temptations of Satan. The history of the Jews was written for our benefit, upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we should not murmur as they did; that we should not be filled with ambition and pride as they were; that we should avoid their example of wrong doing, and not fall as they fell. In the sacred word of God the history of Israel is spread out before us for our instruction. Are we making the most of the information given us, or are we merely following in the footsteps of the Pharisees, merely pretending to be connected with God, bearing the leaves of the profession, but not the fruit. We have the truth of God, the most precious, sacred truth that was ever given to the world; the truth that was likened to a golden chain, being let down, link after link, from heaven to earth for us to grasp. Yet, we may profess to grasp the golden links of truth, and still not be sanctified by it. Like the pretentious fig tree, we may be covered with leaves but be destitute of fruit. While we know that the truth we hold is as firm as the everlasting hills, how many of us are ready to settle down upon the theory of that truth, without having evidence that Christ is in them, and they in Christ? How many are content to pass on from day to day without experiencing its sanctifying influence upon the heart, which leads to good works. Christ said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." It is the sanctification through the truth that makes us the beloved of God.

We should not only take hold of the truth, but let it take hold of us; and thus have the truth in us and we in the truth. And if this is the case, our lives and characters will reveal the fact that the truth is accomplishing something for us; that it is sanctifying us, and is giving us a moral fitness for the society of heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. The truth we hold is from

heaven; and when that religion finds a lodgement in the heart, it commences its work of refining and purifying; for the religion of Jesus Christ never makes a man rough or rude; it never makes him careless, or hard-hearted; but the truth of heavenly origin, that which comes from God, elevates and sanctifies a man; it makes courteous, kind, affectionate, and pure; it takes away his hard heart, his selfishness and love of the world, and it purifies him from pride and ungodly ambition.

June 6, 1878

Parents as Counselors

Parents should encourage their children to confide in them and unburden to them their heart griefs, their daily little annoyances and trials. If they do this, the parents can learn to sympathize with their children, and pray for them and with them, that God would shield and guide them. They should point them to their never-failing Friend and Counselor, who will be touched with the feelings of their infirmities. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Satan tempts children to be reserved to their parents, and choose their young and inexperienced companions as their confidants; such as cannot help them, or give them good advice. They indulge in unprofitable conversation upon the acts and doings of others, which wither noble, devotional thoughts and feelings, and drive good and holy desires from the heart, and leave it cold and destitute of true love for God.

Children would be saved from many evils if they would be more familiar with their parents. Parents should encourage in their children a disposition to be open and frank with them, to come to them with their difficulties, and when they are perplexed as to what course is right, to lay the matter just as they view it before their parents, and ask advice of them. Who are so well calculated to see and point out their dangers as godly parents? Who can understand the peculiar temperaments of their children as well as they? The mother who has watched every turn of the mind from infancy, and is acquainted with the natural disposition, is best prepared to counsel her children. Who can tell as well what traits of character to check and restrain, as the mother, aided by the father?

Children who are Christians will prefer the love and approbation of their God-fearing parents above every earthly blessing. They will love and honor their parents. This should be one of the principal studies of their lives, How can I make my parents happy? Children who have not been disciplined and received right instruction, have but little sense of their obligations to their parents. It is often the case that the more their parents do for them the more ungrateful they are, and the less they respect them. Children that have been petted and waited upon, always expect it; and if their expectations are not met, they are disappointed and discouraged. This same disposition will be seen through their whole lives, and they will be helpless, leaning upon others for aid, expecting others to favor them and yield to them. And if they are opposed, even after grown to manhood and womanhood, they think themselves abused; and thus they worry their way through the world, hardly able to bear their own weight, often murmuring and fretting because everything does not suit them. Much sin results from idleness. Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation the enemy suggests; but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control, and parents should teach their children that idleness is sin.

Many parents think that if they gratify the wishes of their children, and let them follow their own inclinations, they will gain their love. What a mistaken idea! What an error! Children thus disciplined, grow up unrestrained in their desires, unyielding in their dispositions, selfish, exacting, and overbearing, and are a curse to themselves and everybody around them. Parents, to a great extent, hold the future happiness of their children in their own hands. Upon them rests the important work of forming their children's character. The instructions they give them in childhood will follow them all through their lives. Parents can sow the seed which will spring up and bear fruit either for good or evil.

July 18, 1878

Incidents on the Voyage to the North Pacific

We left San Francisco June 10, in the steamer Oregon for Portland. I had been overworked, and was much worn, and flattered myself that I should rest on board the steamer. But the wind blew very strong directly against us, I remained on deck after nearly all had abandoned it because of sea-sickness, I enjoyed the sight of the billows running mountain high, blue and green, and the dashing spray reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. I could not become weary of looking upon that grand scene; and I reflected how easily all on board might be engulfed in the angry waters.

As I looked upon the white-capped, roaring billows, I was reminded of that scene in the life of Christ, when the disciples, in obedience to the command of their Master, went in their boats to the farther side of the sea. A terrible tempest broke upon them, their vessels would not obey their will, and they were driven hither and thither until they laid down their oars in despair. They expected to perish there; but, while the tempest and the billows talked with death, Christ, whom they had left upon the other side, appeared to them, walking calmly upon the boisterous, white-capped waves. They had been bewildered by the uselessness of their efforts, and the apparent hopelessness of their case, and had given all up for lost. When they saw Jesus before them upon the water it increased their terror, they interpreted it as a sure precursor of their immediate death. They cried out in great fear. But, instead of his appearance heralding the presence of death, he came as the messenger of life. His voice was heard above the roar of the elements: "It is I; be not afraid." How quickly the scene now changed from the horror of despair to the joy of faith and hope in the presence of the beloved Master! The disciples felt no more anxiety nor dread of death, for Christ was with them.

I remained on deck until dark, and then went into the cabin, where the pitching of the boat made me very sick. This was on Monday, and I was unable to sit up from that time until Thursday morning, taking but once during that time a little beef tea and cracker. We had a strong head wind against us all the way from San Francisco, and we were all rejoiced when, on Thursday morning, we passed the bar, and entered the smooth river, leaving the restless billows behind us. There were but two or three passengers on board who were not sea-sick.

Captain Connor of the steamer Oregon was courteous and attentive, doing all in his power to make our voyage pleasant. The stewardess was obliging, ever busy hurrying from state-room to state-room with food to tempt the appetites of those too sick to go to the dining-room table. We felt thankful to see so much attention given on this boat to those suffering from sea-sickness, who needed care so much.

All on board made most of the last day upon the water. They had then all recovered their health and appetite, and seemed not much the worse for their sea-sickness.

There were several ministers on board who, like ourselves, were going to Oregon to hold meetings, by request. Among them was Elder Brown, with his family, who has been speaking in San Francisco and Santa Rosa. I had distributed some of our publications among the passengers. In the evening I was lying in my state-room, the door of which opened upon the upper deck. I heard the elder stating to a company gathered about him that it was impossible for any man to keep the law of God; that man never did keep it, and never can keep it. Said he, "No man will get to heaven by keeping the law. Mrs. White is all law, law; she believes that we must be saved by the law, and no one can be saved unless they keep the law. Now I believe in Christ. He is my Saviour, Christ alone can save us, and without him we cannot be saved."

I felt the injustice of the charge made against me, and could not permit such a statement, made before quite a gathering of people, to remain uncorrected. I accordingly said, "That is a false statement. Mrs. White has never occupied that position. I will speak for myself and for our people. We have always taken the position that there was no power in the law to save a single transgressor of that law. The law convicts and condemns the sinner, but it is not in its province to pardon the least or greatest sin. If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The sinner gets into trouble with the Father through transgression of his law. Christ, the sinner's Advocate, pleads in his behalf. The law cannot release the sinner from the consequence of his transgression, but Christ himself pays the penalty the sinner has incurred by his disobedience.

"The apostle Paul inquires, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.' Shall we presume upon the mercy of Christ by living in transgression of the law of God? Paul declares to the elders of the church, 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Repentance toward God because of his law transgressed, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as the sinner's Advocate. Said Paul, 'What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' Again Paul sums up the matter: 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.'

"Christ did not come to excuse sin, nor to justify a sinner while he continued to transgress that law for which the Son of God was to give his life to vindicate and exalt. Had it been possible for the law to be repealed, Christ would have had no need to come to our earth, and to die, the just for the unjust. God could have taken the sinner back into favor by annulling the law.

But this could not be. The law holds the transgressor in bondage, but the obedient are free. The law cannot cleanse from sin, it condemns the sinner. The sinner may stand justified before God only through repentance toward him, and faith in the merits of Jesus Christ. The law is a great mirror by means of which the sinner may discern the defects in his moral character. But the mirror cannot remove those defects. The gospel points to Christ as the only one able to remove the stains of sin by his blood. Though the law has no pardoning power, it is the only means by which to explain to the sinner what sin really is. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Without the law, Paul tells us sin is dead.

"It is folly to bid the sinner come to Christ before being convicted of his sin by being brought before the mirror of the law of God. What is the sinner to be converted from? The transgression of God's law to obedience of it. But if he is told that he cannot keep the law of God, and that if he should attempt it he would be brought into bondage, to what is he then converted,--transgression of the law to a continuance in that transgression? This is absurd. Yet professed ministers of Christ tell the sinner that he is guiltless while disloyal to the law of God. Such conversions are not ratified in heaven.

"Our Christ was the Saviour of the ancient worthies as much as he is our Saviour. They looked forward by faith, to a Saviour to come. Adam was saved by the gospel as virtually as we are saved today. Abraham was saved by faith in Christ as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Moses was saved by the merits of Christ, who was the angel that led the armies of Israel in all their travels through the wilderness. God commanded, 'Provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him,' All who have died in faith, from righteous Abel unto our day are saved by the merits of Jesus Christ.

"Jesus said: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is

in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.' How many there are who cry Christ, Christ, only believe on Christ, when they do not the works of Christ. Such are represented by the class mentioned by our Saviour as workers of iniquity. They transgress the law of God, and by precept and example teach others to do likewise. Nominal profession of faith in Christ will not save a soul; neither will nominal observance of the law. The law of God must be obeyed from the heart; its principles must be carried out in the life; and faith in Jesus Christ as the world's Redeemer must be manifested in the life and character, or there is no true conversion.

"The law of God is changeless in its character as the eternal throne. The types and shadows reached to the antitype and substance, Jesus Christ. At his death they ceased to have any force or significance. But the law of the ten commandments, instituted in Eden, when the foundation of the world was laid, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, was to be as enduring as the heavens and the earth. Christ pronounced his benediction upon all who keep sacred the law of God: 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'

"Elder Brown, please never again make the misstatement that we do not rely on Jesus Christ for salvation, but trust in the law to be saved. We have never written one word to that effect, nor taught such a theory in any manner. We believe that no sinner can be saved in his sins (and sin is the transgression of the law), while you teach that the sinner may be saved while knowingly transgressing the law of God."

"Well," said Elder Brown, in a low voice, to those collected about him, "I know all about them." I felt called upon to reply to this, and said. "Sir, if

you know all about the position that we, as a people, occupy, you must also know that you have misrepresented us. We have never intimated, either in sermons preached by our ministers, or in the thousands of pages of our printed matter scattered all over the world, that there is any power in the law to save the sinner. On the contrary, it has been repeated again and again by our speakers and writers that the law has no power to redeem the transgressor from the consequences of his sin. We will speak at our approaching camp-meeting in Salem. Please come up, and learn what we really do believe, for it is evident that you are not acquainted with us or our faith."

I will here state that Elder Brown, while in San Francisco, said that he had known Mrs. White in the East--knew all about her, leaving an impression on the minds of those whom he addressed unfavorable to me and my work. I have no knowledge of ever having seen this man or of having a moment's conversation with him, previous to the voyage on the Oregon. I have no evidence that he ever heard me speak, or that he has ever read my writings, or acquainted himself with my mission. The truth undoubtedly is he is entirely ignorant concerning Mrs. White and her labors. Many have thus professed to be thoroughly acquainted with me whom I have never seen nor spoken with. They have gathered up the hearsays, and evil reports floating from false and slanderous tongues, and deal them out as facts which they know to be true.

I was astonished at the position taken by Elder Brown on the question of the law. It seemed incredible that one who professed to be a Bible student, and teacher, should affirm that no man ever kept the law of God, or could keep it. This is the fearful position taken by many ministers, in order to get rid of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Such teachers throw a very unfavorable light upon the character of our heavenly Father, when they represent him as giving men a code of laws which is the foundation of all civilized national and domestic government, yet which it is impossible that

men ever have or ever can obey. Such sentiments expressed by public teachers lead men, not only to disregard the divine law, but to trample upon it as an arbitrary requirement which they are justified in rebelling against. The teachers of such pernicious doctrines will not be in an enviable position when they shall meet the great Lawgiver over his broken law.

Wherein would man be happier even in this life if he should have perfect liberty to break the ten precepts of the Father's law? God, in his great love for man gave him that law by which to order his conduct, that he should be restricted to doing those things which would tend, to increase his real happiness, and that of his fellow creatures even in this life. The principles of the commandments, carried out in the daily life ennoble and sanctify the heart and mind and give one a moral fitness through Jesus Christ, for the society of holy angels. Our all wise heavenly Father knew what rules were required to guard man from sin and to regulate his life, leading him to practice such virtues as would make him a fit subject for heaven.

Christ said, "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Christ should be our example in all things. He came from the realms of glory, not to show man a way by which he could be saved in transgression of the law, by which transgression Adam fell. But he took upon himself human nature, passed triumphantly over the ground where Adam stumbled, and redeemed that failure by his own perfect obedience of the law, and resistance to the temptations of Satan, which had compassed the fall of Adam. Christ in his own life has given us a proof that man can keep the law of God, and, through his merits be a final overcomer.

In his sermon on the mount Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall

break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Christ here shows the object of his mission: To show man by his example, that he could be entirely obedient to the moral law, and regulate his life by its precepts. That law was exalted and made honorable by Jesus Christ.

Should the pope of Rome and all the inhabitants of the earth unite their intellect for the purpose, they would not abolish the smallest claim of the law spoken from Sinai. God has specified his will toward man in his ten precepts. It is as perpetual and unchangeable as his character. The law says to every transgressor, Thou shalt surely die. But Christ says to every soul that repents toward God for his transgression of the law, and turns in penitence to his Saviour, Thou shalt as surely be saved as that Christ died for the salvation of men.

What solemn words were those that fell from the lips of the divine Teacher, who came to make honorable the law of his Father: "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Ministers and people should comprehend the full significance of these words. Those who by word or action, or interpretation of Scripture, lessen, or explain away the sacred claims and dignity of God's holy law shall have no place in the kingdom of heaven. Christ would here have us understand that our righteousness must include, not only the observance of the letter of the law, but also the spirit and principle of it. The letter of the law specifies how we must walk in order to please God; the spirit of the law points to Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice, through whose merits the sinner can fulfill the requirements of the law, Christ said, "I and my Father are one." There is therefore perfect harmony between the law and the gospel.

July 25, 1878

Visit to Oregon

My visit to Oregon was of special interest to me. I here met, after a separation of four years, my dear friends, Brother and Sister Van Horn, whom we claim as our children. It was a most precious season to me, especially did my motherly heart go out in sympathy and love for Adelia Van Horn, and her two children whom I had never before seen. Separation had not estranged our hearts; our love and confidence had never been broken. Every moment of my stay with those dear children was precious to me. The labors of our brother and sister have not been in vain in the Lord. They have labored amid much discouragement, and deprivation of the society of familiar friends, and the sacrifice of many comforts, to do what they could for the Lord in the distant field of their labors. Sister Van Horn and her sister, Frances Jones, have suffered from ill health, and at times it was feared that both would lose their lives. But many prayers have ascended to heaven from their house, pleading that the great Healer would remove disease from them and give them health and freedom in him; and the Lord has brought them through their sore afflictions that they may glorify his name. Both sisters are now in much better health, for which we praise God.

Elder Van Horn is a missionary in the true sense of the word, and a man of excellent ability and deep spirituality. His wife is equally talented and self-sacrificing. Their devotion to the cause of present truth has led to the sound conversion of many souls. Brother Van Horn, with characteristic modesty, has not furnished as full and favorable reports of his work as he might justly have done. I was accordingly somewhat surprised, and very much pleased to find the cause of God in so prosperous a condition in Oregon. Through the untiring efforts of these faithful missionaries a company of Sabbath-keepers has been raised up on the North Pacific coast

which does honor to the cause. As a class they are persons of intelligence and rare moral worth. My association with them was very pleasant. I felt my heart linked with theirs in Christian sympathy and fellowship.

I felt it my privilege to rest upon the first Sabbath after my arrival in Salem. Tuesday evening, June 18, I met for the first time in this State a goodly number of Sabbath-keepers, who possess true moral worth. My heart was softened by the spirit of God. I gave my testimony for Jesus, and for the sweet privilege that was ours of trusting in his love, and of claiming his power to unite with our efforts to save sinners from perdition. If we would see the work of God prosper we must have Christ dwelling in us; in short we must work the works of Christ. Wherever we might look the whitening harvest appeared; and the laborers are so few. I felt my heart filled with the peace of God, and drawn out in love for his dear people with whom I was worshipping for the first time.

On Sunday, June 23, I spoke by invitation, in the Methodist church of Salem, on the subject of Temperance. The attendance was unusually good, and I had freedom in treating this, my favorite subject. I was requested to speak again in the same place on the Sunday following the camp-meeting, but was prevented by hoarseness. On the next Tuesday evening, however, I again spoke in the church. Many invitations were tendered me to speak upon Temperance in various cities and towns of Oregon, but the state of my health forbade my complying with these requests. Constant speaking, and the change of climate, had brought a temporary but severe hoarseness upon me.

The camp-meeting was a season of profitable labor for God, and strengthened the church to go on in their warfare for the truth. I had freedom in speaking, though suffering almost constantly from hoarseness. I felt glad to meet with his people, who deeply appreciated my labors among them. During my stay in Oregon, I visited the prison in Salem, and by invitation spoke to the convicts in the prison chapel. Next week I will give an account

of this visit, and my discourse on that occasion.

August 1, 1878

Visit to the Prison

Sunday, June 23, by invitation, I visited the prison, in Salem, Oregon, in company with Brother and Sister Carter, and Sister Jordan, who took me there in her carriage. The superintendent and warden of the prison were introduced to me. When the time arrived for service we were conducted to the chapel, a room made cheerful by an abundance of light, and pure fresh air. At a signal from a bell, two men opened the great iron gates by means of a lever, and the prisoners came flocking from their cells into the chapel. The doors were securely closed behind them, and for the first time in my life, I was immured in prison walls.

I had anticipated seeing a set of repulsive looking men. In this I was disappointed; many of them seemed to be intelligent, and some appeared to be men of ability. They were dressed in the coarse, but neat striped prison uniform, their hair smooth, and boots brushed. As I looked upon the varied physiognomies before me, I thought: To each of these men has been committed peculiar gifts or talents for use, and not for abuse. All before me, from those who had occupied conspicuous and important positions in the world, and in the church, even those who had been most lowly and obscure, have been entrusted with some talents, whether of wealth, station, influence, kindly sympathies or affections, they were given from the heavenly treasury, and were to have been used for the glory of God, and the benefit of the world.

The men before me had despised the gifts of heaven, and had abused, and misapplied them. Some of the convicts manifested a forced unnatural cheerfulness. But many, especially the older men, looked exceedingly sad and melancholy. Before me were youths of tender years, and the hardened,

gray-haired sinner, all under the bondage of the law, because they had transgressed its statutes. As I looked upon young men of eighteen to twenty and thirty years of age, I thought of their unhappy mothers, and of the grief and remorse which was their bitter portion. Had they done their duty by their children? Had they not indulged them in their own will and way, and neglected to teach them the statutes of God, and his claims upon them? Many of those mothers' hearts had been broken by the ungodly course pursued by their children.

When all the company were assembled, Brother Carter read the hymn. All had books, and joined heartily in singing. One, who seemed to be an accomplished musician, played the organ. I then opened the meeting by prayer, and again all joined in singing. I spoke from the words of John: "Behold, what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

I exalted before them the infinite sacrifice that the father made, in giving his beloved Son for fallen men, that they might through obedience be transformed, and become the acknowledged sons of God. The church and the world are called upon to behold and admire a love which thus expressed is beyond human comprehension, and even amazed the angels of heaven. This love was so deep, so broad, and so high, that it filled the holy angels with amazement, and language in which to describe it, failing the inspired apostle, he calls upon the church and the world to behold it--to make it the theme of contemplation, and of admiration.

I presented before my hearers the sin of Adam in the transgression of the Father's express commands. God made man upright, perfectly holy and happy; but he lost the favor of God, and destroyed his own happiness by

disobedience of the Father's law. The sin of Adam plunged the race in hopeless misery and despair. Every successive generation upon the earth have degenerated physically, mentally, and morally. Sin with its terrible curse corrupted the world, and almost obliterated the image of God in man. But the wonderful, pitying love of God did not leave men in their hopeless, fallen condition to utterly perish. He gave his well beloved Son for their salvation. He who was the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of him took man's, nature, to suffer affliction, scorn and hatred of the very ones he came to save. Christ entered the world, his divinity clothed in humanity; he passed over the ground where Adam fell; he bore the test which Adam failed to endure; he overcame every temptation of Satan, and thus redeemed Adam's disgraceful failure and fall.

The sons of men gave way to the indulgence of appetite, which set on fire their passions. They became violent, basely corrupt, and hardened. Their thoughts and acts were evil, and God finally visited his wrath upon the children of disobedience, and washed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood. But God acknowledged the few on earth who were righteous. Noah and his family were saved. In the midst of his wrath and retributive justice God remembered mercy, and left not the righteous and faithful to perish with the wicked.

When the earth became peopled again, sin once more spread abroad over the land. Wickedness covered all nations like the pall of death. Satan compassed the ruin of thousands through temptation to indulge appetite. He has ever thus sought to pervert the senses of man, weaken his moral power, and make him the slave of appetite; he then gains control of him, and uses him as his agent in practising crime, and all manner of wickedness. We see, at the present day, great lack of discernment in regard to right and wrong, and an absence of principle. We may trace this lamentable state of things to the general indulgence of perverted appetite, which excites the baser passions, and urges its victim on to excesses of every kind, and finally to

crimes of every degree.

Intemperance of any kind will enervate a character originally firm, noble, and independent. His fine sensibilities will be blunted, his conscience will become seared. He will form bad associations, evil communications will corrupt his good manners. One false step leads him to another, which may be fatal, and he becomes the tool of Satan. Men plunge into wild license and reckless dissipation, and call it freedom of action, when they are in veriest bondage to the most cruel tyrant who knows no compassion for the wretched victims he allures to ruin. When the world was filled with iniquity God lifted up his standard against Satan by sending his Son to the world in the likeness of sinful flesh. Christ bridged the gulf that sin had made, which separated earth from heaven, and man from God.

I then referred to the long fast of Christ in the wilderness. The sin of the indulgence of appetite, and its power over human nature can never be fully realized except as that long fast of Christ when contending single-handed with the prince of the power of darkness is studied and understood. Man's salvation was at stake. Would Satan or would the Redeemer of the world come off conqueror! It is impossible for us to conceive with what intense interest angels of God watched the trial of their loved Commander.

Jesus came from heaven to earth, assumed man's nature, and was tempted in all points like as we are that he might know how to succor those who should be tempted. Christ's life is for our example. He shows in his willing obedience, how man may keep the law of God, and that transgression of the law, and not obedience of it, brings him into bondage. The Saviour was full of compassion and love; he never spurned the truly penitent, however great their guilt; but he severely denounced hypocrisy of every sort, he is acquainted with the sins of men, he knows all their acts, and reads their secret motives; yet he does not turn away from them in their iniquity. He pleads and reasons with the sinner, and, in one sense,--that of having himself

borne the weakness of humanity,--he puts himself on a level with him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Man, who has defaced the image of God in his soul by a corrupt life cannot, by mere human effort, effect a radical change in himself. He must accept the provisions of the gospel; he must be reconciled to God through obedience of his law and faith in Jesus Christ. His life from thenceforth must be governed by a new principle. Through repentance, faith and good works he may develop and perfect a righteous character, and claim through the merits of Christ the privileges of the sons of God. The principles of divine truth received and cherished in the heart will carry us to a height of moral excellence we had not deemed possible for us to reach. "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

Here is a work for man to do. He must face the mirror of God's law, discern the defects in his moral character and put away his sins, washing his robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Envy, pride, malice, deceit, strife, crime will be cleansed from the heart that is recipient of the love of Christ, and cherishes the hope of being made like him when we shall see him as he is. The religion of Christ refines and dignifies its possessor, whatever his associations or station in life may be. Men who become enlightened Christians rise above the level of their former character into greater mental and moral strength. Those fallen and degraded by sin and crime may become but a little lower than the angels through the merits of the Saviour.

But the influence of a gospel hope will not lead the sinner to look upon the salvation of Christ as a matter of free grace, while he continues to live in transgression of the law of God. When the light of truth dawns upon his

mind, and he fully understands the requirements of God, and realizes the extent of his transgressions, he will reform his ways, become loyal to God through the strength obtained from his Saviour, and lead a new and purer life. Those who overcome in the name of Jesus will stand about the great white throne, with crowns of immortal glory, waving the palm branches of victory. They will be sons of God, children of the heavenly King, their lives running parallel with the life of God. The joy of the Lord will be their joy, and no shadow will ever darken their heavenly home. Said Christ, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." While mercy lingers, I beseech you to make the most of the probationary time left you, in preparing for eternity, that life may not be an utter failure, and that in the time of solemn scrutiny you may be found with those who are accepted of God, and are called the sons of God.

August 15, 1878

Letters from Mrs. E. G. White

The following we extract from private letters received from Sister White since leaving Oakland, July 28, accompanied by her daughter Mrs. Emma White, and Miss Edith Donaldson.

She writes under date of July 29: "We arrived at Sacramento yesterday, and were met by Brother and Sister Wilkinson, who gave us a hearty welcome and took us to their home, where we were kindly entertained during our stay. Last night (Sunday) I spoke according to appointment. The house was well filled with an attentive congregation, and the Lord gave me freedom in speaking to them from his word. On Monday we visited the Capitol, under the guidance of Brother and Sister Wilkinson and spent some time looking through the State library, art collections and cabinets of mineral and metallurgical specimens. We were much interested in what we saw, and would have enjoyed the privilege of remaining longer in the city to farther inspect these valuable collections of the State. But we were obliged to push on the same day, in order to meet my appointment at Reno."

August 1: "We have just passed Ogden, we occupy a splendid car, and are all in good health and spirits. We shall arrive at Cheyenne tomorrow noon, when we change cars for Denver. As we passed over the great American desert in the heat and alkali dust we became very weary of the barren mountainous scenery, though we were furnished with every convenience, and glided swiftly and smoothly over the rails, drawn by our iron steed. My imagination carried me back to the ancient Hebrews, traveling over rocks and arid desert for forty years. The heat, dust and roughness of the way drew complaints and sighs of fatigue from many who trod that weary way. I thought that if we were obliged to travel on foot across the barren

desert, often suffering from thirst, heat, and fatigue, very many of us would murmur more than did the Israelites. The peculiar features of mountain scenery on the overland route has often been sketched by pen and pencil. All who are delighted with the grandeur and beauty of nature must feel a thrill of joy as they behold those grand old mountains, beautiful hills, and the wild and rocky canyons. This is especially true with the Christian. He sees in the granite rocks, and the babbling streams the work of God's all-powerful hand. He longs to climb the lofty hills, for it seems that he would then be nearer heaven, though he knows that God hears the prayers of his children in the lowly valley as well on the mountain tops."

She writes from Rollinsville, Colo., August 8: "Here we are at the old house by the spring, quite comfortable in our temporary home. We here met my husband and children. I find my husband cheerful and active, walking and working as briskly as ever. I feel grateful to God for restoring him to this degree of health. On the way from Denver to this place we stopped in Boulder City, and beheld with joy our canvas meeting-house, where Elder Cornell and Brother Olmstead are holding a series of meetings. We found a quiet, blessed retreat in the comfortable home of Sister Dartt. The tent had been loaned to hold temperance meetings in, and, by special invitation, I spoke above an hour on the subject of temperance to a tent full of attentive hearers. Though wearied by my journey, the Lord helped me to successfully present before the people the necessity of practicing strict temperance in all things of realizing our duty to make every exertion for the welfare of our fellow-men; to overcome our own tendencies to indulge in that which is hurtful to mind and body; and also to do all in our power to help others to so overcome. I presented Christ as the source of all strength. His power combined with human effort can free men from the slavery of vicious habits, and restore them to an honorable position in society, give them enlarged capacities and enlightened views of this life and the life to come. I presented the necessity of educating the children from the cradle up to resist temptation, if we would effect any special reform in society. 'As the twig is

bent the tree inclines.'

"At the conclusion of the meeting I was congratulated by some of the principal citizens on my manner of treating the temperance subject. They declared that the only proper way was to treat it from a Christian standpoint, showing the people that they needed the help of God in order to free themselves from the bondage of intemperance. There appeared to be a general satisfaction at the result of the meeting, and a conviction that good would come from it.

"The Methodist minister in Boulder City spoke Saturday night to the effect that Elder Cornell misinterpreted scripture in teaching that we are living in the last days. Many of his statements will be reviewed by Elder C. A considerable interest is growing up in that place, which has increased under the recent labors in the tent. We hope to see a good work done there for the truth of God, and sinners brought from darkness to light.

"We long to see the truth triumph here in Colorado, and have much faith in the results of the labors now being carried on here. We were never more free in bearing our testimony than at the present time; and, although not able to respond to half the calls coming from different places, we mean to do all we can, trusting in the power of the God of Israel to sustain us in the work."

August 15, 1878

Proffered Mercy

The tears of Christ on the mount of Olivet, when he was being escorted with triumph and hosannas into Jerusalem just prior to his crucifixion were wrung from a broken heart because his love was spurned, and his mercy despised. He saw just before him, in his coming crucifixion, the consummation of the guilt of Jerusalem. Before him was the sheep gate through which for centuries the victims for sacrifice had been conducted. It was soon to open for the great Antitype, who should be taken by wicked hands and slain for the sins of the world. It rent the heart of Christ to pronounce the doom of the city of his love. His body swayed like a cedar before the tempest. He then uttered in a voice broken by grief, "Oh that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace." He hesitated, must the irrevocable sentence be pronounced. "But now they are hid from thine eyes."

This sentence of the Saviour and his tears were not alone for Jerusalem that lay before him, its temple flashing in the sunlight, but for those in all time who slight the proffered mercies of Christ, reject present privileges, the voice of admonition and warning, and continue in disobedience to God. Present unbelief and impenitence are welding the fetters which bind souls in the bondage of doubt and despair. The temple of the soul is desecrated by sin, as the courts of the temple at Jerusalem was desecrated by unholy traffic and confusion. The heart of rebellious man is open to robbers, and has become a den of thieves. He who was purchased at the infinite price of the agony and death of the Son of God becomes like the blighted fig-tree, withered to its very roots under the righteous vengeance of a rejected God.

We are not responsible for the sin of the Jews in rejecting Christ, but the

solemn period of our responsibility is when light, truth and warnings come directly to us. Christ said to Philip, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" It is not the servants of Christ, the bearers of his message whom we reject; but the Master who delegated them to act for him, and sound his warning. Jesus Christ has been a long time with us in mercies and warnings, and yet we have not known him. Christ says, Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. When entreaties, tears, and patient efforts are in vain, the terrible doom pronounced over Jerusalem must be pronounced over the sinner.

While mercy lingers, the golden opportunity still remains to repent and be saved through Christ. Has the temple of the soul been desecrated by unholy shrines? While the sun of righteousness still lingers, loath to remove his rays from those who have slighted his blessings, there is still time to repent, and make your peace with God. Christ calls the sinner, In this, thy day, seek those things which will make for your peace both in this life, and the life beyond the grave. He invites you who are stricken with sin to come with your burdens, and he will relieve you. He will cleanse you from the defilement of sin, and give you moral fitness for his kingdom. Despite your indifference or scorn he urges you to accept his love and mercy.

August 22, 1878

Jesus as an Householder

"Who then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom the Lord has made ruler over his household." Matthew 24:45. The Redeemer of the world asks who? and the question should come home to every heart, Lord, is it I? Christ is represented in the text as a man who took a far journey, left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work. Thus it appears that a work is given to every person, there is no exception, and the faithful performance of this work will bring to its doer the commendation of the Master. To ignore responsibilities makes men slothful servants, and the doing nothing in religious service will receive the condemnation of the Master.

The work of each one corresponds with the ability given him of God. All responsibility does not rest upon the ministers who teach the truth but upon every one who believes the truth. Religion, in this age of the world, is made to connect with the day of rest, and the ordinary church service, but is divorced from the daily business transactions of life. Many professed followers of Christ are content with merely performing their formal religious duties. But when asked, What have you done for Jesus, what self-sacrifice have you made for his dear sake who made the infinite sacrifice for you, they must answer, Nothing. Christ identified his interests with suffering humanity. He laid aside his high command in heaven, where he was worshiped of the angels, and came to a world seared and marred by the curse of sin, in order to save man. He suffered, and died, the just for the unjust, that fallen man might be partakers of his glory hereafter. But this sacrifice of Christ in man's behalf does not lessen the necessity of man's denying himself, and making sacrifices for God on his own account, and in his own behalf. The life of Christ is for our example; we are to follow in his footsteps.

Some ministers are dangerously misleading the people. They would have them accept the fatal sophistry of Satan that simple belief in Christ is sufficient for their salvation; that good works have nothing to do with it. Christ, by his example and precepts taught an entirely different doctrine. Men must not depend too much upon what the ministers tell them, but must themselves examine the law and the testimony. If religious teachers speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. The word of inspiration shows us that beneficence is essential to the Christian character, and its growth in grace. Our means must be consecrated to God, and we must feel that it is not our own, but given us in trust, to be used in the Master's service. Our labors should be sanctified to God. We must do good, and use our means and influence for the benefit of our fellow creatures. In short, if we would truthfully bear the name of Christian, we must follow the example of Christ, who went about doing good.

He gave his life to elevate and ennoble fallen man, and that he might exalt him to his right hand. We have here the pattern of the purest self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Worldliness, selfishness and pride are foreign to the character of a true Christian. Many professors of religion do nothing for Christ by personal effort. They are contented to have others do what properly belongs to themselves to perform, and, by lending a feeble influence for the workers, feel that they are doing good by proxy. Such persons do not possess that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. They have no genuine religion, that enters into their daily business, and regulates every action of their lives. A living faith in Christ is demonstrated by good deeds in our families, and our neighborhoods, by thoughtful, and practical consideration of the poor, by visiting and comforting the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, by keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and by using our means and influence for the advancement of the cause of God. This must not be done grudgingly or murmuringly, but freely and cheerfully as Jesus gave all for us.

Nothing should be withheld from God; he claims the whole heart, talents, and property of those who profess his name. Those who ignore responsibility and their work for God are in a deplorable condition. The angel's record of their lives, as far as usefulness in the cause of God is concerned, presents one mournful blank. Such persons are as trees destitute of fruit, bearing only leaves. They are only cumberers of the ground, darkening with their unproductive boughs the ground that should be occupied by fruit-bearing trees, and excluding the sunshine from those that would be productive but for their shadow.

Conformity to the world is positively forbidden in the word of God. The inspired apostle writes: "Be not conformed to this world." In order to prevent this the opposite course is enjoined upon the true believers: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." The all-powerful grace of God, uniting with the efforts and will of man, works the transformation in the life and character of man, and brings him into a position where he can prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. One who engages in the work of helping and blessing others is being transformed by the renewing of his mind, being a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The apostles are diligent in their injunctions not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Christ was ever severe in his denunciations of hypocritical professors, those who bore no fruit to his glory. He frequently declared that there was more hope for the veriest open sinner than for the pretender. Jesus would cleanse the temple of the soul from the defiling sins of selfishness, pride, envy, and love of the world. He would purify it for his own abode. God calls for workers. All who are his followers must work the works of Christ, deny self, and take up their cross daily. All may wash their robes of character, and

make them white in the blood of the Lamb. This white vesture provided by the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world represents a life of purity and holiness, distinguished from the life of the worldling. Such a course will leave a bright track heavenward, which attracts all who would leave the vanities of the world for holier joys beyond. We would intreat the idle professor, the fruitless tree to be a fruit bearer, doing their duty to the world.

August 29, 1878

A Lesson for the Times

Number One

There is but one standard of right in the world, and that is God's standard. We are all virtually under equal obligations to meet that high standard; and God holds us alike responsible to him. Society may set up artificial differences and regulations, but the fixed fact remains the same. Men require women to live up to a standard of purity almost equal with that of the angels, while they erect a standard of quite a different character for themselves.

Young men sit down to wine suppers, freely indulge their appetites for intoxicating drink and for tobacco, become reckless in their deportment, vulgar and turbulent in their conversation, and frequently seek low and debased society, excusing themselves under the plea of custom and the ways of the world. But should young ladies follow such a course of dissipation they would be utterly and forever disgraced in the eyes of the whole world.

But it is urged, "Oh, young men must sow their wild oats." This is a terrible fallacy. It should be borne in mind that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Young men who have plunged into dissipation are already reaping what they have sown. They do not have to wait for mature years to come before they realize that they must pay the penalty for every violation of moral law. Every day we see instances of young men who are debilitated in body and mind, whose morals are debased, and who are prematurely dying because they have transgressed Nature's laws, and fallen victims to the temptations which the fashions of the world hold out to them.

The law of Nature is the law of God; and the penalty of its transgression is visited alike upon men and women. It is not customary to hold fathers equally responsible with mothers for the training of their children. How many sermons are preached, and how much is written concerning the mother's responsibility; while the father is apparently relieved from all the burden. We would appeal to fathers, in the hope of arousing them to a sense of their God given responsibility in regard to their children. We would say, Guard yourselves from cherishing any pernicious habit which, by its influence, might have a direct or indirect tendency to weaken the moral susceptibilities of your children.

While the mother may be doing her whole duty in educating her children to purity of life, the father too frequently, by his own example, may be opening the door of temptation to his children. His indulgence in wine and tobacco, and other sinful practices, lessen the hideousness of sin in their eyes. In keeping with this immoral course, is the talk that many fathers indulge in before their children, to the effect that the law of God is no longer binding upon man; that it was only for the government of the Israelites; or that it was abrogated at the death of Christ. Intelligent youth are not long in comprehending that where there is no law there is no transgression. The wholesome fear of breaking the commandments of God, grows weaker and weaker in their minds, until the moral perceptions which have been carefully trained by the mother, grow to be in harmony with the father's sentiments.

If men strictly and conscientiously kept the law of God, there would be no drunkards, no tobacco inebriates, no distress, penury, and crime. Liquor saloons would be closed for want of patronage, and nine-tenths of all misery existing in the world would come to an end. Young men would walk forth with erect and noble forms, free and elastic step, clear eye, and healthy complexions.

When ministers, from their pulpits, make loyalty to the law of God

disreputable; when they join with the world in making it unpopular; when these teachers of the people indulge in the social glass, and the defiling narcotic, tobacco, what depth of vice may not be expected from the youth of this generation? The newspaper records of the day, with their annals of crime, murders, and suicides, give the answer, and point out the terrible dangers of the time.

The signs exist today which prophecy predicted would characterize the state of society just prior to the second coming of Christ. You have heard much in regard to the authority and sanctity of the law of the ten commandments. God is the author of that law, which is the foundation of his government in heaven and on earth. All enlightened nations have based their laws upon this grand foundation of all law; yet the legislators and ministers, who are recognized as the leaders and teachers of the people, live in open violation of the principles inculcated in those holy statutes.

Many ministers preach Christ from the pulpit, and then do not hesitate to benumb their senses by wine tippling, or even indulging in brandy and other liquors. The Christian standard says, "Touch not; taste not; handle not;" and the laws of our physical being repeat the solemn injunction with emphasis. It is the duty of every Christian minister to lay this truth plainly before his people, teaching it both by precept and example.

The Bible nowhere teaches the use of intoxicating wine, either as a beverage or as a symbol of the blood of Christ. We appeal to the natural reason whether the blood of Christ is better represented by the pure juice of the grape in its natural state, or after it has been converted into a fermented and intoxicating wine. We maintain that the former is the only symbol properly representing the sacred blood of Christ, and a symbol established by himself; and we urge that the latter should never be placed upon the Lord's table.

It has been declared by some that Christ favored the moderate use of fermented wine, in witness whereof they refer to his miracle of changing water into wine. But we protest that Christ never made intoxicating wine; such an act would have been contrary to all the teachings and example of his life. He was the Angel who led the children of Israel in the wilderness. He spoke the law from Sinai. He prohibited those who officiated in holy office from using wine; and his reasons for so doing are explicit; viz., that they may have clear judgment to distinguish between the common and the sacred, to do justice to the fatherless and widows, to teach his statutes and laws to Israel, and to accept no bribes. Those who abolish the law of God for the sake of getting rid of the Sabbath, do away with the most solemn restrictions against using liquor.

He who appeared to the wife of Manoah, and told her she should bear a son, and described his character for strength, and charged her to drink no wine or strong drink, for the child should be a Nazarite from his birth; He who appeared to Zacharias, and gave him directions regarding the unborn John, charging him that the child should drink no wine or strong drink, was not one who would make intoxicating wine and give it to the people upon a wedding occasion. The wine which Christ manufactured from water by a miracle of his power, was the pure juice of the grape. And the object of the Saviour, in this miracle, was to bring the perverted taste of the governor of the feast to a healthy condition, by inducing him to acknowledge that this wine was superior in quality to any he had before tasted.

There are those in our day, who, in order to excuse their own sins, follow the example of the Jews, and charge Christ with being a Sabbath-breaker and wine-bibber, notwithstanding he declared that he kept his Father's commandments, and his whole life was an example of temperance and self-denial. Had he been a wine-bibber he could not have been a perfect offering, and the virtue of his blood would have been of no avail. But this charge, as well as the former, is best refuted by the character and teachings

of Christ himself.

The Christian church is pronounced to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Can we apply this to the churches of today, many of whose members are using, not only the defiling narcotic, tobacco, but intoxicating wine, and spirituous liquor, and are placing the wine-cup to their neighbor's lips? The church of Christ should be a school in which the inexperienced youth should be educated to control their appetites, from a moral and religious standpoint. They should there be taught how unsafe it is to tamper with temptation, to dally with sin; that there is no such thing as being a moderate and temperate drinker; that the path of the tippler is ever downward. They should be exhorted to "look not upon the wine when it is red," which "at the last biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Mrs. E. G. White, in Health Reformer.

September 12, 1878

New England Camp-Meeting

This has been a very important meeting. From the first we have had a large attendance from the outside, a good attentive congregation. Much labor was required. New churches had been raised up since our last camp-meeting. Precious souls had accepted the truth, and these all needed meat in due season. All needed to be carried forward to a deeper and more thorough knowledge of practical godliness. The Lord gave me freedom in bearing my testimony.

Sabbath, Brother Goodrich gave a discourse in the morning. In the afternoon I was lifted above my infirmities and had freedom in speaking to the people. An invitation was given for those to come forward who wanted to be Christians, and those who had backslidden from God. Between two and three hundred responded. Fervent and effectual prayers were offered. Those who came forward were then divided in companies occupying four tents. A minister was appointed to each tent to labor for those who had come forward and who needed help. These meetings were a success, precious victories were gained. The evening following the Sabbath, Brother Smith spoke from these words, "Great and marvelous are thy works," &c.

Sunday morning the weather was cloudy with some rain, which prevented so large an attendance from the outside as might otherwise have been expected; but as the prospect brightened for a fair day, the numbers increased rapidly, each train bringing more or less, until in the afternoon the crowd on the ground showed quite a marked contrast to that assembled on any other day during the meeting.

Elder Smith spoke in the morning upon the subject of the sanctuary,

showing that the disappointment in the time was not a failure after all. After singing, Brother Farnsworth presented the subject of the Sabbath in the New Testament, showing conclusively that there is no evidence therein for the observance of Sunday. At half past one, Elder Haskell preached. Subject: Who changed the Sabbath. At three o'clock I took the stand, speaking upon the subject of temperance. I spoke one hour, while the people listened with the deepest attention.

A gentleman from Boston, the guardian of a home for orphan children in that city, desired an opportunity of speaking a few words and taking up a contribution for the benefit of the home for the friendless, which is supported purely by charity. He brought with him four of the children, from eight to twelve years of age, who sung little songs very prettily. The remarks on this occasion were brief, but to the point, and all were interested in the home for the fatherless and motherless.

The meetings had been held with but little intermission from nine o'clock until nearly six. The people upon the ground were more quiet than usual upon such occasions.

Monday morning, meeting at the tent commenced at half-past five. I spoke about thirty minutes upon the necessity of economy in dress and in the expenditure of means. There is danger of becoming reckless and careless in the use of the Lord's money. Young men who engage in tent labor should be careful not to indulge in unnecessary expense. The wants of the cause are many, as tents are entering new fields, and as the missionary work is enlarging. The most rigid economy should be used in this matter without stinginess. It is easier to run up a bill than to settle it. There are many things that would be convenient and enjoyable that are not needful, and that can be dispensed with without actual suffering. It is very easy to multiply expenses for hotel bills and railroad fare that might be avoided, or very much lessened. We have passed over the road to and from California twelve times, and have

not expended one dollar for meals at the restaurants or in the attached dining car. We eat our meals from our lunch baskets. After being three days out, the food becomes quite stale, but a little milk or warm gruel supplies our lack.

Our morning meeting was held in the tent. I spoke again about thirty minutes in reference to genuine sanctification, which is nothing less than a daily dying to self, and daily conformity to the will of God. Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self. Said he, "I die daily." His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature.

The reason many in this age of the world make no greater advancement in the divine life is because they interpret the will of God to be just what they will to do. They do exactly as they desire, and flatter themselves they are conforming to God's will. They please themselves in everything, and therefore have no conflicts with self. Many are successful for a time in the conflict against selfish desires for pleasure and ease. They are sincere and earnest; but grow weary of protracted effort, of daily death, of ceaseless turmoil, and resisting Satan's temptations. Indolence seems inviting, death to self, repulsive; and they close their drowsy eyes and fall under temptation instead of resisting it. The pride of life, fashionable sins, do not seem so very repulsive to them.

There is no compromise in the word of God for those who conform to the world. The Son of God was manifested that he might draw all men unto him. But he came not to lull the world to sleep-not to send peace, but a sword. The followers of Christ must walk in the light of his glorious example, and, at whatever sacrifice of ease or selfish indulgence, at whatever cost of labor or sufferings we must maintain the constant battle with self, exalt the gospel standard, and push forward the triumphs of the cross.

We called on those who desired to be baptized, and who were keeping the Sabbath for the first time, to come forward. Twenty-five responded. These bore excellent testimonies. One gentleman of intelligence said he had seen light upon the Sabbath commandment since these meetings commenced. He stated that he had kept the first day strictly according to the canons of Rome, but he now saw that he had not been keeping the day the Lord had sanctified and blessed. But from this time, as long as God spared his life, he should keep the seventh day specified in the fourth commandment. He also stated that the members of his church had attended these meetings, and were very much interested and stirred in regard to the things they had heard.

We had a good attendance from those residing in the vicinity where our camp-meeting was held. The spirit of the meeting is having a moulding influence upon the community. The spirit of the Lord has been in our midst. My testimony has been well received. I have been strengthened and blessed of God. While trying to water others, my own soul has been watered.

We were pleased to meet here our old friends of the cause whose acquaintance we made above thirty years ago. Our much respected Brother Hastings is as deeply interested in the truth today as he was then. We were pleased to meet Sister Temple, and Sister Collins of Dartmouth, Mass., and Brother and Sister Wilkenson at whose house we had been entertained more than thirty years ago. The pilgrimage of some of these dear ones may close ere long, but if faithful unto the end they will receive a crown of life.

We were interested to meet Brother Kimbal who is a mute and has been a missionary among the mutes. Through his persevering labors, quite a little army have accepted the truth. We meet this faithful brother at our yearly camp-meetings surrounded by several of his mute converts. Some one who is interested, who has ears to hear, writes out some portion of the discourse, and he sits surrounded by his mute friends actively preaching to them with

his hands. He has freely used his means to advance the missionary work, thus honoring God with his substance. By and by, if faithful, he will receive a precious reward. Twenty-two received baptism.

We hope that the influence of this meeting will continue, that conviction will deepen, and that all who profess the truth will strive for the unity of the faith, and that oneness which Christ prayed might exist among his disciples, and with all those who should believe on their word. An early meeting of Tuesday morning closed the camp-meeting at this place.

October 17, 1878

A Lesson for the Times

Entire abstinence from every pernicious indulgence, and especially from tobacco and intoxicating drink, should be strenuously taught in our homes, both by precept and example. Upon no consideration should wine be placed upon our tables. Our children should grow up to consider it a deadly evil, leading to misery and crime.

The youth of today are the sure index to the future of society; and as we view them, what can we hope for that future? These young men are to take a part in the legislative councils of the nation; they will have a voice in enacting and executing its laws. How important, then, is it that the voice of warning should be raised against the indulgence of perverted appetite in those upon whom such solemn duties will rest. If parents would zealously teach total abstinence, and emphasize the lesson by their own unyielding example, many who are now on the brink of ruin might be saved.

What shall we say of the liquor-sellers, who imperil life, health, and property, with perfect indifference? They are not ignorant of the result of their trade, but they become callous of heart. They listen carelessly to the complaints of famishing, half-clad mothers and children. Satan has no better agents by which to prepare souls for perdition, and he uses them with the most telling effect. The liquor-seller deals out his fiery draughts to men who have lost all control of reason and appetite; he takes their hard-earned money and gives no equivalent for it; he is the worst kind of robber.

We find in the special precepts given by God to the Hebrews, this command: "If an ox goad [gore] a man or a woman that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the

ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him." "And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them, and the dead beast shall be his."

The principle embodied in this statute holds good in our time. The liquor-seller compares well with the man who turns a vicious ox loose upon his neighbors. The liquor seller is not ignorant of the effects of the fiery draught which he deals out unhesitatingly to husbands, fathers, youth, and aged men. He knows that it robs them of reason, and in many cases changes them to demons. The liquor-seller makes himself responsible for the violence that is committed under the influence of the liquor he sells. If the drunkard commits murder, under the effect of the maddening draught, the dealer who sold it to him, aware of the tendency of its effect, is in the sight of God equally responsible for the crime with him who did the deed.

The liquor-dealer digs a pit for his neighbor to fall into. He has seen the consequences of liquor-drinking too often to be ignorant of any one of their various phases. He knows that the hand of the man who drinks at his bar is likely to be raised against his own wife, his helpless children, or his aged father or mother. He knows, in very many instances, that the glass he hands to his customer will make him a raging madman, eager for quarrel, and thirsting for blood. He knows that he is taking bread from the mouths of hungry children, that the pence which fall into his till, and enable him to live extravagantly, have deprived the drunkard's children of clothes, and robbed his family not only of the comforts, but of the very necessities of life. He is deaf to the appeals of weeping wives and mothers, whose hearts are breaking from cruelty and neglect.

Crimes of the darkest dye are daily reported in the newspapers as the direct result of drunkenness. The prisons are filled with criminals who have been brought there by the use of liquor; and the blood of murdered victims cries to Heaven for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel. The laws of the land punish the perpetrator of the deed, but the liquor-seller, who is also morally responsible for it, goes free; no man calls him a murderer; community looks calmly on at his unholy traffic, because justice is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. But God who declared that if a man owned a dangerous ox, and knew it to be so, yet let it loose upon his neighbors, if it caused the death of any man or woman, he should pay the penalty with his own life,-that just and terrible God will let fall the bolts of his wrath on the liquor-vender, who sells violence and death to his fellow-men, in the poisonous cup of the inebriate, who deals him out that which takes away his reason, and makes him a brute.

Oh, if men, formed in the image of God, would let reason hold sway in their minds; if they would remember that cursed is he who putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips, and that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; if they would count the cost beforehand of creating an appetite which has no foundation in nature,-how much misery, crime, and disease might be spared the children of men!

Parents who freely use wine and liquor leave to their children the legacy of a feeble constitution, mental and moral debility, unnatural appetites, irritable temper, and an inclination to vice. Parents should feel that they are responsible to God, and to society, to bring into existence beings whose physical, mental, and moral characters shall enable them to make a proper use of life, be a blessing to the world, and an honor to their Creator. The indulgence of perverted appetite is the great cause of the deterioration of the human race. The child of the drunkard or the tobacco inebriate usually has the depraved appetites and passions of the father intensified, and at the same

time inherits less of his self-control, and strength of mind. Men who are naturally calm and strong-minded not infrequently lose control of themselves while under the influence of liquor, and, though they may not commit crime, still have an inclination to do so, which might result in the act if a fair opportunity offered. Continued dissipation makes these propensities a second nature. Their children often receive this stamp of character before their birth; for the appetites of the parents are often intensified in the children. Thus unborn generations are afflicted by the use of tobacco and liquor. Intellectual decay is entailed upon them, and their moral perceptions are blunted. Thus the world is being filled with paupers, lunatics, thieves, and murderers. Disease, imbecility, and crime, with private and public corruptions of every sort, are making the world a second Sodom.

For the sake of that high charity and sympathy for the souls of tempted men for whom Christ died, Christians should come out from the popular customs and evils of the age, and be forever separated from them. But we find in the clergy themselves the most insurmountable obstacle to the promotion of temperance. Many are addicted to the use of the filthy weed, tobacco, which perverts the appetite, and creates the desire for some stronger stimulant. The indifference or disguised opposition of these men, many of whom occupy high and influential positions, is exceedingly damaging to the cause of temperance.

The safety of society, and the progress of reform, depend upon a clear definition and recognition of fundamental truth. The principles of God's law must be kept before the people as everlasting and inexorable as the character of God himself. Law is defined as a rule of action. Civil law represents the supreme power of the State, regulating the actions of men, and restricting them from doing wrong under penalty of punishment. The good of society and the safety of man require that the law be respected. All enlightened law is founded on the law of Jehovah, given on Mount Sinai. To the inebriate, both the law of God and the law of man are meaningless. His senses are

benumbed, he cannot comprehend the language of Sinai, and he tries to bring the law down to meet his debased standard rather than elevate himself to meet the exalted standard established by the rules of God's government.

If Christian men would protect their homes from the horrors of vice, let them respect the laws of God. Let them be jealous for the sanctity of the ten precepts given for the government of mankind. Let them thus purify themselves, and decide to obey God at any cost to themselves. Then will they understand the mystery of godliness, and exclaim with David, "How love I thy law. It is my meditation all the day." "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Mrs. E. G. White, in *Health Reformer*.

October 24, 1878

A Lesson for the Times

We are often pained as we see the little moral power possessed by the professed followers of Christ. When tempted on the point of appetite, few will firmly stand the test. Many turn from light and knowledge, and sacrifice principle to indulge their taste. They eat when they have no need of eating, and at irregular periods, because they have no moral strength to resist their inclinations. As the result of this gratification of taste, the abused stomach rebels, suffering follows, and a weary taxation of the friends of the sufferer.

Many indulge appetite at the expense of health and the powers of intellect, so that they cannot appreciate the plan of salvation. What appreciation can such ones have of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and of the victory he gained upon the point of appetite? It is impossible for them to have exalted views of God, and to realize the claims of his law. Many of the professed followers of Christ are forgetful of the great sacrifice made by him on their account. The Majesty of Heaven, in order to bring salvation within their reach, was smitten, bruised, and afflicted. He became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. In the wilderness of temptation he resisted Satan, although the tempter was clothed with the livery of heaven. Christ, although brought to great physical suffering, refused to yield a single point, notwithstanding the most flattering inducements were presented to bribe and influence him to yield his integrity. All this honor, all these riches and glory, said the deceiver, will I give thee if thou wilt only acknowledge my claims.

Could we at this time have entered the heavenly courts, and seen with what intense interest the holy angels watched the conflict of their loved Commander with the fallen foe, we should see greater significance in this

long fast of Christ than it is now possible for us, with our darkened senses, to comprehend. Christ, the Commander of Heaven, was emaciated by long fasting; and his human nature fainted when the conflict was ended. The Son of God appeared to be dying from hunger and the effects of his warfare with Satan. But angels lifted his fainting head, served him with nourishing food, and ministered unto him. Never will so severe a test be brought to bear upon man, as that which the Captain of his salvation endured before him.

There was great rejoicing and triumph in the heavenly courts that Satan, who had deceived even the heavenly angels, and drawn a third part of heaven into his rebellion, had been vanquished at every point by the Prince of Life. Hosannas rung through heaven that Christ had repulsed the fallen foe, and resisted every temptation upon the point of appetite, redeeming Adam's disgraceful failure by his own triumph.

Christ has given us an example of temperance in his own life. Where so many professed Christians fail, and are led captive by appetite and inclination, the Saviour was firm. Oh! what salvation would there now be for the race if Christ had been as weak in moral power as man? No wonder that joy filled heaven as the fallen chief left the wilderness of temptation a conquered foe. Christ has power from his Father to give his divine grace and strength to man-making it possible for us, through his name, to overcome. There are but few professed followers of Christ who choose to engage with him in the work of resisting Satan's temptations as he resisted and overcame.

Professed Christians who enjoy gatherings of gaiety, pleasure, and feasting, cannot appreciate the conflict of Christ in the wilderness. This example of their Lord in overcoming Satan is lost to them. This infinite victory which Christ achieved for them in the plan of salvation is meaningless. They have no special interest in the wonderful humiliation of our Saviour, and the anguish and sufferings he endured for sinful man, while Satan was pressing him with his manifold temptations. That scene of trial in

the wilderness was the foundation of the plan of salvation, and gives to fallen man the key whereby he, in Christ's name, may overcome.

Many professed Christians look upon this portion of the life of Christ as they would upon a common warfare between two kings, and as having no special bearing upon their own life and character. Therefore, the manner of warfare, and the wonderful victory gained, have but little interest for them. Their perceptive powers are blunted by Satan's artifices, so that they cannot discern that he who afflicted Christ in the wilderness, determined to rob him of his integrity as the Son of the Infinite, is to be their own adversary to the end of time. Although he failed to overcome Christ, his power over man is not weakened. All are personally exposed to the temptations that Christ overcame; but strength is provided for them in the all-powerful name of the great Conqueror. And all must, for themselves, individually overcome. Many fall under the very same temptations wherewith Satan assailed Christ.

Although Christ gained a priceless victory in behalf of man in overcoming the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, this victory will not benefit man unless he also gains the victory on his own account.

Man now has the advantage over Adam in his warfare with Satan; for he has Adam's experience in disobedience and his consequent fall to warn him to shun his example. Man also has Christ's example in overcoming appetite and the manifold temptations of Satan, and in vanquishing the mighty foe upon every point, and coming off victor in every contest.

If man stumbles and falls under the temptations of Satan, he is without excuse; for he has the disobedience of Adam as a warning, and the life of the world's Redeemer as an example of obedience and self-denial, and the promise of Christ that "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The great trial of Christ in the wilderness on the point of appetite was to leave man an example of self-denial. This long fast was to convict men of the sinfulness of many things in which professed Christians indulge. The victory which Christ gained in the wilderness was to show man the sinfulness of the very things in which he takes such pleasure. The salvation of man was in the balance, and to be decided by the trial of Christ in the wilderness. If Christ was a victor on the point of appetite, then there was a chance for man to overcome. If Satan gained the victory through his subtlety, man was bound by the power of appetite in chains of indulgence which he could not have moral power to break. Christ's humanity alone could never have endured this test; but his divine power, combined with humanity, gained in behalf of man an infinite victory. Our Representative in this victory raised humanity in the scale of moral value with God.

Every man born into the world with reasoning powers has the opportunity, to a great extent, of making himself whatever he chooses to be. The blessings of this life and the blessings of the immortal life, are within his reach. He may build up a character of mental and moral worth, gaining new strength at every step in life. He may advance daily in knowledge and wisdom, conscious of new delights as he progresses, adding virtue to virtue, and grace to grace.

His faculties will improve by use, and the more wisdom he gains, the more he will be able to acquire, and his intelligence, knowledge, and virtue will thus continually increase and develop into greater strength and beauty.

On the other hand, he may allow his powers to rust out for want of use, or be perverted through evil habits, lack of self-control or of moral and religious stamina. His course then tends downward; he is disobedient to the laws of God, and to the laws of health. Appetite conquers him; inclination carries him away. It is easier for him to stand still and be dragged backward

by the powers of evil, which are always active, than to struggle against them, and go forward. Dissipation, disease, and death follow. This is the history of many lives that might have been useful in the cause of God and humanity.

We are free moral agents. We may obey the law of God, and secure eternal gain and lead others into the path of right, or we may transgress the law of God, and bring the penalty of disobedience upon us. There is glory above us that we may reach; and there is an abyss of wretchedness below, into which we may plunge. It requires less exertion to consent to go backward and downward than to urge our way forward through every obstacle. Thus many go down through inaction, who might be bright and shining lights.

October 31, 1878

A Lesson for the Times

Number Four

Man came from the hand of God complete in every faculty of mind and body; in perfect soundness, therefore in perfect health. It took more than two thousand years of indulgence of appetite and lustful passions to create such a state of things in the human organism as materially lessened his vital force. Through successive generations the tendency was more swiftly downward. Indulgence of appetite and passion combined, led to excess and violence; debauchery and abominations of every kind weakened the energies, and brought upon the race diseases of every type, until the vigor and glory of the first generations passed away, and, in the third generation from Adam, man began to show signs of decay. Successive generations after the flood degenerated more rapidly.

All this woe and suffering may be traced to the indulgence of appetite and passion. Luxurious living and the use of wine corrupt the blood, inflame the passions, and produce diseases of every kind. Parents leave maladies as a legacy to their children. As a rule, every intemperate man who rears children transmits his inclinations and evil tendencies to his offspring; and the evil does not end here; he gives to them disease from his own inflamed and corrupted blood. Licentiousness, disease, and imbecility are transmitted as an inheritance of woe from father to son, and from generation to generation, bringing anguish and suffering into the world, which is no less than a repetition of the fall of man.

The race is groaning under its weight of accumulated woe, because of the sins of former generations. And yet, with scarcely a thought or care, men

and women of the present time indulge intemperance by surfeiting and drunkenness, and thereby leave, as a legacy for the next generation, disease, enfeebled intellects, and polluted morals.

The continual transgression of Nature's laws is a continual transgression of the law of God. The present weight of suffering and anguish which we see everywhere, the present deformity, decrepitude, disease, and imbecility now flooding the world, make it, in comparison to what it might be, and what God designed it should be, a lazar-house; and the present generation are feeble in mental, moral, and physical power. All this misery, accumulated from generation to generation, exists because fallen man persists in breaking the law of God.

The effort made to create a taste for the disgusting, filthy poison, tobacco, leads to the desire for stronger stimulants, as liquor, which is taken, on one plea or another, for some imaginary infirmity, or to prevent some possible disease. Thus an unnatural appetite for hurtful and exciting stimulants is created, which strengthens with one's years. The increase of intemperance in this generation is alarming; beverage-loving, liquor drinking men may be seen everywhere.

Intemperance of any kind is the worst sort of selfishness. Those who truly fear God and keep his commandments look upon these things in the light of reason and religion. How can any man or women keep the law of God, and at the same time indulge intemperate appetite, which benumbs the brain, weakens the intellect, and fills the body with disease? Intemperance inflames the passions, and gives loose rein to lust. Reason and conscience are then blinded by the lower passions.

It is not an easy matter to overcome established habits of appetite for narcotics and stimulants. In the name of Christ alone can this great victory be gained. He overcame in behalf of man in the wilderness of temptation, in the

long fast of nearly six weeks. He sympathizes with the weakness of fallen man. His love for him was so great that he made an infinite sacrifice that he might reach him in his degradation, and through his divine power elevate him finally to his throne. But it rests with man whether Christ shall accomplish for him that which he has undertaken and is fully able to do.

It is a sacred duty that we owe to God to keep the spirit pure, as a temple for the Holy Ghost. If the heart and mind are devoted to the service of God; if we obey all his commandments, loving him with all the heart, might, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, we shall be found loyal and true to the requirements of Heaven.

The apostle says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." He also urges his brethren to earnest diligence and steady perseverance in their efforts for purity and holiness of life, in these words: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible."

December 12, 1878

Reflections on a Colorado Sunset

As the cars bore our company into the city of Denver, we were charmed in beholding one of the beautiful sunsets of Colorado. The sun was passing behind the snow-capped mountains, leaving its softened beams of golden light to tint the heavens. As the blending tints were deepening and extending athwart the skies, with indescribable beauty, it seemed the gates of heaven were ajar to let the gleamings of its glory through. The golden hues were every moment more and more entrancing, as if to invite our imagination to picture the greater glory within. We loved to think that God had let some of the glorious rays of the light abounding in heaven appear to our senses, that our imagination might grasp the more perfect glories still unrevealed. Yet the inspired apostle tells us "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." If this so charms our senses, what must be the fullness of the glory in heaven itself.

We have an infinite God, high above all heavens; and yet he condescends to dwell with him who is of a meek and contrite spirit. It is when we turn our eyes away from this world that we behold the beams of light from heaven. By faith a far more surpassing glory than the world can give dawns upon our senses. Here we see but the faint rays of what will be revealed to those who love God.

Heaven seemed very near. From its golden gates light seemed beaming forth, to bless and comfort, and make joyful the heart of man. As the eye was turned from the dazzling glories of the closing day, we could but reflect that should we see more of heaven by the eye of faith, greater light, more peace and joy would be all along life's pathway. We keep our eyes fixed so closely

upon the low land of earth, looking upon the transient and deceptive attractions of worldly things, that in beholding we become changed to the earthly. If the eye of faith were uplifted to see through the veil of the future and discern the tokens of God's love and glory in the promised life beyond, we should be more spiritually minded, and the beauties and joys of heaven would mingle with our daily life. We should be fitting up for the faithful performance of our work in this life, and for the higher life beyond.

The compassion of the infinite God is expressed to man in the blessings he bestows. The greatest, the wisest, and the happiest man that lives upon the earth is he who sees most of God in his created works; who walks most closely with him in his every day life. The man who walks with God will exert an influence that will make the world better for his having lived in it. The beautiful, well-balanced, symmetrical character is developed by individual acts of duty. The character is formed by the conscientious attention to the little things of life, courteous acts of kindness unselfish deeds of charity. Kind words make the life beautiful and noble; for in them is the spirit that pervades heaven.

A wise improvement of God's gifts and blessings; a diligent cultivation of the little talents given by the Master; a patient continuance in well-doing, even if but little encouragement is received from those around us, will make life in this world a success, and will secure to us the higher immortal life. These things make the world's great men in the sight of God. The world will not know these men, even as they knew not Christ; but they are known and acknowledged of heaven. If the musings and the purposes of man were of a more elevated character, spirituality would not be waxing cold.

The striking figures and pictures God has given in his heavens should thrill our souls and lead our minds to a contemplation of heavenly glories. While engaged in this the mind will have no leisure for worldly imaginings, worldly schemings, lusting for worldly honors or distinction. While in

converse with the God of nature, in viewing with sanctified eyes his created glorious things in nature, the yearnings of the heart will be for higher and holier attainments.

The high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity claims and deserves our highest thoughts and holiest affections. God is the source of all power. From his infinite love flow blessings to every creature formed in his image. Our heavenly Father has hung out glories in the firmament of the heavens, that men may have an expression of his love in the revealing of his wondrous works. God would not have us indifferent to the symbols of the glories of his infinite power in the heavens. David delighted to dwell upon these glories. He composed psalms which the Hebrew singers chanted to the praise of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Christ finds men clinging to the earth and building their foundation upon the sand. He presents to them subjects in the heavens worthy of thought, and inspires them with desire to take hold on God and build upon the rock for time and for eternity. All the powers of our being, every means of our existence and happiness, all the blessings of the warm sunshine and the refreshing showers, causing vegetation to flourish, every comfort and every blessing of this life, comes from God. He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. The treasures of heaven are poured out to all.

Through Jesus Christ comes all these bounties. And how do men receive them? The great mass of mankind take the gift from their heavenly Father's

hand but make no acknowledgment to him. They seem to take it for granted that these bounties are their rightful due, and forget that God is the giver. They do not even acknowledge their obligations by thanking God for his mercies. Indeed they treat no other friend so ill. They sit at the family board, loaded with bounties from his hand, and render no thanks to him. They enjoy the gifts, but despise the giver.

The worst feature of this picture is, many who profess to be followers of Christ pursue the same course as the unbeliever and thankless worldling. They take the gifts of heaven without lifting the heart and voice to God in sincere thanks. God has blessed them with comfortable homes. They lie down to rest in safety because of the guarding care of his ministering angels; but they arise in the morning with scarcely a thought of God. This is unlike the world's Redeemer. Although he owned all things, he never broke bread without lifting his eyes and hands to heaven in thanks to his Father, craving his blessing upon it. Yet finite man, wholly dependent upon God, has no sense of the debt of gratitude he owes.

Many parents professing to be Christians pass the morning without prayer to God or a thought of him. Worldly business is the subject of their thoughts the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. They do not gather the family about them and read to them from the word of God, which teaches the whole duty of man. They do not make the reading of instructive lessons from the precious book of any importance, or the hour of prayer a sacred privilege. They do not, by the form of prayer, teach the children their dependence upon God, and the necessity of divine aid to help them to overcome temptation through the day, and to draw the mind upward to God and heaven. A prayerless house, a house where Christ is not entreated to come in, there the prince of darkness abides. There are scores of families who profess to love God, that love him a great way off; for they do not invite Jesus into their dwellings. They do not erect the family altar and offer up fervent petitions morning and evening. They do not render to God grateful

praise, acknowledging his gifts, and entreating his blessing. How can those who bear the name of Christians rise morning after morning and partake of the bounties God has provided for them and be so ungrateful to the Giver as not to breathe a word of thanks? In such a house a cold and chilling influence prevails. The warming beams of the Sun of Righteousness do not penetrate the darkness of a prayerless house.

Parents should associate in the minds of their children, our heavenly Father with the blessings of life and health and the gifts of his bounties which they daily enjoy. They should not neglect to open to their impressible minds the great book of nature, and teach them lessons of God's love; show them that every bud and blooming flower, formed and tinted by a divine hand, is an expression of the love of God to them. Every spire of grass, every lofty tree, is an evidence of God's love to man. Children may be made acquainted with God in his created works by having their minds directed to the glories of the heavens in the light of the setting sun. His hand has strewed the skies with everlasting gems of light. Worlds are peopled by his power, and yet the humblest creatures of the earth are the objects of his love and care. A contemplation of these things will give to both parents and children more exalted views of the Ruler of the universe.

Christian parents may write upon the tablets of the hearts of their children lessons of the greatness and majesty of God which neither time nor circumstances can efface. The God of such riches and power, who had no need of man to increase his might and glory, gave his only and beloved Son to a life of ignominy and a cruel death, because he loved man whom he had created, and whom he would save from ruin, and bestow on him the gift of everlasting life. Teach the children that the cross of Christ is the instrumentality of God to save perishing man. And he has commanded us, "Love one another as I have loved you." Christ has given us an example in his life, and he commands us to follow in his footsteps.

Those who are absorbed in their own sorrows, who can enjoy only their own blessings, and labor only for their own good, are miserable indeed. As we receive the gifts of God, we should impart to others the blessings Heaven has so richly bestowed upon us. To be happy ourselves we must live to make others happy. Our hearts will be filled with joy and peace when we impart blessings to others. The youth who are faithful in the minor duties of life, who will heed the demands of duty without consulting their own pleasure, and who will speak words of kindness and perform deeds of love to the poor, and carry comfort to the homes of the desolate, will be the ones upon whom the Master will call to make sacrifices to carry the truth to those who are in darkness. These can be intrusted with this work, for they have proved themselves faithful in that which is least. A wise improvement of the talents bestowed will make the faithful doer great in the sight of God. The work of faithfulness must begin at their own door; in their own home must they show an unselfish spirit in all their acts, to those of their own households.

All the glories of God in the heavens, and everything lovely in our world, is to give us a correct knowledge of the character of God the giver. The power, truth, and glory of the gospel are displayed all around us to bring us in harmony and love with our gracious Benefactor.

December 19, 1878

A Few Words to Parents

The position of a parent is one of the most responsible on earth, yet it is far too lightly regarded by the majority of the world. The things which are perishable receive their time, labor, and money, while the work which will be enduring as eternity is made a secondary matter. The future of the rising generation is in the hands of parents; for, in a great measure, they hold within their control the destiny of their children both for time and for eternity. The salvation of the young depends almost wholly upon the training they receive in childhood. Christian parents, who believe the sacred truth of God, are required to regulate their own conduct by the sanctifying influence of that truth, and, by precept and example, impress lessons of morality and religion upon their children. Line upon line, precept upon precept they should be taught concerning the precious love of Jesus for man, and the virtue of his atonement. That love should be blended with all their studies and duties.

The love of Jesus won the hearts of children, and when the disciples would have sent away the mothers with their children, through mistaken zeal to preserve the dignity of their Master, Jesus rebuked them, saying: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Parents, it is your sacred privilege to bring your children to Jesus, and receive his blessing upon them. Bring your children to the loving Jesus, and then teach them the love and fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Impress upon them the sense of sacred things, and their own responsibility to God, and that no evil passion, selfishness, or pride will be excused by God, or will find entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Children should be taught that simplicity of dress is to be preferred to gaudy display. They should learn that dress is a small matter in comparison

with the acts of their daily life, and the character they are forming for eternity; that beauty of soul, the virtues and graces of a true Christian, are pearls of inestimable price, before which costly apparel and jewels sink into insignificance. They should be guarded against pride in their beauty of form or features. No idle words of praise of these attractions should ever fall upon their ears. Such seeds, dropped into ready soil of the heart, are speedily nourished by Satan, and soon spring forth into vigorous growth, bearing the bitter fruit of vanity, selfishness and folly.

Tell your children how little the Saviour values the vain things of earth; that he has said: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Thus Christ exalts natural simplicity above artificial adornment, and counts the flowers growing in beauty in the valley as more attractive than all the glory of Solomon upon his throne. The devoted mother will not rob her children of the time that should be spent in their instruction, to waste it in preparing fine clothes for them, and in arraying them with garments that would tend to excite their vanity. She will rather impress upon their minds the fact that purity of heart and beauty of character are the only ornaments necessary for them to wear in order to enter the heavenly courts.

Love of the world is one of the leading temptations of youth, and one that our Saviour repeatedly warned his disciples against. Parents, however, frequently encourage in their children the desire to seek happiness in gratifying the outward senses, and in frequenting scenes of gayety and frivolous amusements. By teaching them to avoid these things, you prepare them to cherish elevated thoughts, fit them to occupy positions of trust and importance in this life, and to receive the reward of the faithful in the future immortal life.

In accepting the truth of God the minds of the young become strengthened to attain to greater intelligence. The dormant energies of the mind are, as it were, electrified, new powers seem to spring into life. The understanding, in striving to comprehend the heights and depths of the plan of salvation, becomes strong and grasping, and the whole being is illuminated by the brightness and glory of the infinite God. What a contrast is such a one with the youth who devotes his time and energies to the vain pleasures of the day, drifting into dissipation and folly, as surely dwarfing and enfeebling his mind as he is destroying his physical powers.

Children, as a rule, are allowed to gratify their appetite to a decidedly injurious extent. Their tastes are perverted by the use of coffee, tea, rich pastry, condiments, and sweetmeats. These indulgences lay the foundation for various diseases of the body, irritability, nervousness, and mental imbecility. Health, happiness, and life itself is too often sacrificed on the altar of appetite. The mother therefore cannot be too careful of her children in the matter of their eating and drinking. Their food should be simple, healthful, and well prepared; Nothing should pass their lips between meals, and then they should not be allowed to contract the habit of eating to excess. Your hired helpers should understand that they are not at liberty to infringe upon any of your rules in regard to the management of your children. If they fail to comply with this requirement, and secretly indulge your children in that which you have forbidden, discharge them at once. Let nothing interfere with your family government. Remember that hurtful indulgence of appetite renders the physical, mental, and moral faculties weak, and opens the way to temptations of various kinds, into which the victim of perverted appetite drifts almost unconsciously.

If parents seek to obey the word of God, in bringing their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they find a work before them requiring thought, resolution, and trust in God. Difficulties will arise on

every hand which seem almost impossible to be overcome; but the parents must have continual communion with God in their trials and efforts, and have their souls stayed on him. He will not turn a deaf ear to their prayers, but will impart to them wisdom and strength.

Mothers, you have no time for vain display or idle gossip. Your precious moments should be employed in teaching your children the fear of the Lord and self-control, instilling into their minds godly principles, that will become a part of their very nature, and rule their lives; which will make them firm as a rock when temptations assail them, and true to God through weal and woe. Mothers, God will work with your efforts. If you plead the name of Jesus before the Father, that name will not be presented in vain. The Saviour has linked man with God, and earth with heaven. Be patient; work is faith. Believe yourself to be in the presence of Jesus. Anticipate the crown, the robe, the harp, for your dear children, the "Well done, good and faithful servant," the rest, the peace, and joy of heaven, with those loved ones for whom you have prayed and striven on earth. Mrs.

December 19, 1878

Hold The Fort

Battle Creek, Mich., and Oakland, Cal., are the two great fortresses of our cause on the western continent. The first is the headquarters and center of our world-wide operations. At Battle Creek is located our oldest and largest publishing house, our college, and our sanitarium. This fort has been held twenty-three years the present month. Here at Battle Creek, many a hard battle for truth and the right has been fought, and as many triumphant victories have been won. The last grand effort of our people at this important point is the erection of a house of worship which will not only convene the present congregation, but which will comfortably take in the future audience of Battle Creek. Thank God, that in His good providence we are connected with a cause whose growth makes it necessary to form and execute plans for the near future two or three times as large as the present demands.

Oakland, Cal., is the headquarters of all our work on the Pacific Coast. There is located the most perfect and complete publishing house on the coast. We have added to a first-class printing establishment, a complete bindery, stereotyping, electrotyping, and type foundry, where the most improved styles and qualities of the types are manufactured. This fort must be held at all hazards. When we take into the account the youth of the cause on the Pacific Coast, its growth is a marvel. But there is a heavy debt on the Oakland church, which that good people can never lift. They are the poorest and most liberal church on the continent, yet this position is the most important, excepting the Battle Creek church only. Of the financial condition of things at Oakland, our son, J. E. White, writing November 29, says:

"I write you about a matter that is troubling me considerably. That is our church. There is a debt of \$8,000 on it at present, and there is not the

remotest prospect of the Oakland church, if left to itself, ever paying the debt. The church is poor and, struggle as it may, can hardly pay interest and running expenses, which amount to \$1,200 a year. There are only two or three in the church who are worth anything at all, and they pay the least.

"The Christians (Campbellites) want a church and ours suits them. They spoke of buying it once before, and I spoke against it. I told the brethren I thought it would be a terrible disgrace to sell, but as I could not see any way out more than they could, I withdrew my objection.

"I can see the situation just as plainly now as if we had reached the time. Unless outside help comes in, the Oakland church must go either by sale or by the holders of the mortgage taking it. It would be a distressing thing to have anything like that take place. I write to you, hoping you can propose some solution to the difficulty.

"The office, by the closest and most rigid economy can pull through. But it is absolutely unprepared for any draft to be made on it. Finances are the closest here that I have known them to be.

In regard to hard times, in addition to ordinary hard times they have just had the greatest crash in the stock market that California ever knew. This of course unsettles all California.

"Many in our church are out of employment, and the most are scarcely making expenses. In four months there is \$2,000 due from the church to the bank. They might as well try to fly as to think of paying it."

To the foregoing, Mrs. W. responds in the following stirring words:

Dear Son, We received your letter in reference to the Oakland church. I am glad you wrote us in regard to the situation of things there. I am sure the

building of the meeting-house in Oakland was none too soon. These were willing hearts among the believers who were poor. They made great sacrifices in order to raise means to invest in the Oakland church. Their zeal and self-sacrifice shall not be in vain.

"That meeting-house shall not be sold. The building of the house was of God. I hope our brethren and sisters will not murmur as did the children of Israel when brought up facing the Red sea, the Egyptians behind them and impassable mountains shutting them in. It was at this crisis the Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.' As they obeyed, the Red sea parted before them and they went through it in the path God had prepared for them.

"We say to you in Oakland, believe and do all you can, and you will see the salvation of God. Let all murmurings and questioning doubts cease. Let your complaints be turned to prayer and faith and works. I say that house shall not be sold. I will first sell my house on the corner of Castro and Eleventh streets, and put every dollar of the avails into the church to clear it of debt. Sell our houses? yes, yes indeed, rather than the house that has been dedicated to God.

"Wait, work, and pray. We will exert our influence and do what we can. Every foot of room in that house will be needed yet. Oakland is a missionary field, and always will be. The truth will prevail in Oakland. It may take time, but it will take hold of hearts there. Believe, work, hope, and pray. Cling to God with all your might.

"Let all in the office and in the church at Oakland show a still greater spirit of self-sacrifice than they have manifested, and God will work with your efforts. Lift the burdens willingly, and we will not let the matter rest till we see you free from embarrassment. Help shall come. If we cannot sell our property, we will use our influence to interest others to do all they can. Sell

that church? Never, never. I tell you many prayers were offered while it was being erected. You will come out all right.

"Be not faithless, but believing. There are those who have money upon the Pacific coast; let them come up to the help of the Lord and make their offerings to God. Some in California have shown that they had greater confidence in unbelievers than in those whom God has honored by connecting them with his cause.

"These have trusted their money to men of no principle, while the cause of God was wading heavily for the want of means. If any appeal is made to them, they respond by presenting their narrow ideas and selfish views. Too much money, they say, has been expended in buildings and in facilities for the spread of the truth. They are afraid that they shall lose their money if entrusted to the treasury of God, but the Lord has shown his displeasure at their course in suffering losses to occur. They have not saving faith; money is their god. The Lord has entrusted to them means, to use in the advancement of his cause, but their covetous spirit grasps it and will not let it go back to him to whom it belongs.

"Sister Rowland has made most earnest efforts to help when and where she could. May the Lord open ways before her that she may be able to dispose of her property and invest a portion of it in the cause of God. At the greatest inconvenience to herself, she mortgaged her property and raised two thousand dollars to help in the SIGNS office when it was most needed. This noble act on her part is an expression of her confidence in the work and cause of God. She will not lose her reward. If others would show similar commendable zeal and faith, the cause of truth would not be embarrassed as it now is.

"We hope those who have means trusted out to strangers will see that God's cause may be benefited by its use. It was placed in their hands by the

Lord, to test them and prove them, to see if they will render back to the Master his own when he shall call for it. Means were given them, not to hoard or to use for themselves. Those who are murmuring and complaining at the outlay of means in the Publishing House and in the meeting-house, had better be at work to act their part, lest they shall be found wanting by acting the part of Meroz. God gave commandment, 'Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.'

"Let not your offerings to advance the cause of God be stinted. If there is any stint and meagre arrangements and inferior works to be seen and felt anywhere, let it be in your own houses and your own dress, and not in the house of God or in the facilities which are needed to push forward the work of God."

Our house of worship at Oakland, dedicated to the worship of God by a people who fear him and keep his commandments, be sold to a people who trample that law beneath their feet? Never! No! Never!

We need just such a house at that important post at present. In the near future a larger one will be demanded. Its location is excellent.

The future growth of the cause in such a city as Oakland depends very much upon a central, commodious and neat house of worship, such as now exists in that city.

January 9, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 1--The Fall of Satan

Satan in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance, and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Jesus, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and in his ambition assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was he to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon it. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him. Satan was jealous and envious of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge his supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, Satan bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and

hatred. Christ had been taken into counsel with the Father in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself. Satan thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted; but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God himself. He gloried in his loftiness. He knew that he was honored by the angels. He had a special mission to execute. He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God, had shone especially upon him. Satan thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself?

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied, and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved he related the preference God had given to Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the precious liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor upon himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey him. There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into his unsearchable wisdom and ascertain his purposes in exalting his Son Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this first great rebel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Jesus Christ, and with forcible reasons sought to convince Satan that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which he had conferred upon his Son. They clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God, and his mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that he had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They had urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that he had heretofore received. The angels wept, and anxiously sought to move Satan to renounce his wicked design and yield submission to their Creator. All had heretofore been peace and harmony, and what could occasion this dissenting, rebellious voice?

Satan refused to listen, and turned from the loyal angels, denouncing them as slaves. These angels, true to God, stood in amazement as they saw that Satan was successful in his effort to excite rebellion. He promised them a new and better government, in which all would be freedom. Great numbers signified their purpose to accept Satan as their leader and chief commander. As he saw his advances were met with success, he flattered himself that he should yet have all the angels on his side, and that he would be equal with God himself, and his voice of authority would be heard in commanding the entire host of heaven. Again the loyal angels warned Satan, and assured him what must be the consequences if he persisted; that he who could create the angels, could by his power overturn all their authority, and in some signal manner punish their audacity and terrible rebellion. To think that an angel should resist the law of God which was as sacred as himself; they warned the rebellious to close their ears to Satan's deceptive reasonings, and advised Satan, and all who had been affected by him, to go to God and confess their wrong for even admitting a thought of questioning his authority.

Many of Satan's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels, and repent of their dissatisfaction, and be again received to the confidence of the Father and his dear Son. The mighty revolter then declared that he was acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences; for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them.

The loyal angels hasten speedily to the Son of God, and acquaint him with what is taking place among the angels. They find the Father in conference with his beloved Son, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. The great God could at once have hurled this arch deceiver from heaven; but this was not his purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with his own Son and his loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side, and his character and purposes would be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable. If God had exercised his power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence he took another course; for he would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host, his justice and his judgment.

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at their head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, heaven's great commander.

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God, and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand his purposes. God informed Satan that to his Son alone he would reveal his secret purposes, and he required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy a place in heaven. Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven? He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ, and to defend his position in heaven by force of might, strength against strength.

Good angels wept to hear the words of Satan, and his exulting boasts. God declared that the rebellious should remain in heaven no longer. Their high and happy state had been held upon condition of obedience to the law which God had given to govern the high order of intelligences. But no provision had been made to save those who should venture to transgress his law. Satan grew bold in his rebellion, and expressed his contempt of the Creator's law. This Satan could not bear. He claimed that angels needed no law; but should be left free to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right; that law was a restriction of their liberty, and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did. The condition of the angels he thought needed improvement. Not so the mind of God, who had made laws and exalted them equal to himself. The happiness of the angelic host consisted in their perfect obedience to law. Each had his special work assigned him; and until Satan rebelled, there had been perfect order and harmony among the angels in heaven. Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and his loyal angels, engaged in conflict with the arch rebel and those who united with him. The Son of God and true,

loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left. All was again peaceful and harmonious as before.

The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with angels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience.

Chapter 2--The Creation

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated, of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and other bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain. Its surface was diversified with hills and mountains. These, however, were not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger, and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God.

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to his Son, "Let us make man in our image." As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble--perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.

This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. While they lived in obedience to God, this circle of light enshrouded them. Although everything God had made was in the perfection of beauty, and there seemed nothing wanting upon the earth which God had created to make Adam and Eve happy, yet he manifested his great love to them by planting a garden especially for them. A portion of their time was to be occupied in the happy employment of dressing the garden, and a portion in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation. Their labor was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. This beautiful garden was to be their home, their special residence.

In this garden the Lord placed trees of every variety for usefulness and beauty. There were trees laden with luxuriant fruit, of rich fragrance, beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, designed of God to be food for the holy pair. There were the lovely vines which grew upright, laden with their burden of fruit, unlike anything man has seen since the fall. The fruit was very large, and of different colors; some nearly black, some purple, red, pink, and light green. This beautiful and luxuriant growth of fruit upon the branches of the vine was called grapes. And it was the happy labor of Adam

and Eve to form beautiful bowers from the branches of the vine, and train them, forming dwellings of nature's beautiful, living trees and foliage, laden with fragrant fruit. (To be Continued.)

January 16, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 2--The Creation (Continued.)

The earth was clothed with beautiful verdure, while myriads of fragrant flowers of every variety and hue sprang up in rich profusion around them. Every thing was tastefully and gloriously arranged. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, the glory of which surpassed all other trees. Its fruit looked like apples of gold and silver, and was to perpetuate immortality. The leaves contained healing properties.

Very happy were the holy pair in Eden. Unlimited control was given them over every living thing. The lion and the lamb sported together peacefully and harmlessly around them, or slumbered at their feet. Birds of every variety of color and plumage flitted among the trees and flowers, and about Adam and Eve, while their mellow-toned music echoed among the trees in sweet accord to the praises of their Creator.

Adam and Eve were charmed with the beauties of their Eden home. They were delighted with the little songsters around them, wearing their bright yet graceful plumage, and warbling forth their happy, cheerful music. The holy pair united with them, and raised their voices in harmonious songs of love, praise, and adoration, to the Father and his dear Son, for the tokens of love which surrounded them. They recognized the order and harmony of creation, which spoke of wisdom and knowledge which were infinite. Some new beauty and additional glory of their Eden home they were continually discovering, which filled their hearts with deeper love, and brought from their lips expressions of gratitude and reverence to their Creator.

Chapter 3--The Temptation and Fall

In the midst of the garden, near the tree of life, stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree was especially designed by God to be a pledge of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. Of this tree the Lord commanded them not to eat, lest they die. He told them that they might freely eat of all the trees of the garden except one; but if they ate of that tree they should surely die.

When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But the Creator chose, in his all-wise arrangements, to test their loyalty before they could be rendered eternally secure. They were to enjoy his favor, and he was to converse with them, and they with him. Yet he did not place evil out of their reach. Satan was permitted to tempt them. If they endured the trial, they were to be in perpetual favor with God and the heavenly angels.

The hour for joyful happy songs of praise to God and his dear Son had come. Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note, then all the angelic host united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through Heaven. But now, instead of strains of sweetest music, discord and angry words fall upon the ear of the great rebel leader.

Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from heaven with him. Before their fall not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination were among them. Previous to their rebellion these things had been unknown in Heaven. Satan now beheld the terrible results of his rebellion. He shuddered, and feared to

face the future, and to contemplate the end of these things. Where was he? Was it not all a horrible dream? Was he shut out of Heaven? Were the gates of Heaven never more to open and admit him? Bright, holy angels bow before the Father, but no more will Satan unite with them in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God. Could he be again as when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And this was not all; he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself--angels who had never thought to question the will of Heaven, or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds, presenting before them that they might enjoy a greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them. A responsibility now rests upon him from which he would fain be released.

These fallen spirits had become turbulent with disappointed hopes. Instead of greater good, they were experiencing the sad results of disobedience and disregard of law. Never more would these unhappy beings be swayed by the mild rule of Jesus Christ. Never more would their spirits be stirred by the deep, earnest love, peace, and joy, which his presence had ever inspired in them, to be returned to him in cheerful obedience and reverential honor.

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone, in meditation upon the past, the present, and the future. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from Heaven was passing. Satan called him, and intreated an interview with Christ. This was granted. He then related to him that he repented of his rebellion, and wished again to enjoy the favor of God. He was willing to take the place which had been assigned him, and be under Christ's command. The Son of God wept at Satan's woe, but told him, as the mind of the Father, that this could never be. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. The peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received

back; for sin originated with him; the seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would still have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon.

Satan did not repent of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused. The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of Heaven, the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced in not finding his expectations realized, were the cause of his grief. To be commander out of Heaven, was vastly different from being thus honored in Heaven. The loss of all the privileges of Heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these.

The great change in his position had not increased his love for God, nor for his wise and just law. When Satan became fully convinced that it was impossible for him to be re-instated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence.

God knew that such determined rebellion would not remain inactive. Satan would invent means to annoy the heavenly angels, and show contempt for his authority. As he could not gain admittance within the gates of Heaven, he would wait just at the entrance, to taunt the angels and seek contention with them as they should pass in and out. He would seek to destroy the happiness of Adam and Eve. He would endeavor to incite them to rebellion, knowing that this would cause grief in Heaven.

His followers were seeking him; and he aroused himself, and assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could in any way beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to

share with them of God's mercy. If they should fail to obtain pardon, they could unite with Adam and Eve, whose transgression would place them also in a state of rebellion; and thus they could take possession of Eden, and hold it as their home. And if they could gain access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden, their strength would, they thought, be equal to that of the holy angels, and even God himself could not expel them.

Satan held a consultation with his evil angels. They did not all readily unite to engage in this hazardous and terrible work. He told them that he could not intrust the work to any one of them; for he thought that he alone had wisdom sufficient to carry forward so important an enterprise. He wished them to consider the matter while he should leave them and seek retirement, to mature his plans. He sought to impress upon them that this was their last and only hope. If they failed here, all prospect of regaining and controlling Heaven, or any other part of God's creation, was hopeless.

Satan went alone to mature plans that would most surely secure the fall of Adam and Eve. He had fears that his purposes might be defeated. And again, even if he should be successful in leading Adam and Eve to disobey the commandment of God, and thus become transgressors of his law, and no good come to himself, his own case would not be improved; his guilt would only be increased. He shuddered at the thought of plunging the holy, happy pair into the misery and remorse which he was himself enduring. He seemed in a state of indecision; at one time firm and determined, then hesitating and wavering.

His angels were seeking him, their leader, to acquaint him with their decision. They will unite with him in his plans, and with him bear the responsibility, and share the consequences. Satan cast off his feelings of despair and weakness, and, as their leader, fortified himself to brave out the matter, and do all in his power to defy the authority of God and his Son. He acquainted them with his plans. If he should come boldly upon Adam and

Eve and make complaints of God's own Son, they would not listen to him for a moment, but would be prepared for such an attack. Should he seek to intimidate them because of his power, so recently an angel in high authority, he could accomplish nothing. He decided that cunning and deceit would do what might or force could not.

God assembled the angelic host to take measures to avert the threatened evil. It was decided in Heaven's council for angels to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. Accordingly, two angels sped on their way to visit our first parents. The holy pair received them joyfully, expressing their gratitude to their Creator for surrounding them with such a profusion of his bounty. Everything lovely and attractive was theirs to enjoy, and everything seemed wisely adapted to their wants. Above all other blessings they prized the society of the Son of God and the heavenly angels; for at every visit they had much to relate to them, of their new discoveries of the beauties of nature in their Eden home; and they had questions to ask relative to many things which they could but imperfectly comprehend.

The angels graciously and lovingly gave them the desired information. They also gave them the sad history of Satan's rebellion and fall. They then distinctly informed them that the tree of knowledge was placed in the garden to be a pledge of their obedience and love to God; that the high and happy estate of the holy angels was to be retained upon condition of obedience; and that they were similarly situated--they could obey the law of God and be inexpressibly happy, or disobey, and lose their high estate, and be plunged into hopeless despair.

They told Adam and Eve that God would not compel them to obey--that he had not removed from them power to go contrary to his will; they were moral agents, free to obey or disobey. There was but one prohibition that God had as yet seen fit to lay upon them. If they should transgress the will of God, they would surely die. They told them also, that the most exalted angel,

next in order to Christ, had refused obedience to the law of God which he had ordained to govern heavenly beings; that this rebellion had caused war in Heaven, and as the result the rebel leader and every angel who united with him in questioning the authority of the great Jehovah, had been driven out of Heaven; and that this fallen foe was now an enemy to all that concerned the interest of God and his dear Son.

They told them that Satan purposed to do them harm, and it was necessary for them to be guarded, for they might come in contact with the fallen foe; but he could not harm them while they yielded obedience to God's command; for, if necessary, every angel from Heaven would come to their help rather than that he should in any way do them harm. But if they disobeyed the command of God, then Satan would have power to ever annoy, perplex, and trouble them. If they remained steadfast against the first insinuations of Satan, they were as secure as the heavenly angels. But if they yielded to the tempter, He who spared not the exalted angels would not spare them. They must suffer the penalty of their transgression; for the law of God was as sacred as himself, and he required implicit obedience from all in Heaven and on earth.

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment; for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other, they would be in greater danger than if they were together. The angels charged them to follow closely the instructions which God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge; for in perfect obedience they were safe, and the foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve assured the angels that they would never transgress the express command of God; for it was their highest pleasure to do his will. The

angels united with them in holy strains of harmonious music; and as their songs pealed forth from blissful Eden, Satan heard their joyful adoration of the Father and the Son. And as he heard it, his envy, hatred, and malignity increased, and he expressed to his followers his anxiety to incite Adam and Eve to disobedience, and at once bring down the wrath of God upon them, and change their songs of praise to hatred, and curses against their Maker.

Satan then assumed the form of a serpent, and entered Eden. The serpent was a beautiful creature, with wings; and while flying through the air, his appearance was bright, resembling burnished gold. He did not go upon the ground, but went from place to place through the air, and ate fruit like man. Satan entered into the serpent, who took his position in the tree of knowledge, and commenced leisurely eating of the fruit.

Eve, unconsciously at first, separated from her husband in her employment. When she became aware of the fact, she felt that there might be danger; but again she thought herself secure, even if she did not remain close by the side of her husband. She had wisdom and strength to know if evil came, and to meet it. This the angels had cautioned her not to do. Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. She saw it was very lovely, and was reasoning with herself why God had so decidedly prohibited their eating it. Now was Satan's opportunity. He addressed her as though he was able to divine her thoughts, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Thus, with soft and pleasant words, and with musical voice, he addressed the wondering Eve. She was startled to hear a serpent speak. He extolled her beauty and exceeding loveliness, which was not displeasing to Eve. But she was amazed, for she knew that to the serpent God had not given the power of speech.

Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be

that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium. It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. Eve was beguiled, flattered, infatuated. Had she met a commanding personage, possessing a form like the angels, and resembling them, she would have been upon her guard. But that strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she enters into a controversy with the serpent. She answers his question, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." The serpent answers, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Satan would convey the idea that by eating of the forbidden tree, they would receive a new and more noble kind of knowledge than they had hitherto attained. This has been his special work with great success ever since his fall, to lead men to pry into the secrets of the Almighty, and not to be satisfied with what God has revealed, and not careful to obey that which was commanded. He would lead them to disobey God's commands, and then make them believe that they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge. This is a miserable deception. They fail to understand what God has revealed, they disregard his explicit commandments, aspire after wisdom, independent of God, and seek to understand that which he has been pleased to withhold from mortals. They are elated with their ideas of progression, and charmed with their own vain philosophy; but they grope in midnight darkness relative to true knowledge. They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It was not the will of God that this sinless pair should have any knowledge of evil. He had freely given them the good, but withheld the evil. Eve thought the words of the serpent wise, and she received the broad assertion, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat

thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,"--making God a liar. Satan boldly insinuates that God had deceived them to keep them from being exalted in knowledge equal with himself. God said, If ye eat "ye shall surely die." The serpent said, If ye eat "ye shall not surely die."

Satan assured Eve that as soon as she ate of the fruit she would receive a new and superior knowledge that would make her equal with God. He called her attention to himself. He ate freely of the tree and found it not only perfectly harmless, but delicious and exhilarating; and he told her that it was because of its wonderful properties to impart wisdom and power that God had prohibited them from tasting or even touching it; for he knew its wonderful qualities. The tempter stated that by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree he had attained the power of speech. He intimated that God would not carry out his word. It was merely a threat to intimidate them and keep them from great good. He further told them that they could not die. Had they not eaten of the tree of life which perpetuates immortality? He said that God was deceiving them to keep them from a higher state of felicity and more exalted happiness.

Satan plucked the fruit and passed it to Eve. She took it in her hand. Now, said the tempter, you were prohibited from even touching it lest ye die. He told her that she would realize no more sense of evil and death in eating than in touching or handling the fruit. Eve was emboldened because she felt not the immediate signs of God's displeasure. She thought the words of the tempter wise and correct. She ate, and was delighted with the fruit. It seemed delicious to her taste, and she imagined that she realized in herself the wonderful effects of the fruit.

She then plucked the fruit for herself and ate, and imagined she felt the quickening power of a new and elevated existence as the result of the exhilarating influence of the forbidden fruit. She was in a state of strange and

unnatural excitement as she sought her husband, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit. She related to him the wise discourse of the serpent, and wished to conduct him at once to the tree of knowledge. She told him she had eaten of the fruit, and instead of feeling any sense of death, she realized a pleasing, exhilarating influence. As soon as Eve disobeyed, she became a powerful medium through which to occasion the fall of her husband.

A sadness came over the countenance of Adam. He appeared afraid and astonished. A struggle seemed to be going on in his mind. He told Eve that he was quite certain that this was the foe whom they had been warned against; and if so, she must die. She assured him she felt no ill effects, but rather a very pleasant influence, and entreated him to eat. (To be Continued.)

January 23, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 3--The Temptation and Fall (Concluded)

Adam quite well understood that his companion had transgressed the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. Eve reasoned that the serpent said they should not surely die, and his words must be true, for she felt no signs of God's displeasure, but a pleasant influence, as she imagined the angels felt. Adam regretted that Eve had left his side; but now the deed was done. He must be separated from her whose society he had loved so well. How could he have it thus? His love for Eve was strong, and in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He reasoned that Eve was a part of himself; and if she must die, he would die with her; for he could not bear the thought of separation from her. He did not think that God, who had created him a living, beautiful form out of the dust of the ground, and had given him Eve to be his companion, could supply her place. After all, might not the words of this wise serpent be correct? Eve was before him, just as lovely and beautiful, and apparently as innocent, as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater, higher love for him than before her disobedience, as the effect of the fruit she had eaten. He saw in her no signs of death. She had told him of the happy influence of the fruit, of her ardent love for him, and he decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it, and, like Eve, felt not immediately its ill effects.

Eve had thought herself capable of deciding between right and wrong. The flattering hope of entering a higher state of knowledge had led her to think that the serpent was her especial friend, possessing a great interest in her welfare. If she had sought her husband, and they had related to their

Maker the words of the serpent, they would have been delivered at once from his artful temptation.

God instructed our first parents in regard to the tree of knowledge, and they were fully informed relative to the fall of Satan, and the danger of listening to his suggestions. God did not deprive them of the power of eating the forbidden fruit. He left them as free moral agents to believe his word, obey his commandments and live, or believe the tempter, disobey and perish. They both ate, and the great wisdom they obtained was the knowledge of sin, and a sense of guilt. The Lord would not have them investigate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for then they would be exposed to Satan masked. He knew that they would be perfectly safe if they touched not the fruit.

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent; yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit; while God had given them everything that was good for food, and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent, to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in their Creator, she basely distrusted his goodness, and cherished the words of Satan.

After Adam's transgression he at first imagined himself rising to a new and higher existence. But soon the thought of his transgression terrified him. The air, that had been of a mild and even temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. They had a sense of sin, and felt a dread of the future, a sense of want, a nakedness of soul. The sweet love and peace seemed removed from them, and in their place a want of something came over them that they had never experienced before. They then for the first turned their attention to the external. They had not been clothed, but were draped in light as were the heavenly angels. This light which had enshrouded them departed. To relieve the sense of nakedness which they realized, their attention was directed to

seek a covering for their forms; for how could they meet the eye of God and angels unclothed.

Their crime is now before them in its true light. Their transgression of God's express command assumes a clearer character. Adam censured Eve's folly in leaving his side, and being deceived by the serpent; but they both flattered themselves that God, who had given them everything to make them happy, might yet excuse their disobedience, because of his great love to them, and that their punishment would not be so dreadful after all.

Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God, to question his wisdom, and to seek to penetrate his all-wise plans. And through her he had also caused the overthrow of Adam, who, in consequence of his love for Eve, disobeyed the command of God, and fell with her.

The news of man's fall spread through Heaven--every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All Heaven was in agitation. The angels were grieved at the base ingratitude of man, in return for the rich blessings which God had bestowed upon him. A council was held to see what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate a life of sin.

The Lord visited Adam and Eve, and made known to them the consequence of their disobedience. And as they hear God's majestic approach, they seek to hide themselves from inspection of him whom they delighted, while in their innocence and holiness, to meet. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" This question was asked by the Lord, not because he needed information, but for

the conviction of the guilty pair. Adam acknowledged his transgression, not because he was penitent for his great disobedience, but to cast reflection upon God. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman was then addressed: "What is this that thou hast done?" Eve answered, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The Lord then addressed the serpent: "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." As the serpent had been exalted above the beasts of the field, he should be degraded beneath them all, and be detested by man, inasmuch as he was the medium through which Satan acted. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground."

God cursed the ground because of the sin of Adam and Eve in eating of the tree of knowledge, and declared, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." He had apportioned them the good, but withheld the evil. Now he declares that they shall eat of it, that is, they shall be acquainted with evil, all the days of their life.

The race from that time forward was to be afflicted by Satan's temptations. A life of perpetual toil and anxiety was appointed unto Adam, instead of the happy, cheerful labor which he had hitherto enjoyed. They should be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally come to dissolution. They were made of the dust of the earth, and unto dust should they return.

Adam and Eve were informed that they must lose their Eden home. They had yielded to Satan's deception, and believed that God would lie. By

their transgression they had opened a way for Satan to gain access to them more readily, and it was not safe for them to remain in the garden of Eden, lest in their state of sin they gain access to the tree of life, and perpetuate a life of sin. They entreated to be permitted to remain, although they acknowledged that they had forfeited all right to blissful Eden. They promised that they would in the future yield implicit obedience to God. They were informed that in their fall from innocence to guilt, they had gained no strength, but great weakness. They had not preserved their integrity while they were in a state of holy, happy innocence, and they would have far less strength to remain true and loyal in a state of conscious guilt. At these words the unhappy pair were filled with keenest anguish and remorse. They now realized that the penalty of sin was death.

It was Satan's studied plan that Adam and Eve should disobey God, receive his frown, and then partake of the tree of life, that they might perpetuate a life of sin. But holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the way to the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light on every side, which had the appearance of glittering swords.

Many regard the punishment of Adam's transgression as too severe a penalty for so small a sin. The enemy of all righteousness has blinded the eyes of sinners, so that sin does not appear sinful. Their standard of what constitutes sin is vastly different from God's standard. Should those who regard Adam's sin as a matter of very small consequence look a little deeper, they would see the great mercy of God in giving Adam the smallest possible test. It could scarcely be called a self-denial on his part to refrain from partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for he already had everything necessary to supply his wants. A compassionate God gave no severe test, no strong temptation that would tax human endurance beyond the power to resist. The fruit itself was harmless. If God had not forbidden Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, their action in taking it would not have been sinful. Up to the moment of God's prohibition, Adam might

have eaten of the fruit of that tree without realizing any harm. But after God had said, Thou shalt not eat, the act became a crime of great magnitude. Adam had disobeyed God. In this was his sin. The very fact that Adam's trial was small, made his sin exceeding great. God tested him in that which was least, to prove him; and with the prohibition he stated that the punishment consequent upon his disobedience would be death. If Adam could not bear this smallest of tests to prove his loyalty, he surely could not have endured a stronger trial had he been taken into closer relationship with God, to bear higher responsibilities. He evidenced that God could not trust him; should he be exposed to Satan's more determined attacks, he would signally fail.

God created man in his own image, after his likeness, free from sin, and with organs well developed. The earth was to be populated with intelligent beings who were only a little lower than the angels. But God would first prove the holy pair, and test their obedience; for he would not have a world filled with beings who would disregard his laws. Adam did the worst thing he could do under the circumstances. In doing that which God had expressly forbidden he set his will against the will of God, thus waging war with his requirements. The pen of inspiration has with accuracy traced the history of our first parents' sin and fall, that all generations may be warned not to follow Adam's example, in the slightest disregard of God's requirements. Had the test been in regard to larger matters, men might have excused the sin of disobedience in what they call smaller things. But God made the test with Adam upon things that are least, to show man that the slightest disobedience to his requirements is sin in every sense of the word. God, the Governor of the universe, has made all things subject to law; things apparently insignificant, and things of the greatest magnitude, are all governed by laws adapted to their natures. Nothing that God has made has been forgotten or left to blind chance. To man, as being endowed with reasoning powers and conscience, God's moral law is given to control his actions. Man is not compelled to obey. He may defy God's law, as did Adam, and take the fearful consequences; or by living in harmony with that law he may reap the

rewards of obedience.

Ministers of our time give from their pulpits license to sin, in saying to the sinner, that the law of God is not binding upon man, and that it is impossible for him to keep it. It was then impossible for Adam to keep God's law, and why should the punishment of transgression have fallen upon him? The very fact that disobedience to God in one of the smallest requirements brought such woe to our world shows that any disregard of his law will surely be followed by the penalty, which is death. Ministers who make war upon the law of God, are gathering in their garments the blood of souls. They are working in harmony with the great rebel.

January 30, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 4--The Plan of Salvation

Sorrow filled Heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender; the whole family of Adam must die. The heart of the Son of God was touched with pity for the lost race. Upon his lovely countenance rested an expression of sympathy and sorrow. Soon he approached the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father, and he seemed to engage in close converse with him. The anxiety of the angels was intense while Jesus thus communed with his Father. Three times he was shut in by the cloud of glory; the third time he came forth his countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give his life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself, that through him man might find pardon; that through the merits of his blood, and obedience to the law of God, man could again have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

At first the angels could not rejoice, for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. He told them that he would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man, that he would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive him as the Son of God. He would leave all his glory in Heaven, appear upon earth as a

man, become acquainted by his own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset; and, finally, after his mission as a teacher should be accomplished, he would be delivered into the hands of men, and after enduring almost every cruelty and suffering, that Satan and his angels could inspire wicked men to inflict, he would die the cruelest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. And not merely would he suffer bodily pain, but mental agony. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon him. He told them also that after his death he would rise again the third day, and ascend to his Father to intercede for wayward, guilty man.

The angels prostrated themselves before their beloved Commander, and offered to give their lives. Jesus told them the transgression was so great that the life of an angel could not pay the debt; his life alone could be accepted by his Father as a ransom for man. But the work of the angels was assigned them, to descend with strengthening balm from glory to soothe the Son of God in his sufferings, and to minister unto him. Also, their work would be to guard the subjects of grace from the evil angels, and the darkness constantly thrown around them by Satan.

With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels, and informed them that hereafter those whom he should redeem would be with him, and ever dwell with him; and that by his death he should ransom many, and finally destroy him who had the power of death. And his Father would give him the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and he should possess it forever and ever. Satan and sinners should be destroyed, never more to disturb Heaven, or those who should inherit the new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father had accepted, and rejoice that fallen man could be exalted again, through his death, to obtain favor with God and enjoy Heaven.

Then joy inexpressible filled Heaven, and the heavenly host sung a song

of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sung a note higher than they had done before, for the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up his dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Praise and adoration were poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus; that he would consent to leave the bosom of his Father, and choose a life of suffering and anguish, and die an ignominious death to redeem the fallen race.

The Father did not yield up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle, whether to let guilty man perish or to give his Son to die for the lost race. It was impossible for God to change his law, or give up the smallest part of its claims, in order to save man; therefore he suffered his Son to die for man's transgression.

When the plan of salvation was revealed, Satan rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man's fall, pull down the Son of God from his exalted position. He told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower him, and hinder the accomplishment of the plan.

In humility and inexpressible sadness, Adam and Eve left the lovely garden wherein they had been so happy until they disobeyed the command of God. The atmosphere was changed. It was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they were exposed.

Angels of God were commissioned to visit the fallen pair and inform them that, although they could no longer retain possession of their holy estate, their Eden home, because of their transgression of the law of God, their case was not altogether hopeless. The Son of God had been moved with pity as he viewed their hopeless condition, and had volunteered to take upon himself the punishment due to them, and die for them that they might yet live, through faith in the atonement which Christ proposed to make. A door

of hope was opened, that man, notwithstanding his great sin, might not be under the absolute control of Satan. Probation would be granted him in which, through a life of repentance, and faith in the atonement of the Son of God, he might be redeemed from his transgression of the Father's law, and thus be elevated to a position where his efforts to keep that law could be accepted.

The angels related to them the grief that was felt in Heaven, as it was announced that they had transgressed the law of God, which had made it expedient for Christ to make the great sacrifice of his own precious life.

When Adam and Eve realized how exalted and sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly a sacrifice necessary to save them from utter ruin, they pleaded that they and their posterity might endure the penalty of their transgression, rather than that the beloved Son of God should make this great sacrifice. The anguish of Adam was increased. He saw that his sins were of so great magnitude as to involve fearful consequences. And must it be that Heaven's honored Commander, who had walked with him and talked with him while in his holy innocence, whom angels worshiped, must be brought down from his exalted position to die because of man's transgression.

Adam was informed that an angel's life could not pay the debt. The law of Jehovah, the foundation of his government in Heaven and upon earth, was as sacred as its divine Author; and for this reason the life of an angel could not be accepted of God as a sacrifice for its transgression. His law was of more importance in his sight than the holy angels around his throne. The Father could not change nor abolish one precept of his law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God, who had in unison with the Father created man, could make an atonement for man acceptable to God, by giving his life a sacrifice, and bearing the wrath of his Father. As Adam's transgression had brought death and wretchedness upon the race, life and

immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a sacrifice of such infinite value as to make a man who should avail himself of it more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

To Adam were revealed future, important events, from his expulsion from Eden, to the flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth. His love for Adam and his posterity would lead the Son of God to condescend to take human nature, and thus elevate, through his own humiliation, all who would believe on him. Such a sacrifice was of sufficient value to save the whole world; but only a few would avail themselves of the salvation thus brought to them.

The many would not comply with the conditions. They would prefer sin, transgression of the law of God, rather than repentance and obedience, relying by faith upon the merit of the sacrifice offered.

Adam was carried down through successive generations, and shown the increase of crime, of guilt and defilement, because man would yield to his naturally strong inclinations to transgress the holy law of God. He saw the curse of God resting more and more heavily upon the human race, upon the cattle, and upon the earth, because of man's continued transgression. He saw that iniquity and violence would steadily increase; yet amid all the tide of human misery and woe, there would ever be a few who would preserve the knowledge of God, and would remain unsullied amid the prevailing moral degeneracy. Adam was made to comprehend what sin is--the transgression of the law. He was shown that moral, mental, and physical degeneracy would result to the race, from transgression, until the world would be filled with human misery of every type.

The days of man have been shortened by his own course of sin in transgressing the righteous law of God. The race has so greatly depreciated as to become almost worthless. Because of the indulgence of the carnal

mind, they are generally incapable of appreciating the mystery of Calvary, the grand and elevated facts of the atonement and the plan of salvation. Yet, notwithstanding the weakness, and enfeebled mental, moral, and physical powers to the human race, Christ, true to the purpose for which he left Heaven, continues his interest in the feeble, depreciated, degenerate specimens of humanity, and invites them to hide their weakness and great deficiencies in him. If they will come unto him, he will supply all their needs.

When Adam, according to God's special directions, made an offering for sin, it was to him a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which God alone could give. It was the first time he had witnessed death. As he looked upon the bleeding victim, writhing in the agonies of death, he was to look forward by faith to the Son of God, whom the victim prefigured, who was to die man's sacrifice.

This ceremonial offering, ordained of God, was to be to Adam a perpetual reminder of his guilt, and also a penitential acknowledgment of his sin. This act of taking life gave him a deeper and more perfect sense of his transgression, which nothing less than the death of God's dear Son could expiate. Adam marveled at the infinite goodness and matchless love which would give such a ransom to save the guilty. As he was slaying the innocent victim, it seemed to him that he was shedding the blood of the Son of God by his own hand. He knew that if he had remained steadfast to God, and true to his holy law, there would have been no death of beast nor of man. Yet in the sacrificial offerings, pointing to the great and perfect offering of God's dear Son, there appeared a star of hope to illuminate the dark and terrible future, and relieve it of its utter hopelessness and ruin.

In the beginning, the head of each family was considered ruler and priest of his own household. Afterward, as the race multiplied upon the earth, men of divine appointment performed this solemn worship of sacrifice for the

people. The blood of beasts was to be associated in the minds of sinners with the blood of the Son of God. The death of the victim was to evidence to all that the penalty of sin was death. By the act of sacrifice, the sinner acknowledged his guilt, and manifested his faith, looking forward to the great and perfect sacrifice of the Son of God, which the offering of beasts prefigured. Without the atonement of the Son of God there could have been no communication of blessing or salvation from God to man. God was jealous for the honor of his law. The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels.

February 6, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 5--Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Both acknowledged God, both professed to worship him; but while Abel loved and feared God, Cain cherished rebellious feelings, and murmured against him because of the sentence pronounced upon Adam, and because the ground was cursed for his sin. These brothers had been instructed in regard to the provision 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 entire dependence upon the promised Redeemer by slaying the firstlings of the flock, and in the most solemn manner presenting them, with the blood, as an offering to God. Thus they were ever to keep before their minds the consequences of transgression, and the promise of a Redeemer to come.

God had made known to Adam that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. But Cain was unwilling to follow strictly the plan of obedience, to procure a lamb and offer it with the fruit of the earth. He brought only an offering of the fruit, thus disregarding the requirement of God. And he was not even particular to bring the best of the fruits. Abel advised his brother not to come before the Lord without the blood of a sacrifice; but Cain, being the eldest, would not listen to him. He despised his counsel, and with murmuring and infidelity in his heart with regard to the promised Sacrifice, and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings, he presented his gift.

Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock, as God had commanded, and with full faith in the Messiah to come he presented the offering. God had respect unto this sacrifice, and fire came down from Heaven and consumed it. But Cain saw no manifestation that his offering was accepted.

Abel came in God's appointed way, while Cain followed the promptings of his own heart, in opposition to the command of God. "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." As Abel looked upon the expiring victim he was impressed with the painful fact that the wages of sin is death. He saw that it was transgression of God's law which had separated man from his Creator, and that the sacrifice of life alone could meet the claims of the broken law. Through the dying struggles and streaming blood of the victim, he saw by faith the Son of God dying for the guilty race.

An important lesson may be learned from the history of the offerings of Cain and Abel. The claims of infinite justice, and the demands of God's law, can be met only by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The most costly offering that man may bring to God, the fruit of his toil, his physical and intellectual acquirements, already belong to his Creator. Man has nothing which he has not received. Neither material wealth nor intellectual greatness will atone for the sin of the soul. Cain scorned the idea that it was necessary to come to God with an offering of blood. In the same spirit many in our day refuse to believe that the blood of Christ was shed as a sacrifice for the sins of men. Although Cain chose to disregard the command of God, he brought his offering with great confidence. He looked upon it as the fruit of his own labor, and hence as belonging to himself; and in presenting it to God he felt that he was placing his Creator under obligations to him. The popular religion of the day virtually teaches the same thing, that men may by their good works merit the blessing of God. Many feel that it is a condescension on their part to make a profession of religion; and that in so doing they are conferring a favor upon God. And there are multitudes who have no desire to

come to God's terms, but who make terms for themselves, and expect God to accept them. Such a religion is of the same character as that of Cain. The great question should be, What can I do to meet the approval of God? not, How can I best please myself?

Abel trusted wholly in the merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It was this faith that connected him with God. The promise of a Redeemer was dimly understood; but the sacrificial offerings cast light upon the promise. Cain had the same opportunity of learning and accepting these truths as had Abel. God did not accept one and reject the other without sufficient reason. Abel believed and obeyed; Cain doubted and rebelled. God is no respecter of persons, yet he will reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient.

When Cain saw that his offering was not accepted, he was very angry with the Lord, and with his brother. But God, in his infinite mercy, condescended to send an angel to Cain, to converse with him. The angel inquired the reason of his anger, and informed him that if he would follow the directions which God had given he would respect his offering. But if he would not humbly submit to God's arrangements, and believe and obey him, his offering could not be accepted.

There had been no injustice on the part of God, and no partiality shown to Abel; 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 complained of the injustice and partiality of God. And in his jealousy and hatred he contended with Abel, and reproached him. Abel meekly pointed out his brother's error, and endeavored to convince him that the wrong was in himself. But Cain hated his brother from the moment that God manifested to him the tokens of his acceptance. Abel sought to appease his wrath by pointing to the compassion of God in saving the lives of their parents, when he might have

brought upon them immediate death. He told Cain that God loved them, or he would not have given his Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the wrath which man by his disobedience deserved to bear. While Abel justified the plan of God, Cain became enraged, and his anger increased and burned against Abel because he would not join him in his rebellion, until in his rage he slew him.

God inquired of Cain for his brother, and he attempted to conceal his guilt by uttering a falsehood: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" God informed 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 said 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 at first pronounced upon the earth 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 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 grand-children the fear of the Lord, he was often bitterly reproached for the sin which had resulted in so much misery to his posterity. When he left 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 terrible 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, deprived of his son Abel, and looking upon Cain as his murderer, and knowing the curse which God had pronounced upon him, Adam's heart was bowed down 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 finally provoked God to destroy the inhabitants of the earth by a flood. Though the sentence of death pronounced upon him by his Maker at first appeared so terrible to him, yet after he had lived some hundreds of years, it looked just and merciful in God, thus to bring to an end a miserable life.

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

To his children, and to their children, to the ninth generation, Adam 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 which 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; and he entreated them to obey God, who would deal mercifully with them if they should love and fear him.

Adam was commanded to teach his descendants the fear of the Lord, and, by his example of humble obedience, lead them to highly regard the offerings which typified a Saviour to come. Adam carefully treasured what God had revealed to him, and handed it down by word of mouth to his

children and children's children. By this means the knowledge of God was preserved.

The Sabbath was instituted in Eden and observed by our first parents before the fall. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, and ate of the forbidden fruit, they were expelled from Eden; but they observed the Sabbath after their fall. They had experienced the bitter fruits of disobedience, and learned what every one who tramples upon God's commands will sooner or later learn, that God means just what he says, and that he will surely punish the transgressor. Those who venture to lightly esteem the day upon which Jehovah rested, the day which he sanctified and blessed, the day which he has commanded to be kept holy, will yet know that all the precepts of his law are alike sacred, and that death is the penalty of the transgression.

On account of the special honors which God had conferred upon the seventh day, he required his people to number by sevens, lest they should forget their Creator who made the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. The descendants of Cain were not careful to respect the day upon which God had rested. They chose their own time for labor and for rest, regardless of Jehovah's special command. There were two distinct classes upon the earth. One class were in open rebellion against God's law, while the other obeyed his commandments, and revered his Sabbath.

February 13, 1879

Texas

Since coming to Denison, Texas, our time has been occupied mostly in writing, yet we have held some meetings. By invitation we held a meeting in the Shilo school house about four miles from where we live. Some individuals attending this meeting urged us to give an appointment for Cherry Mound, a place about five miles from Shilo. We gave an appointment, and one week ago last Sunday we spoke to a house full and nearly as many more who could not find room in the house. We had freedom in speaking to our intelligent and interested audience. Here we were urged to leave an appointment for the next Sunday and also to give an appointment for Hebron, three miles from Cherry Mound, which requests we complied with. After this meeting closed we rode five miles to fill our appointment at Shilo. My husband spoke to a good audience upon the words of Paul to Timothy, "Preach the word," contrasting the pure Bible teachings with fables taught from the pulpit in this time.

Last Sunday we rode over bad roads to Cherry Mound, to fill our appointment there at 11 o'clock. When we arrived, found the people waiting, and ready to hear the words of truth. The house was literally packed. I had barely standing room. Many were standing by the door and windows. Hymns were sung from Song Anchor, which interested the audience. I had freedom in speaking. After the close of this meeting we partook of our lunch, then rode on to Hebron to fill our appointment at 3 P. M. The people here had had preaching in the forenoon and we did not expect many would be out to hear us. Yet they came, gentlemen and ladies, on horseback, and whole families in lumber wagons, and the house was well filled. As we looked over the sparsely settled country on our way to the place we queried where the people would come from to make a congregation. But about one hundred and sixty

came together. My husband addressed them while they listened with eager attention. I spoke about thirty minutes with great freedom; many were in tears. As soon as the meeting closed persons from different points came to us and urged us to hold meetings with them. We distributed tracts and papers to eager hands; and left appointments for Cherry Mound and Hebron.

Here in the State of Texas is a large field for missionary labor. The most of these to whom we have spoken in these country towns have never heard of a Seventh-day Adventist. At Cherry Mound they had no meeting for months, and meetings are but seldom held in any of these places. We feel our hearts melt with pity as we see the ignorance prevailing in regard to Bible truth and a religious life. The people pay but little attention to the prosy sermons to which they listen occasionally.

Laborers are needed in this field; God-fearing, self-denying laborers. Souls are starving for the word of life. Some who have once enjoyed the love of God, who have been members of different churches in the North, but have long been without a shepherd, are anxious to learn the way of salvation more perfectly. And others who have made no profession of religion, listen just as eagerly.

Strong tea and coffee and swine's flesh are used in great quantities here, and as the result sickness prevails. I believe many would make determined efforts to change their habits of life if they had the light upon health reform. Where are the patient missionaries for God, who will let their light shine forth to this people? "The common people heard him gladly." Thus we find it. We mean to do all we can here in Texas. Sow beside all waters. The seed may spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God.

February 20, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 6--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 instruction of his father Adam, he honored the Lord 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 learned from the lips of Adam the painful story of the fall, and the precious story of God's condescending grace in the gift of his Son as the world's Redeemer. He believed and relied upon the promise given. 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 he might not ever regard God with that holy reverence which was due his exalted character. His soul was vexed as he daily beheld them trampling upon the authority of God. He chose to be separate from them, and spent much of his time in solitude, giving himself 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 it was his purpose to destroy the sinful race by bringing a flood of waters upon the earth.

The beautiful garden of Eden, from which our first parents had been driven, remained until God determined to destroy the earth by a flood. The Lord had planted that garden, and especially blessed it; and in his wonderful providence he withdrew it from the earth, and will return it again, more gloriously adorned than before it was removed. God purposed to preserve a specimen of his perfect work of creation free from the curse which sin had brought upon 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.

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 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, denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 had been revealed to

him by the spirit of prophecy. Some believed his words, and turned from their wickedness to fear and worship God. Such often sought Enoch in his places of retreat, and he instructed them, and prayed for them that God would give them a knowledge of his will. He finally chose certain periods for retirement, and would not suffer the people to find him, for they interrupted his holy meditations and communion with God. He did not exclude himself at all times from the society of those who loved him and listened to his words of wisdom; neither did he separate himself wholly from the corrupt. He met with the righteous and the wicked at stated times, and labored to turn the ungodly from their evil course, and instruct them in the fear of God, while he taught those who had the knowledge of God to serve him more perfectly. He would remain with them as long as he could benefit them by his godly conversation and holy example, and then would withdraw himself for a season from all society--from the just, the scoffing and idolatrous, to remain in solitude, hungering and thirsting for communion with God, and that divine knowledge which he alone could give him.

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 dignified appearance struck the people with awe. The Lord loved Enoch, because he steadfastly followed him, and abhorred iniquity, and earnestly sought a more perfect knowledge of his will, that he might perform it. He yearned to unite himself still more closely to God, whom he feared, revered, and adored. The Lord would not permit Enoch to die like 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 diligently, and being unable to find him, they reported that he was not, for God took him.

By the blessings and honors which he bestowed upon Enoch, the Lord

teaches a lesson of the greatest importance, that all will be rewarded, who by faith rely upon the promised Sacrifice, and faithfully obey God's commandments. Here, again, two classes are represented which were to exist until the second coming of Christ--the righteous and the wicked, the loyal and the rebellious. 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 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 condition of sin and misery, there was danger that man would become discouraged, and inquire, "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord," 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 gloom and darkness, 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, while living among a corrupt and sinful people, who were in open and daring rebellion against their Creator, if they would obey him, and have faith in the promised Redeemer, they would 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.

Enoch instructed his family in regard to the flood. Methuselah, the son of Enoch, listened to the preaching of his grandson Noah, who faithfully warned the inhabitants of the old world that a flood of waters was coming upon the earth. Methuselah and his sons and his grandsons lived in the time of the building of the ark. They, with some others, received instruction from Noah, and assisted him in his work.

Seth was one of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more than did any of his other sons. The descendants of Seth separated themselves from the wicked descendants of Cain. They cherished the knowledge of God's will, while the ungodly race of Cain had no respect for God and his sacred commandments. But when men multiplied upon the earth, the children of Seth saw that the daughters of the descendants of Cain were very beautiful, and they departed from God and displeased him by taking wives as they chose of the idolatrous race of Cain.

February 27, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 7--The Flood

Those who honored and feared to offend God, at first felt the curse but lightly, while those who turned from him and despised his authority felt its effects more heavily, especially in stature and nobleness of form. The descendants of Seth were called the sons of God; the descendants of Cain, the sons of men. As the sons of God mingled with the sons of men, they became corrupt, and by intermarriage with them lost, through the influence of their wives, their peculiar, holy character, and united with the sons of Cain in their idolatry. Many cast off the fear of God, and trampled upon his commandments. But there were a few who did righteousness, who feared and honored their Creator. Noah and his family were among the righteous few.

Sin was spreading abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy. The world was but in its infancy in the days of Noah, yet iniquity had become so deep and wide-spread, that God repented that he had made man. Goodness and purity seemed to be almost extinct; while hatred of the law of God, emulation, envy, sedition, strife, and the most cruel oppression and violence, were corrupting the earth under its inhabitants. The thoughts and imaginations of man's heart were evil continually.

A heavy, double curse was resting upon the earth in consequence, first, of Adam's transgression, and, secondly, because of the murder committed by Cain; yet this did not at once change the face of nature. It was still rich and beautiful in the bounties of God's providence. The quiet valleys and

spreading plains, robed with verdure and adorned with shrubs and bright hued flowers colored by the Divine Artist, the lovely birds whose glad songs filled the groves with music, the graceful hills and winding streams, the trailing vines and stately trees, charming the eye with their beauty and supporting life with their fruit,--all seemed little less fair than Eden.

Gold and silver existed in abundance. The race of men then living was of very great stature, and possessed wonderful strength. The trees were vastly larger, and far surpassed in beauty and perfect proportions anything which mortals can now look upon. The wood of these trees was of fine grain and hard substance--in this respect more like stone. It required much more time and labor, even of that powerful race, to prepare the timber for building, than it requires in this degenerate age to prepare trees that are now growing upon the earth, even with the weaker strength which men now possess. These trees were of great durability, and would know nothing of decay for very many years. But notwithstanding the richness and beauty of the earth, when compared with its state before the curse was pronounced upon it, there was manifest evidence of certain decay.

The people used the gold, silver, precious stones, and choice wood, in building houses for themselves, each striving to excel the other. They beautified and adorned their houses and lands with the most ingenious works, and provoked God by their wicked deeds. They formed images to worship, and taught their children to regard these pieces of workmanship made with their own hands, as gods, and to worship them. They did not choose to think of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and rendered no grateful thanks to Him who had bestowed upon them all which they possessed. They even denied the existence of the God of Heaven, and gloried in, and worshiped, the works of their own hands. They corrupted themselves with those things which God had placed upon the earth for man's benefit. They prepared beautiful walks, overhung with fruit trees of every description, and under these majestic and lovely trees, with their wide-spread

branches, which were green from the commencement of the year to its close, they placed their idols. Whole groves, because of the shelter of their branches, were dedicated to these idol gods, and made attractive as a resort for the people in their idolatrous worship.

The groves of Eden were God's first temples, from which ascended purest worship to the Creator. The sorrowing exiles from Paradise could never forget that happy home. The waving trees and sheltering groves had for them a peculiar charm; for they reminded them of Eden and the joyful converse which they had once enjoyed with God and angels. And as they listened to the murmur of the wind among the leaves it almost seemed that they could again distinguish the sound of that voice that was heard in the garden in the cool of the day. The oak and the palm-tree, the drooping willow and the fragrant cedar, the olive and the cypress, were sacred to our first parents. Their verdant branches, spreading abroad and reaching upward to heaven, seemed to them to be praising their Creator. To Adam there was something almost human and companionable in the trees, carrying him back to many pleasing incidents of his life in Eden.

If the hearts of God's people were softened as they should be by his grace, they would become acquainted with him, as they discern his wisdom and power in the things of his creation. Every green leaf, with its delicate veins, every opening bud and blooming flower, every lofty tree stretching upward to heaven, the earth clothed with its carpet of living green, is an expression of the love of God to man, not to lead us to worship nature, but to attract our hearts through nature up to nature's God. The forest trees swaying in the wind, break forth into singing and praise to God, and rebuke the silence and indifference of man.

Adam had described Eden to his children and children's children. Again and again the story was repeated, and his love for trees and flowers and groves was transmitted to his descendants. But instead of bowing down in

the solemn groves to acknowledge the love of God and to worship him, they desecrated these groves by their idols. It was an abuse of the tender and sacred memories which Adam cherished--the association of the groves with the worship of the true and living God--that led the idolatrous children of Cain to build their altars and set up their images in the groves and under every green tree. And as they put God out of their hearts, their course of conduct was in accordance with their sacrilegious sacrifices and worship. The characters of men became more and more debased.

Instead of doing justice to their neighbors, they carried out their own unlawful wishes. They had a plurality of wives, which was contrary to God's wise arrangement at the beginning. God gave to Adam one wife--showing to all who should live upon the earth, his order and law in that respect. The transgression and fall of Adam and Eve brought sin and wretchedness upon the human race, and man followed his own carnal desires, and changed God's order. The more men multiplied wives to themselves, the more they increased in crime and unhappiness. If any one chose to take the wives, or cattle, or anything belonging to his neighbor, he did not regard justice or right, but if he could prevail over his neighbor by reason of strength, or by putting him to death, he did so, and exulted in his deeds of violence. Men loved to destroy the lives of animals. They used the flesh for food, and this increased their ferocity and violence, and caused them to look upon the blood of human beings with astonishing indifference.

God proposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long lived race that had corrupted their ways before him. He would not suffer them to live out the days of their natural life, which would have been hundreds of years. It was only a few generations since Adam had access to that tree which was to prolong life. After his disobedience he was not suffered to eat of the tree of life and perpetuate an existence in sin. In order for man to possess an endless life he must continue to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his life would gradually wear out.

More than one hundred years before the flood, the Lord sent an angel to Noah, to make known unto him his purpose in regard to the sinful race, that his Spirit would not always strive with man, but that he would send a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy man and beast. He would not leave the race ignorant of his design; but would, through Noah, warn the world of its coming destruction, that the inhabitants might be left without excuse. Noah was to preach to the people, and also to prepare an ark as God should direct him for the saving of himself and family. Not only was he to preach, but his example in building the ark was to be a continual testimony of warning to the world, showing that he believed what he preached. His simple, childlike faith, and his implicit obedience, notwithstanding the opposition he received, was an evidence to the world of his sincerity. He was firm as a rock to duty, directing the work of that singular building, under the guidance of the Divine Architect. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.

This period was the testing time for Noah. He knew that he was the object of popular contempt and scorn with that corrupt generation. He met with unbelief and mockery everywhere. But the greater the iniquity surrounding him, the more earnest and firm and persevering was he in his obedience, showing that there was one man in the world who would be true to God. He was a faithful and unbending witness for God, kind and courteous to all, resenting no insult. He was as one who heard not the reviling and blasphemy that greeted him on every side.

Noah was bearing to the inhabitants of the earth an important message of warning, the reception or rejection of which would decide the destiny of their souls. He believed God, he believed that he had the truth, and he moved straight forward in the path of faith and obedience, gaining strength from God daily, by communion with him. Noah was a man of prayer; and in this close connection with God he found all his courage and firmness. He preached, and warned, and entreated the people; but they would not change

their course. They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married and were given in marriage, they indulged in feasting and gluttony, and debased their souls, showing contempt for the message of Noah. Their speeches and actions became more vile and corrupt as the period of their probation was closing. The whole world seemed to be against Noah; but he had the testimony from God, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

As far as human wisdom could see, the event predicted by Noah was not likely to occur. Rain had never fallen; a mist or dew had watered the earth. The brooks and rivers had safely flowed along their channels, emptying into the sea. The bodies of water had been kept in their place by God's decree, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Men then talked about the fixed laws of nature, that could not be set aside to bring about any such event as Noah had foretold. They wished to believe, and to have all others believe, that God could not change the order of the natural world; thus they sought to prescribe the limits of his power, making him a slave to his own laws. The people in Noah's day possessed sharp intellects, and they sought to show, on scientific grounds, that it was impossible for his prophecy to be fulfilled. Noah was laughed to scorn because of his warnings; he was regarded as a fanatic. Noah's implicit trust in God annoyed while it condemned them; but they could not move this faithful reprover from his position. The Lord had given the warning, and that was enough for Noah. The arguments of the philosophers were nothing to him, when the message of God was sounding in his ears, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. He had that fear which should characterize the life of every Christian. The perfect faith of Noah intensified his fear. The threatened wrath of God, which was to fall upon man and beast, and upon the earth, led him to prepare the ark. His faith, and his fear of God's anger, produced obedience. Noah did

not hesitate to obey God. He urged no excuse, that the labor of building that ark was great and expensive. He believed God, and invested in the ark all that he possessed, while the wicked world scoffed and made themselves merry at the deluded old man.

They had more opportunity for their unbelief and mockery, because God did not at once carry out his purpose. But the lapse of time did not cause the faith of Noah to waver; his trust in God was unfailing, and he accepted without a murmur the hardships and sacrifice involved. Noah's faith, combined with action, condemned the world; for he was a faithful preacher of righteousness, rebuking, warning, and exhorting the wicked. Their reproach and abuse was sometimes almost unendurable; yet the patriarch stayed his soul on God, and called upon him for help in his great need. Through derision, insult, and mockery, he went to and fro as a man with a great mission to fulfill. Privileges had been neglected, precious souls degraded, and God insulted; and the day of retributive justice came slowly on; man's unbelief did not hinder the event.

God gave Noah the exact dimensions of the ark, and explicit directions in regard to its construction in every particular. It was three stories high, but there were no windows in the sides, all the light being received from one in the top. The different apartments were so arranged that the window in the top gave light to all. The door was in the side. The ark was made of the cypress, or gopher wood, which would know nothing of decay for hundreds of years. It was a building of great durability, which no wisdom of man could invent. God was the designer and Noah his master-builder.

The work of completing the building was a slow process. Every piece of timber was closely fitted, and every seam covered with pitch. All that men could do was done to make the work perfect; yet, after all, it was impossible that it could of itself withstand the violence of the storm which the Lord in his fierce anger was to bring upon the earth. God alone by his miraculous

power, could preserve the building upon the angry, heaving billows.

A multitude at first apparently received the warning of Noah, yet they did not fully turn to God with true repentance. There was some time given them before the flood was to come, in which they were placed upon probation--to be proved and tried. They failed to endure the trial. The prevailing degeneracy overcame them, and they finally joined others who were corrupt, in deriding and scoffing at faithful Noah. They would not leave off their sins, but continued in polygamy, and in the indulgence of their base passions.

With heart filled with sorrow that his warnings had been slighted and neglected, Noah makes, with quivering lips and trembling voice, his last appeal to the people. And while their voices are raised, in jest and scoffing, suddenly they see the beasts, the most ferocious as well as the most gentle, of their own accord coming, from mountain and forest, and marching quietly into the ark. A noise like a rushing wind is heard; and lo, birds of every description come from all directions, clouding the heavens with their numbers, and file, in perfect order, into that ark. Philosophers were appealed to in vain to explain from natural laws the singular phenomenon. Here was a mystery beyond their depth. The world looked on with wonder--some with fear, but they had become so hardened by rebellion that this most signal manifestation of God's power had but a momentary effect upon them. For seven days these animals were coming into the ark, and Noah was arranging them in the places prepared for them.

And as the doomed race beheld the sun shining in its glory, and the earth clad in almost Eden beauty, they drove away their rising fears by boisterous merriment; and by their deeds of violence seemed to be encouraging upon themselves the visitation of the already awakened wrath of God.

March 6, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 7--The Flood (Continued)

Everything was now ready for the closing of the ark, which could not be done by Noah from within. The scoffing multitude behold an angel descending from heaven, clothed with brightness like the lightning. He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to heaven again. Seven days were the family of Noah in the ark before the rain began to descend. During this time they were arranging for their long stay while the waters should be upon the earth. And these were days of blasphemous merriment by the unbelieving masses. Because the prophecy of Noah was not fulfilled immediately after he entered the ark, they thought that he was deceived, and that it was impossible for the world to be destroyed by a flood. Notwithstanding the solemn scenes which they had witnessed, the beasts leaving the mountains and forests and going into the ark, and the angel of God, clothed with brightness and terrible in majesty, descending from Heaven and closing the door, they hardened their hearts and continued to revel and sport over the signal manifestations of divine power.

But the same power that called the world into existence, and that created man, has shut Noah into his temporary refuge. The last golden opportunity is past. All have heard the warning, God's forbearance with that vile race is exhausted, and the swift bolts of his wrath are to be hurled upon the impenitent. Upon the eighth day the heavens gathered blackness. The muttering thunders and vivid lightning flashes began to terrify man and beast. The rain descended from the clouds above them. This was something they had never witnessed, and their hearts were faint with fear. The beasts

were roving about in the wildest terror, and their discordant voices seemed to moan out their own destiny and the fate of man. The storm increased in violence until water appeared to come from heaven in mighty cataracts. The boundaries of rivers broke away, and the waters rushed to the valleys. The foundations of the great deep also were broken up. Jets of water would burst up from the earth with indescribable force, throwing massive rocks hundreds of feet into the air, and these, in falling, would bury themselves deep in the ground.

The people first beheld the destruction of the works of their own hands. Their splendid buildings, the beautifully arranged gardens and groves where they had placed their idols, were destroyed by lightning from heaven. The ruins were scattered everywhere. They had erected and consecrated to their idols altars whereon they offered human sacrifices. These which God detested were torn down in his wrath before them, and they were made to tremble at the power of the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and to know that it was their abominations and horrible, idolatrous sacrifices, which had called for their destruction.

The violence of the storm increased, and there were mingled with the warring of the elements, the wailings of the people who had despised the authority of God. Trees, buildings, rocks, and earth were hurled in every direction. The terror of man and beast was beyond description. And even Satan himself, who was compelled to be amid the warring elements, feared for his own existence. He had delighted to control so powerful a race, and wished them to live to practice their abominations, and increase their rebellion against the God of Heaven. He now uttered imprecations against God, charging him with injustice and cruelty. Many of the people, like Satan, blasphemed God, and if they could have carried out their rebellion, would have torn him from the throne of justice. Others were frantic with fear, stretching their hands toward the ark, and pleading for admittance. But this was impossible. God had closed the door, the only entrance, and shut Noah

in, and the ungodly out. He alone could open the door. Their fear and repentance came too late. Conscience was at last awake to know that there was a God who ruled in the heavens. They called upon him earnestly, but his ear was not open to their cry. Some in their desperation sought to break into the ark, but that firm-made structure resisted all their efforts. Some clung to the ark until they were borne away with the furious surging of the waters, or their hold was broken off by rocks and trees that were swept here and there by the angry billows. The ark was severely rocked and tossed about. With the noise of the tempest was mingled the roaring of the terrified beasts; yet amid all the warring of the elements, the ark rode safely. Angels that excel in strength guided and preserved it from harm. Every moment during that frightful storm of forty days and forty nights the preservation of the ark was a miracle of almighty power.

The animals exposed to the tempest rushed toward man, choosing the society of human beings, as though expecting help from them. Some of the people bound their children and themselves upon powerful beasts, knowing that they would be tenacious of life, and would climb the highest points to escape the rising water. The storm does not abate its fury--the waters increase faster than at first. Some fasten themselves to lofty trees, but these trees are torn up by the roots, and carried with violence through the air, and angrily hurled, with stones and earth, into the foaming billows. As the black, seething waters rise higher and higher, the wicked flee for safety to the loftiest mountains. The solemn denunciations of Noah did not then seem to be so laughable a matter. One spot after another that promised safety was abandoned for one still higher. Men looked abroad upon a shoreless ocean. How they longed then for the opportunities, which they had slighted. How they pleaded for one hour's probation, one more privilege of mercy, one more call from the lips of Noah. But mercy's sweet voice was no more to be heard by them. She had stepped down from her golden throne, and stern, imperative justice had taken her place. The pitiless waves finally sweep over the last retreat, and man and beast alike perish in the black depths.

Fifteen cubits above the highest mountains did the waters prevail; but Noah and his family were safe in the ark, under the protecting care of God. The Lord had shut out all his foes, and he was never more to hear their taunts and sneers. Often it seemed to this family of God's providence that they must go to destruction as their boat was swept hither and thither. It was a trying ordeal; but Noah believed God. He had the assurance that God was caring for them. A Divine Hand was upon the helm.

As the waters began to abate, the Lord caused the ark to rest upon the top of a cluster of mountains which had been preserved by his power and made to stand fast all through that violent storm. These mountains were but a little distance apart, and the ark moved about and rested upon one, then another, and was no more driven upon the boundless ocean. This gave great relief to all within the ark.

Anxiously did Noah and his family watch the decrease of the waters. He wished to go forth upon the earth again, and sent out a raven which flew back and forth, to and from the ark. Not receiving the information he desired, he sent forth a dove, which finding no rest, returned to the ark. After seven days the dove was again sent forth, and when the olive leaf was seen in its mouth, there was great rejoicing by this family which had so long been shut up in the ark. Again an angel descends from Heaven and opens the door of the ark. Noah could remove the top, but he could not open the door which God had shut. God spoke to Noah through the angel and bade him go forth with his family out of the ark, and bring forth with them every living thing.

Noah did not forget Him who had so graciously preserved them, but immediately erected an altar and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, thus showing his faith in Christ the great sacrifice, and manifesting his gratitude to God for their wonderful preservation. Noah's offering came up before God like a sweet

savor. He accepted the sacrifice, and blessed the patriarch and his family. Here a lesson is taught all who should live upon the earth, that for every manifestation of God's mercy and love toward them, the first act should be to render to him grateful thanks and humble worship.

Lest man should be terrified with gathering clouds and falling rains, and should be in continual dread, fearing another flood, God graciously encourages the family of Noah by a promise. "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

What a condescension on the part of God! What compassion for erring man, to place the beautiful, variegated rainbow in the clouds, a token of the covenant of the great God with man! This rainbow was to evidence to all generations the fact that God destroyed the inhabitants of the earth by a flood, because of their great wickedness. It was his design that as the children of after generations should see the bow in the cloud, and should inquire the reason of this glorious arch that spanned the heavens, their parents should explain to them the destruction of the old world by a flood, because the people gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness, and that the hands of the Most High had bended the bow, and placed it in the clouds, as a token that he would never bring again a flood of waters on the earth. This symbol in the clouds was to confirm the belief of all, and establish their confidence in God; for it was a token of divine mercy and goodness to man. Although God had been provoked to destroy the earth by the flood, yet his

mercy still encompasseth the earth. God says when he looks upon the bow in the cloud, he will remember. He would not have us understand that he would ever forget; but he speaks to us in our own language, that we may better understand him.

A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a symbol of God's mercy encompassing the earth. When man, by his great wickedness, provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man's intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God's great compassion for erring man; also to the rainbow above the throne and upon his head, emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man.

After Noah had come forth from the ark, he looked around upon the powerful and ferocious beasts which he brought out with him and then upon his family, numbering only eight, and was greatly afraid that they would be destroyed by the beasts. But the Lord sent his angel to say to Noah, "The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

Previous to this time God had given man no permission to eat animal food. But every living substance upon the face of the earth upon which man could subsist had been destroyed; therefore God gave Noah permission to eat of the clean beasts which he had taken with him into the ark. God said to Noah, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." God had formerly given them the herb of the ground and the fruit of the field, but now, in the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, he permitted them to eat animal food.

March 6, 1879

Necessity of Thorough Bible Study

We are fast entering the perils of the last days, when views which conflict with the word of God will be presented by men of giant intellects, and we ought to be able to show the falsity of their claims. Our children also should be thoroughly furnished with Bible truth, so that they will not be moved by every new doctrine presented in their hearing.

Many parents do not see the necessity that their children should be so particular in learning their Sabbath-school lessons, and often neglect to give them proper assistance or encouragement. The great object of thoroughness in the study of the Bible is that they may understand why they believe as they do, and that when the test shall come and the question is asked, "Will you obey God, or will you yield to the requirements of the world?" they will decide to serve God, because by studying his word they have learned to love him and his truth.

We desire that the youth shall be able to say, we have become familiar with the Scriptures, and we see that it is of the highest importance that we be obedient to the truth of God found in his word. We want the little children to understand the Bible, and grow up in the knowledge of the truth. And we as parents do not wish to be found among those who do not see the necessity of their children's understanding the Scriptures for themselves, and who are therefore negligent and cause their children to be negligent; but we want to be in earnest in these matters, and search the Scriptures, and see that our children search them. Christ said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." We should become firm in the truth, the word of God, which testifies of Him in whom all our hopes of everlasting life are centered. If you would know how to

imitate the spotless life and character of Christ, obtain a knowledge of him as presented in the word of God.

The apostle says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If, therefore, you would be thus thoroughly furnished, and "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," study the Bible with all diligence.

The teachers in our Sabbath-schools should be God-fearing men and women who can have an interest in the spiritual condition of the members of their classes, as well as see that they have good lessons. They should be connected with God, and should feel it a duty to pray with and for each pupil in their classes.

The Sabbath-school teacher who is faithful in little things is preparing himself for a higher responsibility. We should be faithful in everything. It is a sin to forget. Many are heard again and again to excuse themselves for some gross error, by saying that they forgot. Have they not intellectual powers? and is it not a duty to discipline their minds to be retentive? It is a sin to neglect. If you form a habit of negligence you will find at last you have neglected your own soul's salvation, and are unready for the kingdom of God.

Parents and teachers, let us awake to our duty; let us sense the responsibility of our position, and take hold of the Sabbath-school work with more zeal and earnestness, that God can approve of our efforts, and that our children may lay up sound knowledge, and with us be prepared for the future immortal life.

March 6, 1879

Reports from the Field

Texas

Sister White writes Feb. 16: "Yesterday we bore pointed testimony to the church in Dallas upon the subject of health reform. My husband spoke from the text "Preach the word." The Spirit of the Lord was in our midst softening hearts and breaking up the fallow ground. Many testimonies were borne, and the church encouraged. We now expect to commence labor here with a tent in about two weeks. We shall also hold meetings in Denison and vicinity. Angels of God are at work impressing souls everywhere, and we want to be at work doing all we can for the Master."

Arbuckle, Cal.

Several more have signed the covenant here. We now number eleven, and expect others to unite with us. Next week some wish to be baptized. Have reviewed a Baptist minister, who preached against the law, taking the strongest antinomian ground. February 25.

J. D. Rice.

An Arbuckle correspondent of the Willows Journal says of Bro. Rice's meetings : "Elder J. D. Rice is still preaching here. He has organized an Adventist Church, and commences with fifteen members, with good prospects of many more accessions soon. He has done a power of good here. He has caused to join the church people who were hardly ever seen inside of a church before."

Capay Valley, Yolo Co., Cal.

I came up here and began meetings Jan. 25. Elder Bauder, a United Brethren, is opposing by speaking on the immortality question. He began by railing against Sister White. He showed more zeal than love for truth.

We closed our meetings evening after the Sabbath, with twenty-one names on the covenant; we hope a few others will unite with us. I shall remain here and visit during Eld. B.'s meetings, and if necessary review what he shall say. W. C. Grainger.

St. Helena, Cal

We have been holding meetings here as best we could for two weeks. Much of the time the rain has hindered. There is considerable interest already manifested. Our attendance is quite good and we hope for good results.

Many calls for help are coming from all parts of the State, and I find I am hardly able to do the work in one place. May the Lord of the harvest send more laborers and give strength to those now in the field. Brethren, pray for us. Feb. 23, 1879. W. M. Healey.

Finlay, Dakota

Having visited all the churches in the territory, and got our tract society matters into as good a condition as possible for the present, I made arrangements to hold a series of meetings in this place, and began them on Monday evening last. The interest has been good from the first. We held the first few meetings in the school-house, but that proving too small for the congregation, and being occupied several evenings in the week, we soon moved to a commodious hall about a mile away. This hall was freely offered us by the owner, especially as we were requested to occupy it by some in the

community. Our audiences are large for the territory; there were nearly a hundred out last night. S. B. Whitney

Seville, Gratiot Co., Mich.

I have held thirty-six meetings, besides listening to four opposition discourses, which were so contradictory that they served to strengthen our positions. We think a good work is begun here. Fifteen have commenced to keep the Sabbath. There are urgent calls for labor in many districts; the minds of the people seem to be preparing for the reception of the truth. The Lord's hand is in this work. L. A. Kellogg.

Toledo, Iowa

I leave in this place, as the result of labor here, five who are keeping the "Sabbath of the Lord our God," seven almost decided who expressed a firm determination to continue the investigation till the Bible evidence on the question is clear to them, and many others favorably impressed. Those taking hold of this work are the most influential and devoted of the Baptist church. Geo. H. Rogers.

Winstead, McLeod Co., Minn.

We commenced labor at this place Jan. 15. The interest has increased as our work has progressed. Seven kept last Sabbath, and as many more are convinced. The interest continues. The large school-house in which our meetings are held is often filled with attentive hearers. H. W. Babcock, E. A. Curtis.

Little Prairie, Wis.

At our business meeting Jan. 1, in addition to what we had before

pledged and paid, we pledged for the Tabernacle \$14.00, for the Oakland house \$20.25. For the Tabernacle \$6.40 was paid down, and for the Oakland house \$4.65. Pliny Potter, Eld.

Spring Lake, Wis.

We commenced to hold meetings in this vicinity about the first of January. The attendance has been good. Nine were keeping the Sabbath when we came, and fifteen have been added to that number, making twenty-four in all. The interest is still good, and many are deciding. Bro. E. E. Olive has joined me this week. S. Fulton.

Nova, Ashland Co., Ohio

Our church held a meeting on New Year's day, and pledged \$9.00 for the Oakland, Cal., house. This is called the Troy church. John Sprinkle.

York Co., Neb.

My meetings at the Pleasant Hill schoolhouse, which have just closed, were held in the vicinity of the Waco church. This church was much encouraged, and received three additional members. Several took hold of the truth for the first time. May the Great Shepherd lead them. H. Shultz.

Clarksville, Georgia

With pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of the package of books and papers. We find here the book we needed. The Signs of the Times is so well liked--there is nothing like it. All want the paper, but only a few can read. I trust before the summer is over we shall be able to send for it. I have three schools in charge--all Sabbath-schools. Y. W. Smith.

March 13, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 7--The Flood (Concluded)

The entire surface of the earth was changed at the flood. A third dreadful curse now rested upon it in consequence of man's transgression. The beautiful trees and flowering shrubbery were destroyed, but Noah preserved seed and took it with him into the ark, and God by his miraculous power preserved a few of the different kinds of trees and shrubs alive for future generations. Soon after the flood, trees and plants seemed to spring out of the very rocks. In God's providence, seeds had been scattered and driven into the crevices of the rocks, and there securely hidden for the future use of man.

As the waters abated from the earth, the mountains and hills appeared in a broken, rough condition, and all around them was a sea of roiled water or soft mud. In the time of the flood, the people, and the beasts also, gathered to the highest points of land, and as the waters disappeared, dead bodies were left upon the mountains and hills, as well as on the plains. The surface of the earth was strewn with the bodies of men and beasts. But God would not have these remain to decompose and pollute the atmosphere, therefore he made of the earth a vast burying ground. He caused a powerful wind to pass over it for the purpose of drying up the waters, which moved them with great force, in some instances carrying away the tops of the mountains like mighty avalanches, forming hills and mountains where there were none to be seen before, and burying the dead bodies with trees, stones, and earth. The precious wood, stone, silver, and gold, that had made rich and adorned the world before the flood, and which the inhabitants had idolized, were sunk beneath the surface of the earth. The waters which had broken forth with

such great power, had moved earth and rocks, and heaped them upon these treasures, and in many instances formed mountains above them to hide them from the sight and search of men. God saw that the more he enriched and prospered sinful man, the more he corrupted his way before him. The treasures which should have led man to glorify the bountiful giver, had been worshiped instead of God, while the giver had been rejected.

The beautiful, regular-shaped mountains had disappeared. Stones, ledges, and ragged rocks appeared upon some parts of the earth which were before out of sight. Where had been hills and mountains, no traces of them were visible. Where had been beautiful plains covered with verdure and lovely plants, hills and mountains were formed of stones, trees, and earth, above the bodies of men and beasts. The whole surface of the earth presented an appearance of disorder. Some portions were more disfigured than others. Where once had been earth's richest treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones, were seen the heaviest marks of the curse. And upon countries which were not inhabited, and those where there had been the least crime, the curse rested more lightly.

At the time of the flood, immense forests were torn up or broken down and buried in the earth. These have since petrified and become coal, which accounts for the large coal beds that are now found. This coal has produced oil. Large quantities of coal and oil frequently ignite and burn. Rocks are intensely heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. Water and fire under the surface of the earth meet. The action of water upon the limestone adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues. The action of fire and water upon the ledges of rocks and ore causes loud explosions which sound like muffled thunder. These wonderful exhibitions will be more numerous and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction.

Coal and oil are generally to be found where there are no burning

mountains or fiery issues. When fire and water under the surface of the earth meet, the fiery issues cannot give sufficient vent to the heated elements beneath. The earth is convulsed, the ground heaves, and rises into swells or waves, and there are heavy sounds like thunder under ground. The air is heated and suffocating. The earth quickly opens, and villages, cities, and burning mountains are carried down together into the earth.

God controls all these elements; they are his instruments to do his will; he calls them into action to serve his purpose. These fiery issues have been, and will be, his agents to blot out from the earth very wicked cities. Like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, they go down alive into the pit. These are evidences of God's power. Those who have beheld these burning mountains pouring forth fire and flame, and a vast amount of melted ore, drying up rivers and causing them to disappear, have been struck with terror at the grandeur of the scene. They have been filled with awe, as they beheld the infinite power of God.

These manifestations bear the special marks of God's power, and are designed to cause the people of the earth to tremble before him, and to silence those who, like Pharaoh, would proudly say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Isaiah refers to these exhibitions of God's power where he exclaims, "Oh! that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence." Isaiah 64:1-3.

"The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers. Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of

Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." Nahum 1:3-6.

"Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them." Psalm 144:5, 6.

Greater wonders than have yet been seen will be witnessed by these upon the earth a short time previous to the coming of Christ. "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke." "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

The bowels of the earth were the Lord's arsenal, from which he drew forth the weapons he employed in the destruction of the old world. Waters in the earth gushed forth, and united with the waters from heaven, to accomplish the work of destruction. Since the flood, God has used both water and fire in the earth as his agents to destroy wicked cities.

In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, God will send lightnings from heaven in his wrath, which will unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud, into the rivers, will cause them to

boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks, and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. God will plague the wicked inhabitants until they are destroyed from off the earth. But the saints will be preserved in the midst of these dreadful commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark at the time of the flood.

March 20, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 8--Disguised Infidelity

The first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week. The great God, in his days of creation and day of rest, measured off the first cycle as a sample for successive weeks till the close of time. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." God gives us the result of his work on each of the days of creation. Each day was accounted of him a generation, because every day he generated, or produced, some new portion of his work. On the seventh day of the first week God rested from his labor, and then blessed the day of his rest, and set it apart for the use of man. The weekly cycle of seven literal days, six for labor and the seventh for rest, which has been preserved and brought down through Bible history, originated in the great facts of the first seven days.

When God spoke his law with an audible voice from Sinai, he introduced the Sabbath by saying, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." He then declares definitely what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh. He next gives the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing us back to his example on the first seven days of time. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the record of creation to mean literal days. The first six days of each week are given to man in which to labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. The

seventh day God has reserved as a day of rest, in commemoration of his rest during the same period of time after he had performed the work of creation in six days.

But the infidel supposition, that the events of the first week required seven vast, indefinite periods for their accomplishment, strikes directly at the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It makes indefinite and obscure that which God has made very plain. It is the worst kind of infidelity; for with many who profess to believe the record of creation, it is infidelity in disguise. It charges God with commanding men to observe the week of seven literal days in commemoration of seven indefinite periods, which is unlike his dealings with mortals, and is an impeachment of his wisdom.

Infidel geologists claim that the world is very much older than the Bible record makes it. They reject the testimony of God's word because of those things which are to them evidences from the earth itself that it has existed tens of thousands of years. And many who profess to believe the Bible are at a loss to account for wonderful things which are found in the earth, with the view that creation week was only seven literal days, and that the world is now only about six thousand years old. These, to free themselves from difficulties thrown in their way by infidel geologists, adopt the view that the six days of creation were six vast, indefinite periods, and the day of God's rest was another indefinite period; making senseless the fourth commandment of God's holy law. Some eagerly receive this position; for it destroys the force of the fourth commandment, and they feel a freedom from its claims upon them.

Bones of men and animals are found in the earth, in mountains and in valleys, showing that much larger men and beasts once existed. Instruments of warfare are sometimes found; also petrified wood. Because the bones found are so much larger than those of men and animals now living, or that

have existed for many generations past, some conclude that the earth was populated long before the record of creation, by a race of beings vastly superior in size to men now living. Those who reason in this manner have limited ideas of the size of men, animals, and trees, before the flood, and of the great changes which then took place in the earth.

Without Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of a state of things differing in many respects from the present. But the time of their existence can be learned only from the inspired record. It may be innocent to conjecture beyond this, if our suppositions do not contradict the facts found in the sacred Scriptures. But when men leave the word of God, and seek to account for His creative works upon natural principles, they are upon a boundless ocean of uncertainty. Just how God accomplished the work of creation in six literal days, he has never revealed to mortals. His creative works are as incomprehensible as his existence.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable."

"Which doeth great things, past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."

"Which doeth great things, and unsearchable; marvelous things without number."

"God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we can not comprehend."

"Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?"

The word of God is given as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. Those who cast his word behind them, and seek by their own blind philosophy to penetrate the mysteries of Jehovah, will stumble in darkness. A guide has been given to mortals whereby they may trace his works as far as will be for their good. Inspiration, in giving us the history of the flood, has explained wonderful mysteries that geology alone could never fathom.

It has been the special work of Satan to lead fallen man to rebel against God's government, and he has succeeded too well in his efforts. He has tried to obscure the law of God, which in itself is very plain. He has manifested a special hatred against the fourth precept of the decalogue, because it defines the living God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. Yielding to his devices, men have turned from the plainest precepts of Jehovah to receive infidel fables.

Man will be left without excuse. God has given sufficient evidence upon which to base faith, if he wishes to believe. In the last days, the earth will be almost destitute of true faith. Upon the merest pretense, the word of God will be considered unreliable, while human reasoning will be received, though it be in opposition to plain Scripture facts. Men will endeavor to explain from natural causes the work of creation. But just how God wrought in the work of creation he has never revealed to men. Human science cannot search out the secrets of the God of Heaven.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Men professing to be ministers of God, raise their voices against the investigation of prophecy, and tell the people that the prophecies, especially of Daniel and John, are obscure, and that we cannot understand them. Yet some of these very men eagerly receive the suppositions of geologists, which dispute the Mosaic record. But if God's revealed will is so difficult to be understood, certainly

men should not rest their faith upon mere suppositions in regard to that which he has not revealed. God's ways are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. In his providence men, beasts, and trees, many times larger than those now upon the earth, were buried at the time of the flood, and thus preserved to prove to man that the inhabitants of the old world perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things in the earth should establish faith in inspired history. But men, with their vain reasoning, make a wrong use of these things which God designed should lead them to exalt him. They fall into the same error as did the people before the flood--those things which God gave them as a benefit, they turned into a curse, by making a wrong use of them.

Chapter 9--The Tower of Babel

Some of the descendants of Noah soon began to apostatize. A portion followed his example, and obeyed God's commandments; others were unbelieving and rebellious. Some of these disbelieved in the existence of God, and in their own minds accounted for the flood from natural causes. Others believed that God existed, and that he destroyed the antediluvian race by a flood; and their hearts, like that of Cain, rose in rebellion against God, because he had destroyed the people from the earth, and cursed it the third time by a flood.

Those who were enemies of God felt daily reproved by the righteous conversation and godly lives of those who loved, obeyed, and exalted him.

The unbelieving consulted among themselves, and agreed to separate from the faithful, whose righteous lives were a continual restraint upon their wicked course. They journeyed a distance from them, and selected a large plain wherein to dwell. There they built a city, and then conceived the idea of erecting a large tower to reach unto the clouds, that they might dwell together in the city and tower, and be no more scattered. They reasoned that

they would secure themselves in case of another flood, for they would build their tower to a much greater height than the waters prevailed in the time of the flood, and all the world would honor them, and they would be as gods, and rule over the people. This tower was calculated to exalt its builders, and was designed to turn the attention of others who should live upon the earth from God to join with them in their idolatry. Before the work of building was accomplished, people dwelt in the tower. Rooms gorgeously furnished and decorated were devoted to their idols. Those who did not believe in God, imagined that if their tower could reach unto the clouds they would be able to discover reasons for the flood.

Thus they exalted themselves against God. But he would not permit them to complete their undertaking. They had built their tower to a lofty height, when the Lord sent two angels to confound them. Men had been appointed for the purpose of receiving word from the workmen at the top of the tower, calling for material for their work, which the first would communicate to the second, and he to the third, until the message reached those upon the ground. As the word was passing from one to another in its descent, the angels confounded their language, and when the word reached the workmen upon the ground, material was called for which had not been required. And after the laborious process of getting the material to the workmen at the top of the tower, it was not that which they had wished for. Disappointed and enraged, they reproached those whom they supposed were at fault. After this, there was no harmony in their work. Angry with one another, and unable to account for the misunderstanding and strange words among them, they left the work, and scattered abroad in the earth. Up to this time, men had spoken but one language. Those who could understand one another associated together, and thus originated various nations speaking different languages. Lightning from heaven, as a token of God's wrath, broke off the top of their tower, and cast it to the ground. Thus rebellious man is taught that God is supreme.

March 27, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 10--Abraham

The Lord selected Abraham to carry out his will. He was directed to leave his idolatrous nation, and separate from his kindred. The Lord had revealed himself to Abraham in his youth, and given him understanding, and preserved him from idolatry. He designed to make him an example of faith and true devotion, for his people who should afterward live upon the earth. His character was marked for integrity, generosity, and hospitality. He commanded respect as a mighty prince among the people. His reverence and love for God, and his strict obedience in performing his will, gained for him the respect of his servants and neighbors. His godly example and righteous course, united with his faithful instructions to his servants and all his household, led them also to fear, love, and reverence the God of Abraham. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and promised him that his seed should be like the stars of heaven for number. He also made known to him, through the figure of the horror of great darkness which came upon him, the long, servile bondage of his descendants in Egypt.

In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife, thus showing his order. He never designed that man should have a plurality of wives. Lamech was the first who departed in this respect from God's wise arrangement. He had two wives, which created discord in his family. The envy and jealousy of both made Lamech unhappy. When men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, they took them wives of all whom they chose. This was one of the great sins of the inhabitants of the old world, which brought the wrath of God upon them. This custom was

practiced after the flood, and became so common that even righteous men fell into the practice, and had a plurality of wives. Yet it was no less sin because they became corrupted, and departed in this thing from God's order.

The Lord said of Noah who, with his family, was saved in the ark, "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Noah had but one wife; and their united family discipline was blessed of God. Because Noah's sons were righteous, they were preserved in the ark with their father. God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It was contrary to his will. He knew that the happiness of man would be destroyed by it. Abraham's peace was greatly marred by his unhappy marriage with Hagar.

After Abraham's separation from Lot, the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir."

As Abraham had no son, he at first thought that his trusty servant, Eliezer, should become his son by adoption, and his heir. But God informed Abraham that his servant should not be his son and his heir, but that he should really have a son. "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell me the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

If Abraham and Sarah had waited in confiding faith for the fulfillment of the promise that they should have a son, much unhappiness would have been avoided. They believed that it would be just as God had promised, but could

not believe that Sarah, in her old age, would have a son. Sarah suggested a plan whereby she thought the promise of God could be fulfilled. She entreated Abraham to take Hagar as his wife. In this they both lacked faith, and a perfect trust in the power of God. By yielding to the advice of Sarah, and taking Hagar as his wife, Abraham failed to endure the test of his faith in God's unlimited power, and brought upon himself, and upon Sarah, much unhappiness. The Lord intended to prove the faith of Abraham and his reliance upon the promises which he had made him.

Hagar was proud and boastful, and carried herself haughtily before Sarah. She flattered herself that she was to be the mother of the great nation which God had promised to make of Abraham. And Abraham was compelled to listen to the complaints from Sarah in regard to the conduct of Hagar, charging him with wrong in the matter. Abraham is grieved, and tells Sarah that Hagar is her servant, and that she can have the control of her, but he refuses to send her away, for she is to be the mother of his child through whom he thinks the promise is to be fulfilled. He informs Sarah that he would not have taken Hagar for his wife if it had not been her special request. Abraham was also compelled to listen to Hagar's complaints of abuse from Sarah. Abraham is in perplexity. If he seeks to redress the wrongs of Hagar, he increases the jealousy and unhappiness of Sarah, his first and much-loved wife. Hagar fled from the face of Sarah. An angel of God meets her, and comforts her, and also reproves her for her haughty conduct, in bidding her return to her mistress, and submit herself under her hands.

After the birth of Ishmael, the Lord again manifested himself to Abraham, and said unto him, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant." Again the Lord repeated by his angel his promise to give Sarah a son, and that she should be a mother of many nations. Abraham did not yet understand the promise of God. His mind immediately rests upon Ishmael, as

though through him would come the many nations promised, and he exclaims, in his affection for his son, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"

Again the promise is more definitely repeated to Abraham: "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Angels are sent to Abraham on their way to destroy Sodom, and they more distinctly repeat the promise that Sarah shall have a son.

After the birth of Isaac, the great joy manifested by Abraham and Sarah caused Hagar to be very jealous. Ishmael had been instructed by his mother that he was to be especially blessed of God, as the son of Abraham, and to be heir to that which was promised to his father. Ishmael partook of his mother's feelings, and was angry because of the joy manifested at the birth of Isaac. He despised Isaac, because he thought that he was preferred before himself. Sarah saw the disposition manifested by Ishmael against her son Isaac, and she was greatly moved. She related to Abraham the disrespectful conduct of Ishmael to her, and to her son, and said to him, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

Abraham is greatly distressed. Ishmael is his son, beloved by him. How can he send him away! He prays to God in his perplexity, for he knows not what course to take. The Lord, through his angels, directs Abraham to listen to the voice of Sarah his wife, and not to let his affection for his son, or for Hagar, prevent his compliance with her wishes. For this was the only course he could pursue to restore harmony and happiness again to his family. Abraham had the consoling promise from the angel, that Ishmael, although separated from his father's house, should not die, nor be forsaken of God; he should be preserved because he was the son of Abraham. God also promised

to make of Ishmael a great nation.

Abraham was of a noble, benevolent disposition, as was manifested in his pleading so earnestly for the people of Sodom. His strong spirit suffered much. He was bowed with grief, and his paternal feelings were deeply moved as he sent away Hagar and his son Ishmael to wander as strangers in a strange land.

If God had sanctioned polygamy, he would not have thus directed Abraham to send away Hagar and her son. He would teach all a lesson in this, that the rights and happiness of the marriage relation are ever to be respected and guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Sarah was the first and only true wife of Abraham. As a wife and mother, she was entitled to rights which no other in the family could have. She revered her husband, calling him lord; but she was jealous lest his affections should be divided with Hagar. God did not rebuke Sarah for the course which she pursued. Abraham was reproved by the angels for distrusting God's power, which had led him to take Hagar as his wife, and to think that through her the promise would be fulfilled.

Again the Lord saw fit to test the faith of Abraham by a most fearful trial. If he had patiently waited for the promise of God to be fulfilled in his own time and manner, and had not sought to make a providence himself, he would not have been subjected to the closest test that was ever required of man. The Lord directed his faithful servant to go into the land of Moriah, and there offer up Isaac, the son of promise, as a burnt-offering.

Abraham was one hundred and twenty years old when this terrible and startling command came to him, in a vision of the night. He was to travel three days' journey, and would have ample time for reflection. Fifty years previous, at the divine command, he had left father and mother, relatives and friends, and had become a pilgrim and a stranger in a land not his own. He

had obeyed the direction of God to send away his son Ishmael to wander in the wilderness. His soul was bowed down with grief at this separation, and his faith was sorely tried, yet he submitted because God required it.

But now a trial was before him which caused all his other afflictions to appear insignificant. The words of the command were calculated to stir his soul to the depths: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Over and over again did the grief-stricken father exclaim, Oh! my son, my son, would to God my life could be accepted in the place of thine; then should my light not go out in darkness. Abraham arose before day, and as he looked up to the starry heavens, he called to mind the promise which God had made to him fifty years before: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." And now the same voice had commanded him to slay his only son, through whom the promise was to be fulfilled.

Abraham was tempted to believe that after all this might be a delusion. Stricken with grief, he bowed before God, and prayed as never before for a confirmation of this strange command, for greater light if he must perform this terrible duty. He remembered the angels sent to tell him of God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and those who bore to him the promise that he should have this same son Isaac. He walked forth where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again and receive some special direction from them; but he gained no light, darkness seemed to close about him, day was approaching, and he must be on his journey before light.

He first passed to the couch upon which Isaac slept in peaceful innocence; he was the joy of his heart, the comfort of his old age. Abraham's lips quivered, he turned quickly away, and looked upon Sarah who was also quietly sleeping. He knew that Isaac was her pride, that her heart was

entwined with his. Should he awake her, that she might look upon her son for the last time? Should he tell her the requirement of God? He knew that he himself had strength of faith, and confidence in God; he did not know the strength of Sarah's faith; but he did know the strength of her love for Isaac.

He passed from one sleeper to the other, undecided in regard to the wisest course to pursue. He finally awakened Isaac, and informed him that he was commanded of God to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain, and that he must accompany him. He called his servants, and made every necessary preparation for his long journey. If he could have unburdened his mind to Sarah, and they together have borne the suffering and responsibility, it might have brought him some relief; but he decided that this would not do; for her heart was bound up in her son, and she might hinder him. Abraham went forth on his journey, with Satan by his side to suggest unbelief and impossibility.

While walking by the side of Isaac, the patriarch could not engage in conversation as usual, for a deep sorrow was concealed in his own breast. The night approaches, the longest day Abraham ever experienced has come to a close. He saw his loved son Isaac and the servants locked in slumber, but he could not sleep. He spent the night in prayer, still hoping that some heavenly messenger would appear to tell him that it is enough, that he may return to Sarah, with Isaac unharmed.

No new light dawned upon the tortured soul of Abraham. A heavy pressure was upon him, but he staggered not at the promise. He reasoned not that his posterity, which was to be as the stars, must now come through Ishmael, for God had plainly stated that through Isaac should the promise be fulfilled. Then again was that voice ringing in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That terrible command which would leave him childless can scarcely be realized. He rises early to continue his toilsome journey. Satan whispers doubts, but Abraham resists his

suggestions.

April 3, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 10--Abraham (Continued)

All day he cherished the hope of meeting an angel coming to bless and comfort him, or perhaps to revoke the command of God, but no messenger of mercy appeared. Satan suggested that he must be deceived, for God had said, "Thou shalt not kill," and it was not like God to require what he had once forbidden. The second long day comes to a close, another sleepless night is spent in humiliation and prayer, and the journey of the third day is commenced. Abraham lifts his eyes to the mountains, and upon one he beholds the promised sign, a bright cloud hovering over the top of Mount Moriah. Now he knows it is all a terrible certainty, and no delusion.

He was yet a great distance from the mountain, but he bade his servants remain behind while he placed the wood upon the shoulders of his son, and himself took the knife and fire. Abraham braced himself for the sad work which he must perform. He did not murmur against God. Isaac had been given to him unexpectedly; he had received him with gratitude and great joy, and though he was the son of his old age, the son of his love, he yet believed that the same power that gave him Isaac, could raise him again even from the ashes of the burnt sacrifice. He strengthens his soul by the evidences he has had of the goodness and faithfulness of God. Had not He, who had graciously given Isaac to him, perfect right to recall the gift?

Isaac had been a comfort, a sunbeam, a blessing to Abraham in his old age, and although this gift of God seemed so precious, so dear to him, he was now commanded to return it to the Giver. The words of God's command

showed that he fully realized the pain which Abraham must feel in obeying his requirement, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Abraham wanted no witnesses. It was enough that God could look on and not only see the full consecration of his darling son Isaac, but read the heart and fully understand how severely he felt the test. He wished no one but God to witness this parting scene between father and son.

Abraham knew not how Isaac would receive the command of God. As they drew near the mountain, "Isaac spake to Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" These endearing words, "My father," pierced the affectionate heart of Abraham, and again he thought, Oh, that I, in my old age, might die instead of Isaac! Still reluctant to open before his son the true purpose of his errand, Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

Isaac assisted his father in building the altar. Together they placed on the wood, and the last work preparatory to the sacrifice is done. With quivering lips and trembling voice, Abraham reveals to his son the message that God had sent him. In obedience to the divine command, he had taken the journey. Everything was ready. Isaac was the victim, the lamb to be slain. Had Isaac chosen to resist his father's command, he could have done so, for he was grown to manhood; but he had been so thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of God that he had perfect faith in his promises and requirements.

The patriarch assured Isaac that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would gladly give his own life to save that of his son. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. Abraham told his son that the Lord had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured him that the divine promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead.

Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. But he considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but God had appointed him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God had conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as an offering; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that the Lord loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice.

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were spoken by father and son, the last affectionate, parental, and filial tears were shed, the last embrace was given, and the father had pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, when suddenly his arm is stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of Heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

As evidence of God's approval of the faith of Abraham, he gave him the name of "Father of the faithful." The example of Abraham is recorded in sacred history for the benefit of his believing children. This great act of faith teaches the lesson of implicit confidence in God, perfect obedience to his requirements, and a complete surrender to the divine will. In the example of Abraham we are taught that nothing we possess is too precious to give to God.

How many now who profess to be Christians would follow the example of Abraham in yielding up to God his beloved Isaac? Yet our dearest treasure belongs to God. A solemn duty rests upon Christian parents to so educate and mould the minds of their children that they will ever have a high respect and exalted reverence for God and for everything sacred and holy. Such will feel that God's claims must first be regarded, that nothing is too precious to sacrifice for him. Such will, like Abraham, exemplify their faith by their works.

How many now who profess to believe God, and pass for Christians, refuse to obey his voice when he calls upon them to deny self, and yield to him their darling treasures. They will hesitate, and cling to earthly things. Their affections are upon the world and the things of the world; yet some of these very ones will have the most to say about how much they have sacrificed to obey the truth. Isaac felt that it was a privilege to yield his life as an offering to God. If the Lord could accept him, he felt that he was honored.

Human judgment may look upon the command given to Abraham as severe, too great for human strength to bear. Abraham's strength was from God. He looked not at the things which are seen with mortal vision, but at the things which are eternal. God required no more of Abraham than he had, in divine compassion and infinite love, given to man. He gave his only

begotten Son to die, that guilty man might live. Abraham's offering of Isaac was especially designed of God to prefigure the sacrifice of his Son.

Every step that Abraham advanced toward Mount Moriah, the Lord went with him. All the grief and agony that Abraham endured during the three days of his dark and fearful trial, were imposed upon him to give us a lesson in perfect faith and obedience, and that we might better comprehend how real was the great self-denial and infinite sacrifice of the Father in giving his only Son to die a shameful death for the guilty race. No other trial, no other suffering or test, which could have been brought to bear upon Abraham, would have caused such mental anguish, such torture of soul, as that of obeying God in offering up his son.

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The meager conception that many have of the worth of the soul, and the sacrifice of God's dear Son for sinful man, is shown by their works. Should God speak to them, as he did to Abraham, Sacrifice your possessions, the temporal benefits that I have lent you to advance my cause, they would look in astonishment, thinking God did not mean just what he said. Their riches are as dear to them as their children; their worldly treasure is their Isaac. To honor God with their substance, they think, is a requirement altogether too great, and they cannot believe that God means it. What have this class sacrificed for God?

Men will show all the faith they have. If God should speak to them and command them to offer one of their beloved children, they would think him a hard master. Yet he has done more than this for them. No such command will come to test and prove them. God knew to whom he spake, when he gave the command to faithful Abraham. The patriarch knew that it was God who had commanded, and that his promises were infallible. Had the Lord directed him to offer his gold, his silver, his flocks, or even his own life, he would have done so cheerfully. He would have felt that he was but yielding back to God that which belonged to him.

But there are many who know not what self-denial, or sacrifice, or devotion to God, is. They never can have extended and elevated views of the infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God to save a ruined world, until they surrender all to him. If he should speak to them in a command, as he did to Abraham, they would not be enough acquainted with his voice to understand that he did really require something of them, to show their love, and the genuineness of their faith.

The claims of God upon our love, affection, and possessions, our talents, and ourselves, are correspondingly great as was the infinite sacrifice made in giving his Son to die for sinful man. Those who really appreciate the work of the atonement, those who have a high sense of the sacrifice which Christ has made to exalt them to his throne, will count it a special honor to be partakers with him in his self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering, that they may be co-workers with him in saving souls.

There are many who profess the truth, who do not love God half so well as they love the world. God is testing and proving them. Their love of the world and of riches darkens their minds, perverts their judgment, and hardens their hearts. God has, to some of them at least, revealed his will, and called for a surrender of their Isaac to him. But they refuse to obey, and let golden opportunities pass. Precious time is bearing into eternity a record of

duties unfulfilled, and of positive neglect.

Nothing we have is of true value until it is surrendered to God. The talent of means devoted to the cause and work of God, is of tenfold more value than if selfishly retained for the gratification of our own pleasure. The faith of the devoted martyrs was like that of Abraham, it was genuine. They valued the precious truth, and in their turn, although despised of men, hunted from place to place, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented, they were valued of God. There was no place for them upon the earth, but of them, says the apostle, the world was not worthy. Those who clung to the truth in face of prison, torture, and death, had faith that few now living possess.

Many have chosen a life of ease. They have exalted their earthly interests above the spiritual and eternal. They neglect to learn the hard lesson of self-denial, and of surrendering all to God. They do not count anything interesting, save that which is learned without much effort, and without involving any sacrifice of temporal enjoyment; and it is forgotten as soon as learned, because it cost them nothing.

The deepest poverty, with God's blessing, is better than houses and lands, and any amount of earthly treasure, without it. God's blessing places value on everything we possess; but if we have the whole world without his blessing we are indeed as poor as the beggar, for we can take nothing with us into the next world.

Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour, should have Abrahamic faith; a faith that is valued because it has cost them something; a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that he is not to be trifled with. He means what he says, and he requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will he let his light shine around about us, and we

shall be all light in the Lord.

April 10, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 11--Isaac

The Canaanites were idolaters, and the Lord had commanded that his people should not intermarry with them, lest they should be led into idolatry. Abraham was old, and he expected soon to die. Isaac was yet unmarried. Abraham was afraid of the corrupting influence surrounding his son, and was anxious to have a wife selected for him who would not lead him from God. He committed this matter to his faithful, experienced servant who ruled over all that he had. Abraham required his servant to make a solemn oath to him before the Lord, that he would not take a wife for Isaac of the Canaanites, but that he would go to Abraham's kindred, who believed in the true God, and select a wife for the young man. He charged him not to take Isaac to the country from which he came; for they were nearly all affected with idolatry. If he could not find a wife for Isaac who would leave her kindred and come where he was, then he should be clear of the oath which he had made. This important matter was not left with Isaac, for him to select for himself, independent of his father. Abraham tells his servant that God will send his angel before him to direct him in his choice.

The servant, taking with him ten camels and numerous presents for the intended wife and her relatives, started on his long journey up toward Damascus, and then on to the fertile plains that border on the great river of the East. Bethuel, the nephew of Abraham, was the owner of large flocks, but he dwelt in a town or city, to the wells outside of which the women were in the habit of resorting for water, and to which the servant of Abraham now drew near. It was an anxious time with the man; the happiness of the whole

family in Canaan depended on the choice which he made, and how was he to choose wisely among those who were entire strangers to him? He remembered his master's words, that God would send his angel with him; and he prayed earnestly that certain evidence might be given him, that he might not err in the matter.

His prayer was answered. Among the maidens gathered at the well he particularly noticed the engaging manners and courteous conduct of Rebekah, and he received the desired evidence that she was the one whom God had been pleased to select to become Isaac's wife. Full of joy the man inquired of her parentage, and on learning that she was the daughter of Bethuel, he "bowed down his head, and worshiped the Lord." The maiden immediately informed her brother Laban of what had occurred, and they hastened to invite to their home the servant, with his attendants and the camels. Before he would partake of food, the servant told his errand, his prayer at the well, and the answer, with all the circumstances attending it. Then he said, "And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." The answer was, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."

After all had been arranged, and the consent of the family had been obtained, Rebekah herself was consulted as to whether she would go with the servant of Abraham a great distance from her father's house, to become the wife of Isaac. She believed, from the circumstances that had taken place, that God's hand had selected her to be Isaac's wife, and she said, "I will go."

The servant, knowing that his master would rejoice at the success of his mission, was impatient to be gone; and they immediately set out on the homeward journey. Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, and Isaac, who had been attending to the flocks in the adjoining country, had returned to his father's

tent to await the arrival of the messenger from Haran. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this, that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a vail and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

In ancient times marriage contracts were generally made by the parents, yet no compulsion was used to make persons marry those whom they could not love. But the children had confidence in the judgment of their parents, and followed their counsel, and bestowed their affections upon those whom their God-fearing, experienced parents chose for them. It was considered a crime to follow a course contrary to this.

What a contrast to the course now pursued by many children! Instead of showing reverence and due honor for their parents, by consulting them, and having the advantages of their experienced judgment in choosing for them, they move hastily in the matter, and are controlled by fancy and impulse rather than by the judgment of their parents and the fear of God. It is often the case that they contract marriage without even the knowledge of their parents. And, in many instances, the lives of parents are imbittered by the hasty marriages of their children, because the son-in-law or the daughter-in-law feels under no obligation to make them happy.

Abraham saw and realized the influence which an idolatrous wife would exert upon her husband. He would not have Isaac imperil his moral and religious character by connecting with a woman who was unacquainted with God. His eldest son had contracted an unhappy marriage. Ishmael's home was made miserable, his children were undisciplined, and their characters

were uncourteous and disrespectful. They were not taught the knowledge of God. Abraham was unwilling that Isaac should run the risk of taking a wife of the heathen nations. He had marked the unhappy course of others, and the result of connecting with companions who knew not and feared not God, from the days of Cain to his own time.

However pure and correct the principles of the God-fearing, the society of an irreligious companion has an influence to lead away from God. Therefore, Abraham was determined on this point, that Isaac should marry one of his own nation. The women of other nations were, many of them, attractive because of their beauty; but they lacked beauty of character. Abraham knew that true dignity, true elevation is to be found only in those who love and fear God. There is a debasement upon the entire character of the godless, who follow the imagination of their own hearts, and are filled with their own devices. But those who make God their trust, who are elevated by his grace, obedient to his requirements, seeking his glory, fearing his displeasure, will receive his blessing. They will have that hope and courage, that dignity, calmness, and self-possession, which only those can have who are connected with God. Abraham had maintained an habitual trust in God. The impress of such character is reproduced in their children. Yet Abraham saw that in Isaac there was a disposition to be yielding. He was a firm believer in God, but if connected with one of opposite character he would be in danger of losing his adherence to right, to avoid disagreeable consequences.

Evil associates include more than the immoral and profane. Connection with one who is known to be irreligious is contrary to God's order, and cannot fail to draw the soul away from Him. Those who have not the fear of God before them, who are not seeking to live in obedience to him, although they may be moral, intellectual, apparently refined, fashionable, wealthy, are not the ones for Christians to form a marriage alliance with. However agreeable their society may be, however entertaining their conversation, the

word of God is plain upon the point; the Christian should not connect with them.

Those who enter the marriage relation while unconverted should not after conversion leave their unbelieving companions. Whatever their religious character may be, they must remain faithful, kind, and true toward them; yet they should acknowledge the claims of God above any earthly relationship, serving him with fidelity, even though inconvenience, trials, and persecutions may arise for the sake of Christ and the truth. This persevering fidelity to truth and duty may be a sanctifying influence upon the unbelieving companion. But marriages formed understandingly with unbelievers are forbidden by the word of God. The suit may be urged by the unbeliever, and inclination may plead that it be accepted; and inclination frequently triumphs; but Satan has the victory; temptation has not been resisted, and in nine cases out of ten both parties are lost to Christ.

There is a willing blindness in regard to the result of human action, the consequence of which reaches far into the future of man's existence. A life of bitterness and woe is before those who venture to disregard God's commands; but they pass heedlessly on, rashly taking solemn vows upon them, the believer binding up his life interest with an unbeliever. Domestic life and domestic relation are to be shared by those two, one professedly obeying God, and the other living in disregard of his requirements. How can two walk together, except they be agreed? If a woman respects not the claims of God, pays no heed to the bonds which bind her to religion, how can she be expected to be faithful to the law which binds her to her husband?

Young men and women sometimes manifest great independence upon the subject of marriage, as though the Lord had nothing to do with them, or they with the Lord, in that matter. They seem to think that it is purely a matter of their own, which neither God nor their parents should in any wise control, that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone

should be consulted. Such make a serious mistake; and a few years of marriage experience generally teaches them that it is a miserable mistake. This is the great reason of so many unhappy marriages, in which there is so little true, generous love, and so little exercise of noble forbearance, toward each other. These often behave in their own homes more like pettish children, than the dignified, affectionate husband and wife.

Isaac had been trained in the fear of God to a life of obedience. And when he was forty years old, he submitted to have the God-fearing, experienced servant of his father choose for him. He believed that God would direct in regard to his obtaining a wife.

Children now from fifteen to twenty years of age generally consider themselves competent to make their own choice, without the consent of their parents. And they would look with astonishment, if it should be proposed to them to move in the fear of God, and make the matter a subject of prayer. Isaac's case is left on record, as an example for children in after generations, especially those who profess to fear God.

The course which Abraham pursued in the education of Isaac, that caused him to love a life of noble obedience, is recorded for the benefit of parents, and should lead them to command their households after them. They should instruct their children to yield to, and respect their authority. And they should feel that a responsibility rests upon them to guide the affections of their children, that they may be placed upon persons who in their judgment would be suitable companions for their sons and their daughters. It is a sad fact that Satan controls the affections of the young to a great extent. And some parents feel that the affections should not be guided or restrained. The course pursued by Abraham is a rebuke to all such.

April 17, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 12--Jacob and Esau

God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew, before the birth of Jacob and Esau, just what characters they would both develop. He knew that Esau would not have a heart to obey him. When he answered the troubled prayer of Rebekah, informing her that she would have two children, he presented before her the future history of her two sons, that they would become two nations, the one greater than the other, and the elder would serve the younger. The first-born was entitled to peculiar advantages and special privileges; he possessed honor and authority, in the family and the tribe, next to that of the parents; he was regarded as especially consecrated to God, and was selected to fill the office of priest; and he received a double portion of the father's goods.

The two brothers were very unlike in character. Isaac was pleased with the bold, courageous spirit manifested by Esau, who delighted in the chase, bringing home game to his father, with stirring accounts of his adventures. Jacob was the favorite son of his mother, because his disposition was mild, and better calculated to make her happy. He had learned from his mother what God had taught her, that the elder should serve the younger, and his youthful reasoning led him to conclude that this promise could not be fulfilled while his brother had the privileges which were conferred on the first-born. And when the latter came in from the field, faint with hunger, Jacob improved the opportunity to turn Esau's necessity to his own advantage, and proposed to feed him with pottage, if he would renounce all claim to the birthright; and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob.

Esau had taken two wives of the idolatrous Canaanites. This was a source of deep sorrow to Isaac and Rebekah, for they well knew that God had commanded their fathers not to intermarry with idolaters, and they had fully understood the care and anxiety of Abraham that Isaac should marry a wife of his own nation and faith. Isaac was now more than one hundred years old, the infirmities of age were upon him, and his sight had grown dim. Esau was still his favorite son, and notwithstanding Isaac had been made acquainted with the purpose of God, he determined to bestow the benediction upon his first-born. He called Esau, and, as he supposed, privately made known his wish that he should prepare him venison before the bestowal of the blessing, in accordance with the custom of making a feast upon such occasions. Rebekah had been divinely instructed that Jacob was to be in the direct line through which the promise would be fulfilled in the birth of the Redeemer. She was confident that her husband was going contrary to the will of God, and that no reasoning could change his purpose, and without due reflection she determined not to allow the father's partiality for his eldest son to avert the purpose of God; by stratagem she would obtain the blessing for Jacob. As soon as Esau had departed on his errand she called her youngest son, and related to him the words of Isaac, and the necessity of action on their part to prevent the accomplishment of his designs to bestow a blessing, finally and irrevocably, upon Esau. If Jacob would follow her directions he might obtain the blessing, as God had promised. As Jacob listened to his mother's plan he was at first greatly distressed, and assured her that in thus deceiving his father he would receive a curse instead of the desired blessing. But his scruples were overborne, and he proceeded to carry out his mother's suggestions. The plan was successful; he obtained by fraud that which, had he shown the proper trust in God, he would have received as his right.

It was not his intention to utter a direct falsehood, but once in the presence of his father he thought he had gone too far to retreat. From that moment he felt poor in heart, he was weighed down with self-condemnation.

In grossly deceiving his blind, aged father, he had lost his nobility and truth. In one short hour he had made work for a life-long repentance. This scene was vivid before him in after years, when the wicked course of his own sons oppressed his soul.

The unrighteous course of Jacob and Rebekah produced no good results; it brought only distrust, jealousy, and revenge. Mother and son should have waited for the Lord to accomplish his own purpose in his own way, and in his own time, instead of trying to bring about the foretold events by the aid of deception. If Esau had received the blessing which was bestowed upon the firstborn, his prosperity could have come from God alone; and he would have granted him prosperity, or brought upon him adversity, according to his course of action. If he should love and reverence God, like righteous Abel, he would be accepted and blessed. If, like wicked Cain, he had no respect for God, nor for his commandments, he would be rejected of him, as was Cain. If Jacob's course should be righteous, the prospering hand of God would be with him, even if he did not obtain the blessings and privileges generally bestowed upon the firstborn. Rebekah repented in bitterness for the wrong counsel which she had given to Jacob, for it was the means of separating him from her forever. He was compelled to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau, and his mother never saw his face again. Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced by the course of his two sons, that the blessing rightly belongs to Jacob.

In the providence of God the unerring pen of inspiration withheld not the mistakes and sins of good men. The sin is unsparingly brought to light, and also the just judgment of God. Because of his transgression, Jacob became a fugitive from his home, compelled to serve a hard master for twenty years. A cruel fraud was practiced upon him in his marriage with Leah, his ten sons deceived him as he had deceived his father, and for many years he mourned over the supposed death of Joseph. All these years Jacob was a recipient of God's favor, yet he had sown a crop that he must reap; neither time nor

repentance could change into golden grain the vile weed sown. This view of the matter makes it of the highest consequence that in words and actions we move in conscious integrity, for "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

As Jacob pursued his journey, a stranger in a strange land, he sadly pondered the events which had transpired as the result of his own transgression. At night he lay down to sleep with the canopy of heaven as a covering, the earth his bed, and a stone his pillow. A compassionate God, who ever pitieth the woes of men, saw the lonely fugitive, troubled and perplexed, fearing that God had forsaken him because of his injustice, deception, and falsehood. In a vision of the night, the Lord manifested himself to Jacob. He saw a ladder, the base resting upon the earth, the top round reaching into the highest heaven even to the throne of God. The Lord himself, enshrouded in light, stood above the top of the ladder, and angels were ascending and descending upon it.

As Jacob gazed with wonder upon the scene, the voice of God was heard, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob awakened from his dream, and exclaimed in solemn awe, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." He looked about as if to again catch a glimpse of the heavenly messengers, but above him was only the blue, star-gemmed firmament, his head was still resting upon the rocky pillow. The ladder was gone, and the angels were no longer to be seen; but the voice of God was still echoing in his ears, with the promise now to him so precious. He felt indeed that angels of God, although unseen, peopled the place; that God was looking down upon him with compassion and love. Filled with holy awe and amazement, he involuntarily exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this the gate of Heaven."

The meaning of this ladder is explained to us in the words of Christ to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." The atonement of Christ links earth to Heaven, and finite man to the infinite God; for through Christ, the communication that was broken off because of transgression, is resumed with man. Sinners may find pardon and be visited by mercy and grace.

When the morning light appeared, Jacob arose, and taking the stone upon which his head had rested, he poured oil upon it, in accordance with the custom of those who would preserve a memorial of God's mercy, that whenever he should pass that way, he might tarry at this sacred spot to worship the Lord. And he called the place Bethel, or the house of God. With the deepest gratitude and love he repeated again and again the gracious promise that God's help and presence would be with him; and then, in the fullness of his soul, he made the solemn vow, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

God's presence is not confined to the splendid edifice. Jacob's humble resting-place had been consecrated by a manifestation of divine glory. God has often made sacred the hillside, the caves of the earth, the forest, the humble barn, the cotton tent. Each has become a tabernacle where he meets and blesses his servants, who are humbly seeking after truth, and peace, and righteousness. But the grandest cathedral, the marvel of architecture, if it encloses pride, dead forms, and hollow hypocrisy, is repulsive in the sight of God, who seeketh such to worship him as worship in spirit and in truth.

With a heart overflowing with love to God, and making melody in

harmony with the happy songsters, Jacob went forward on his journey. He felt indeed that the presence of the Unseen was with him, and that angels were his companions.

Jacob felt that God had claims upon him which he must acknowledge, and that the special tokens of divine favor granted to him demanded a corresponding return. In like manner, every blessing bestowed upon us calls for a response. The Author of all our mercies should receive, not only gratitude, but tangible returns. Our time, our talents, our property, should be, and will be by every true Christian, sacredly devoted to the service of Him who has given these blessings to us in trust. When special deliverance has been wrought for us, when new and unexpected favors have been bestowed upon us, we should not accept them with indifference and with careless, thankless hearts.--God would have us follow the example of Jacob, pledge to the Lord in return for all his mercies. (To be Continued.)

April 24, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 12--Jacob and Esau (Continued)

One reason why God does not bestow more and larger blessings upon his people is that they would not appreciate them and render to God the things that are God's. Every Christian should often review his past life, and never should he forget the precious deliverances which God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, consoling him in affliction, opening ways for him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint under discouragements. And in view of all these innumerable blessings, he should be melted and subdued, grateful and humble. He may well exclaim, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The rendering to God will not be merely in words of thankfulness, but in tithes and offerings. The Christian will practice self-denial and self-sacrifice to make returns to God.

The conduct of Esau in selling his birthright represents the course of the unrighteous, who consider the redemption purchased for them by Christ of little value, and sacrifice their heirship to Heaven for perishable treasures. Many are controlled by inclination, and rather than deny an unhealthy appetite, they will sacrifice high and valuable considerations. If one must be yielded, the gratification of a depraved appetite, or the high and heavenly blessings which God promises only to the self-denying and God-fearing, the clamors of appetite, as in the case of Esau, will generally prevail, and for self-gratification, God and Heaven will be virtually despised. Even professed Christians will use tea, coffee, snuff, tobacco, and spirits, all of which benumb the finer sensibilities of the soul. If you tell them they cannot have

Heaven and these hurtful indulgences, and that they should cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, they are offended, and conclude that if the way is so straight that they cannot indulge their gross appetites, they will no longer walk therein.

Especially will the corrupt passions control the mind of those who consider Heaven of so little worth. Health will be sacrificed, the mental faculties enfeebled, and Heaven will be sold for these pleasures, as Esau sold his birthright. This case is left on record as a warning to others. Esau was a reckless person. He made a solemn oath that Jacob should have his birthright. Yet when he learned that his brother had obtained the blessing which would have belonged to him, had he not rashly sold it, he was greatly distressed. He had repented of his rash act, when it was too late to remedy the matter. Thus it will be in the day of God with sinners, who have bartered away their heirship to Heaven for selfish gratifications and hurtful lusts. They will then find no place for repentance, although, like Esau, they may seek it carefully and with tears.

Jacob was not happy in his marriage relation, although his wives were sisters. He formed the contract with Laban for his daughter Rachel, whom he loved, but after he had served seven years for her, Laban, wishing to retain his faithful services a greater length of time, deceived him, and gave him Leah. When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love her, and he reproved his father-in-law for thus trifling with his affections. Laban entreated him not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family. Jacob was placed in a most trying position; but he decided still to retain Leah, and also to marry her sister. Yet Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel.

Laban was selfish in his dealings with Jacob, and thought only of

advantaging himself by his faithful labors. Jacob would have left the artful Laban long before, but he was afraid of encountering Esau. He heard the complaint of Laban's sons, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before."

Jacob was greatly distressed. He knew not which way to turn. He carries his case to God, and intercedes for direction from him, and the Lord mercifully answers his prayer. "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." Jacob now called his two wives to the field, where there could be a secret consultation without danger of being overhead, and said, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me." Jacob then related to them the dream given him of God, to leave Laban and go unto his kindred. Rachel and Leah replied, expressing their dissatisfaction with their father's proceedings, "Is there yet any portion of inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him as strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

Anciently it was customary for the bridegroom to pay a sum of money, according to his circumstances, to the father of his wife. If he had no money, nor anything of value, his labor was accepted for a stated length of time before he could obtain the daughter as his wife. This custom was deemed a safeguard to the marriage contract. Fathers did not consider it safe to trust the happiness of their daughters to men who had not made sufficient provision to take care of a family. If they had not ability to manage business, to acquire cattle or lands, it was feared that their lives would be worthless. But that the

truly worthy might not become discouraged, a provision was made to test the worth of those who had nothing of value to pay for a wife. They were permitted to labor for the father whose daughter they loved. Their labors were engaged for a certain length of time, regulated by the value of the dowry required for the daughter. In doing this, marriage was not hasty, as there was opportunity to test the depth of affections of the suitor. If he was faithful in his services, and was otherwise considered worthy, the daughter was given him as his wife. And, generally, all the dowry the father had received was given to his daughter at her marriage.

What a contrast to the course now pursued by parents and children! There are many unhappy marriages because of so much haste. Two unite their interests at the marriage altar, by most solemn vows before God, without previously weighing the matter, and devoting time to sober reflection and earnest prayer. Many move from impulse. They have no thorough acquaintance with the dispositions of each other. They do not realize that the happiness of their life is at stake. If they move wrong in this matter, and their married life proves unhappy, it cannot be taken back. If they find they are not calculated to make each other happy, they must endure it as best they can. In some instances the husband proves to be too indolent to provide for a family, and his wife and children suffer. If the ability of such had been proved, as was the custom anciently, before marriage, much misery would have been saved. In the case of Rachel and Leah, Laban selfishly kept the dowry which should have been given to them. They have reference to this when they say, "He hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money." (To be Continued.)

May 1, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 12--Jacob and Esau (Concluded)

In the absence of Laban, Jacob took his family and all that he had, and departed. After he had pursued his journey three days, Laban learned that he had left him, and he was very angry, and pursued after him, determined to bring him back by force. But the Lord had pity upon his servant, and as Laban was about to overtake him, gave him a dream not to speak good or bad to Jacob. That is, he should not force him to return, or urge him by flattering inducements. When Laban met his son-in-law, he inquired why he had stolen away unawares, and carried away his daughters as captives taken with the sword. Laban tells him, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight," and he mentioned how he had been warned by the dream. Jacob then rehearsed to Laban the ungenerous course he had pursued toward him, that he had studied only his own advantage. He appeals to his father-in-law as to the uprightness of his conduct while with him: "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes."

A shepherd's life was one of diligence. He was obliged to watch his flocks day and night. Wild beasts were common, and often bold, and would do great injury to sheep and cattle that were not guarded by a faithful shepherd. Although Jacob had a number of servants to aid him in tending the flocks owned by himself and Laban, the responsibility of the whole matter

rested upon him. And during some portions of the year he was obliged to be with the flocks himself, day and night, to care for them in the dry season, that they might not perish with thirst; in the coldest part of the year to save them from becoming chilled with the heavy night frosts. Their flocks were also in danger of being stolen by unprincipled shepherds.

A shepherd's life was one of constant care. He was not qualified for his position unless he was merciful, and possessed courage and perseverance. Jacob was chief shepherd, and had shepherds under him who were termed servants. The chief shepherd called these servants, to whom he intrusted the care of the flock, to a strict account if they were not found in a flourishing condition. If any of the cattle were missing, the chief shepherd suffered the loss.

Christ, in his relation to his people, is compared to a shepherd. He saw, after the fall, his sheep in a pitiable condition, exposed to sure destruction. He left the honors and glories of his father's house to become a shepherd, to save the miserable, wandering sheep, who were ready to perish. His winning voice was heard calling them to his fold, a safe and sure retreat from the hand of robbers; also a shelter from the scorching heat, and a protection from the chilling blasts. His care was continually exercised for the good of his sheep. He strengthened the weak, nourished the suffering, and gathered the lambs of the flocks in his arms, and carried them in his bosom. His sheep love him. He goeth before them, and they hear his voice, and follow him. "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." Christ says, "I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

Christ is the chief shepherd. He has intrusted the care of his flock to under-shepherds. He requires these shepherds to have the same interest for his sheep that he has ever manifested, to ever feel the responsibility of the charge he has intrusted to them. Ministers, who are called of God to labor in word and doctrine, are Christ's shepherds. He has appointed them under himself to oversee and tend his flock. He has solemnly commanded these to be faithful shepherds, to feed the flock with diligence, to follow his example, to strengthen the weak, nourish the fainting, and shield them from devouring beasts. He points them to his example of love for his sheep. To secure their deliverance, he laid down his own life. If they imitate his self-denying example, the flock will prosper under their care. They will manifest a deeper interest than did Jacob, who was a faithful shepherd over the sheep and cattle of Laban. They will be constantly laboring for the welfare of the flock. They will not be mere hirelings, of whom Jesus speaks, who possess no particular interest in the sheep; who, in time of danger of trial, flee and leave the flock. A shepherd who labors merely for the wages he obtains, cares only for himself, and is continually studying his own interests and ease, instead of the welfare of his flock.

Says Peter, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Says Paul, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

All those professing to be shepherds, who feel that to minister in word and doctrine, and bear the burdens and have the care which every faithful shepherd should have, is a disagreeable task, are reprov'd by the apostle: "Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." All such unfaithful shepherds, the chief Shepherd would willingly release. The church of God is purchased with the blood of Christ, and every shepherd

should realize that the sheep under his care cost a priceless sum. He should be diligent in his labor, and persevering in his efforts to keep the flock in a healthy, flourishing condition. He should consider the sheep intrusted to his care of the highest value, and realize that he will be called to render a strict account of his ministry. And if he is found faithful, he will receive a rich reward. "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Jacob continued, plainly presenting before Laban the injustice of his course: "Thus have I been twenty years in thy house. I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

Laban then assured Jacob that he had an interest for his daughters and their children, and he could not harm them. "Now, therefore," he said. "come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee." To this, Jacob consented, and a pile of stones was thrown up as a visible token of the compact.

And Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters; no man is with us, see, God is witness between me and thee." Laban understood the wrong of polygamy, although it was through his artifice alone that Jacob had taken two wives. He well knew that it was the jealousy of Leah and Rachel that led them to give their maids to Jacob, which confused the family relation, and increased the unhappiness of his daughters. And now as they are journeying to a distant country, and their interest is to be entirely separate from his own, he would guard their happiness as far as possible.

Jacob made a solemn covenant before the Lord, that he should not take other wives. "And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the Fear of his father Isaac."

July 3, 1879

Wisconsin Camp-Meeting

I came upon the ground very weak, but have labored much harder than it seemed possible when I came. Sabbath after speaking I invited those who desired to seek the Lord to come forward; about one hundred responded. I also spoke twice on Sunday. Monday morning resumed our labor for those who had been invited forward. Candidates for baptism were examined, and twenty-six were baptized in the beautiful lake. One poor paralytic, a young man, who had lost the use of his limbs; he was taken in the arms of Brn. Olsen and Decker and buried with Christ in baptism and came out of the water, his countenance lighted up with beams of the Sun of righteousness.

At this meeting a temperance society was organized. The teetotal pledge was circulated and one hundred and fifty signed it. Tuesday morning we had our closing meeting. The deepest feeling was beginning to take hold of the people, just as we must separate. We deeply regretted that many commenced moving from the ground Monday morning, which was a great injury to the meeting. We feel that it is not right for our brethren to delay to come to the meeting until it has been in session one or two days. They lose the labor put forth to advance and bring up the interest, and they lag behind all through the meeting. Others become uneasy and home cares draw them away before they have a chance to be benefited by the meeting.

We had some sweet, refreshing seasons. We were blessed ourselves and know that many were convicted that we had the truth. My husband was free in spirit, and spoke with great clearness and power. We rejoice that many were comforted and strengthened in God. But we feel sad as we think of the far richer blessings God was willing to give us at this camp meeting, which we did not receive because our minds were not prepared to accept them. For

the lack of appropriating faith many are apparently content to receive little from God's storehouse. Their lives are, therefore, not rich in faith, hope, and noble courage, and do not abound in good works. They have a sickly faith, a dwarfed and defective religious experience. My heart aches, as I see the low standard our people are becoming too willing to retain. They do not follow on to know the Lord. They are not connected with God. They are like salt that has lost the savor. They have not vital godliness, or heart-holiness; therefore they are like the fig tree destitute of fruit. As a people, unless we cherish the light that shines upon our pathway, we shall have darkness, and great will be the darkness. Our privileges and opportunities are great, and we must make persevering, determined effort to keep pace, in our daily experience, with the onward march of truth.

August 7, 1879

The Sufferings of Christ

"God is love." And his matchless love manifested toward fallen man, in the gift of his beloved Son, amazed the holy angels. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He was the Father's "appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." He was the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." And he upheld "all things by the word of his power." He possessed divine excellence and greatness. It pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. And Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Yet he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The Son of God consented to die in the sinner's stead, that man might, by a life of obedience, escape the penalty of the law of God. His death did not slay the law, lessen its holy claims, nor detract from its sacred dignity. The death of Christ proclaimed the justice of his Father's law in punishing the transgressor, in that he consented to suffer the penalty in order to save fallen man from its curse. The death of God's beloved Son on the cross shows the immutability of God's law. His death magnifies the law and makes it honorable, and gives evidence of its changeless character. From his own lips is heard, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The death of the divine Son justified the claims of the divine law. In order to more fully realize the value of redemption, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited views of the sufferings of the divine Son of God, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement.

The plan of redemption, embracing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, was first preached to Adam. It was to him the star of hope, lighting up the dark and dreaded future. Adam saw that Christ was the only door of hope through which he could enter and have life. The plan of saving sinners through Christ alone was the same in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and every successive generation of those who lived before the advent of Christ, as it is in our day. The patriarchs, prophets, and all the holy martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, in whom they showed their faith by sacrificial offerings. At the crucifixion the typical system of sacrifices was done away by the great antitypical offering. The sacrifice of beasts shadowed forth the sinless offering of God's dear Son, and pointed forward to his death upon the cross. But at the crucifixion type met antitype, and the typical system there ceased; but not one jot or tittle of the moral code was abrogated at the death of Christ.

The Son of God is the center of the great plan of redemption, which unit plan covers all dispensations. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He is the Redeemer of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam in all the ages of human probation. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Christ is the substance or body which cast its shadow back into former dispensations. And when Christ died the shadow ceased. The transgression of the moral code made the shadowy system necessary. And at the death of Christ, which event had been shadowed forth by the blood of beasts from the time of Adam, these offerings, and not the law of God, the violation of which had made them necessary, was abolished.

The gospel preached to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses was to them good news; for their faith embraced a coming Saviour. A more clear and glorious light now shines upon the Christian world; for in the Jewish age the cross cast its shadow away back to the time when Adam left his Eden home.

That which was faith to the ancients, who lived before Christ, is assurance to us, as we see that Christ has come, as foretold by the prophets. It is as essential, no more so, and no less, that we have faith in a Redeemer who has come and died our sacrifice, as it was for the ancients to believe in a Redeemer to come, whom they represented by their typical sacrifices.

The Son of God, in becoming man's substitute, and bearing the curse which should fall upon man, has pledged himself in behalf of the race to maintain the sacred claims and exalted honor of his Father's law. His work and mission was to convince men of sin, which is the transgression of that law, and through the divine mediation, bring them back to obedience to his perfect law. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through his mediatorial work he may completely vindicate the binding claims and the holiness of every principle of his law.

After Christ was baptized of John in Jordan, he came up out of the water, and bowing upon the banks of the river, he prayed with fervency to his Heavenly Father for strength to endure the conflict with the prince of darkness in which he was about to engage. The heavens were opened to his prayer and the light of God's glory, brighter than the sun at noonday, came from the throne of the Eternal, and, assuming the form of a dove with the appearance of burnished gold, encircled the Son of God, while the clear voice from the excellent glory was heard in terrible majesty, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Here was the assurance to the Son of God that his Father accepted the fallen race through their representative, and that he had granted them a second trial. The communication between Heaven and earth, between God and man, which had been broken by the fall of Adam, was resumed. He who knew no sin, became sin for the race, that his righteousness might be imputed to man. Through the perfection of Christ's character, man was elevated in the scale of moral value with God; and through the merits of

Christ, finite man was linked to the Infinite. Thus the gulf which sin had made was bridged by the world's Redeemer.

But few have a true sense of the great privileges which Christ gained for man by thus opening Heaven before him. The Son of God was then the representative of our race; and the special power and glory which the Majesty of Heaven conferred upon him, and his words of approval, are the surest pledge of his love and good will to man. As Christ's intercessions in our behalf were heard, the evidence was given to man that God will accept our prayers in our own behalf through the name of Jesus. The continued, earnest prayer of faith will bring us light and strength to withstand the fiercest assaults of Satan.

The light and strength of one day to the Christian will not be sufficient for the trials and conflicts of the next. Satan is now constantly changing his temptations, as he did with Christ. Every day we may be placed in new positions, and may have new and unexpected temptations. We may as consistently expect to be sustained on the morrow by food eaten today, as to depend upon present light and present blessings for future strength. Weak and sinful man cannot be safe unless God shall daily manifest his light and impart to him his strength.

It is of the highest importance that God manifest his will to us in the daily concerns of life; for the most important results frequently depend upon small occurrences. The more we become acquainted with God through his divine light, the more sensible shall we become of our weaknesses, and that we cannot live without him. We should ever feel that we need a sure guide to direct our faltering steps.

The life of a living Christian is a life of living prayer. The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The Christian's life is one of progression. He goes forward from strength to strength, from grace to grace,

and from glory to glory, receiving from Heaven the light which Christ, at infinite cost to himself, made it possible for man to obtain. The Christian cannot let his light shine properly unless he receives an increase of the divine illumination, corresponding with his growth in the knowledge of Bible truths. The strength and glory from the accessible Heavens will qualify him to meet the new temptations and bear the heavier responsibilities which are ever before him. Untried scenes await the Christian. New dangers surround him. And unexpected temptations constantly assail him. Our great Leader points us to the open Heavens as the only source of light and strength.

After his baptism, the Son of God entered the dreary wilderness, there to be tempted by the devil. For nearly six weeks he endured the agonies of hunger. For forty days he ate and drank nothing. This made his suffering greater than anything which man would ever be called to endure. Christ was bearing the guilt of the transgressor. He realized the power of appetite upon man; and in behalf of sinful man, he bore the closest test possible upon that point. Here a victory was gained which few can appreciate. The controlling power of depraved appetite, and the grievous sin of indulging it, can only be understood by length of the fast which our Saviour endured that he might break its power.

Satan had gained the victory over man in almost every temptation on the point of appetite. The Son of God saw that man could not of himself overcome this powerful temptation and he had such infinite love for the race that he left the royal courts of Heaven, and clothed his divinity with humanity, that with his long human arm he might reach to the very depths of human woe, while with his divine arm he grasps the Infinite. He came to earth to unite his divine power with our human efforts, that through the strength and moral power which he imparts, we may overcome in our own behalf. Oh! what matchless condescension for the King of glory to come down to this world to endure the pangs of hunger and the fierce temptations of a wily foe, that he might gain an infinite victory for man. Here is love

without a parallel. Yet this great condescension is but dimly comprehended by those for whom it was made.

It was not the gnawing pangs of hunger alone which made the sufferings of our Redeemer so inexpressibly severe. It was the sense of guilt which had resulted from the indulgence of appetite that had brought such terrible woe into the world, which pressed so heavily upon his divine soul. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

With man's nature, and the terrible weight of his sins pressing upon him, our Redeemer withstood the power of Satan upon this great leading temptation, which imperils the souls of men. If man should overcome this temptation, he could conquer on every other point.

Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the moral evils known to man. Christ began the work of redemption just where the ruin began. The fall of our first parents was caused by the indulgence of appetite. In redemption, the denial of appetite is the first work of Christ. What amazing love has Christ manifested in coming into the world to bear our sins and infirmities, and to tread the path of suffering, that he might show us by his life of spotless merit how we should walk, and overcome as he had overcome, and that we might become reconciled to God.

As the human was upon Christ, he felt his need of strength from his Father. He had select places of prayer. He loved the solitude of the mountain in which to hold communion with his Father in Heaven. In this exercise he was strengthened for the duties and trials of the day. Our Saviour identifies himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that he becomes a suppliant, a nightly petitioner, seeking from his Father fresh supplies of strength, to come forth invigorated and refreshed, braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not possessing like

passions. As the sinless One, his nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul, in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He required all the divine support and comfort which his Father was ready to impart to his Son, who had left the joys of Heaven and chosen his home, for the benefit of man, in a cold and thankless world. Christ found joy and comfort in communion with his Father. Here he could unburden his sorrows that were crushing him. He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.

Through the day he labored earnestly to save men from destruction. He healed the sick, he comforted the mourning, and brought cheerfulness and hope to the despairing. He brought the dead to life. After his work was finished for the day, he went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the city, and his form was bowed in some retired place, in supplication to his Father. At times the bright beams of the moon shone upon his bowed form. And then again the clouds and darkness shut away all light. The dew and frost of night rested upon his head and beard while in the attitude of a suppliant. He frequently continued his petitions through the entire night. If the Saviour of men, with his divine strength, felt the need of prayer in our behalf, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of prayer--fervent, constant prayer on their own account! When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, he ate nothing. He committed himself to God, and through earnest prayer, and perfect submission to the will of his Father, came off conqueror.

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." Our tables are frequently spread with luxuries not healthful nor necessary, because we love these things more than we love freedom from disease and a sound mind. Jesus sought earnestly for strength from his Father. This the divine Son of God considered of more value even for himself than to sit at the most luxurious table. He has given us evidence that prayer is essential to us in order to receive strength to contend with the

powers of darkness, and to do the work allotted us to perform. Our own strength is weakness, but that which God gives will make every one who obtains it more than conqueror. (To be Continued.)

August 14, 1879

The Sufferings of Christ

Jesus had often resorted to Gethsemane with his disciples for meditation and prayer. They were all well acquainted with this sacred retreat. Even Judas knew where to lead the murderous throng, that he might betray Jesus into their hands. Never before had the Saviour visited the spot with his heart so full of sorrow. It was not bodily suffering from which the Son of God shrank, and which wrung from his lips in the presence of his disciples these mournful words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "Tarry ye here," said he, "and watch with me." He was bowed to the earth with mental anguish, and in an agony he prayed to his Heavenly Father. He felt the iniquity of sin, and the wrath of God against the violators of his holy law.

Christ was amazed with the horror of darkness which enclosed him. The temptations of Satan were almost overpowering. These words, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," were borne upon the sympathizing air, to his disciples, in tones of startling agony. The sins of a lost world were upon him, and a sense of his Father's anger in consequence of sin was crushing him. He arose from his prostrate position, and, yearning for the sympathy of his disciples, he came to them and found them sleeping. He roused Peter and said to him, "Simon, sleepest thou?" What, couldest not thou, who so recently was willing to go with me to prison and to death, watch with thy suffering Master one hour? "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." At the most important time, the disciples were found sleeping. It was the very time when Jesus had made a special request for them to watch with him. He knew that terrible temptations were before his disciples. He took them with him, that they might be a strength to him, and that the events they should witness that night, and the lessons of instruction they should receive, might be

indelibly printed upon their memories. This was necessary that they might be strengthened for the test just before them.

But instead of watching with Christ, they were burdened with sorrow, and fell asleep. Even the ardent Peter was asleep, who, only a few hours before, had declared that he would suffer, and, if need be, die for his Lord. At the most critical moment, when the Son of God was in need of their sympathy and heartfelt prayers, they were found asleep. They lost much by thus sleeping. Our Saviour designed to fortify them for the severe test of their faith to which they would soon be subjected. If they had spent that mournful period in watching with the dear Saviour and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to his own feeble strength, to deny his Lord. We can have but faint conception of the inexpressible anguish of God's dear Son in Gethsemane, as he realized the separation from his Father in consequence of bearing man's sin. The divine Son of God was fainting, dying. The Father sent an angel from his presence to strengthen the divine sufferer. Could mortals view the amazement and sorrow of the angels as they watched in silent grief the Father separating his beams of light, love, and glory, from his Son, they would better understand how offensive is sin in his sight. As the Son of God in the garden of Gethsemane bowed in the attitude of prayer, the agony of his spirit forced from his pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded him. The sins of the world were upon him. He was suffering in man's stead, as a transgressor of his Father's law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from his vision, and he was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In the agony of his soul he lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing his Father's frown. The cup of suffering Christ had taken from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it himself, and, in its place, give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man, was now falling upon Christ.

The disciples roused from their slumber to find their Master standing

over them in a state of mental and bodily anguish such as they never before had witnessed. They saw the grief and agony of his pale face, and the bloody sweat upon his brow, for "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." The disciples were grieved that they had fallen asleep, so that they could not pray and sympathize with their suffering Lord. They were speechless with sorrow and surprise.

The suffering Son of God leaves his disciples, for the power of darkness rushes upon him with an irresistible force which bows him to the earth. He prays as before, and pours out the burden of his soul with stronger crying and tears. His soul was pressed with such agony as no human being could endure and live. The sins of the world were upon him. He felt that he was separated from his Father's love; for upon him rested the curse because of sin. Christ knew that it would be difficult for man to feel the grievousness of sin, and that close contact and familiarity with sin would so blunt his moral sensibility, that sin would not appear so dangerous to him, and so exceedingly offensive in the sight of God. He knew that but few would take pleasure in righteousness, and accept of that salvation which, at infinite cost, he made it possible for them to obtain. While this load of sin was upon Christ, unrealized, and unrepented of by man, doubts rent his soul in regard to his oneness with his Father.

In this fearful hour of trial Christ's human nature longed even for the sympathy of his disciples. A second time he rose from the earth and went to them and found them sleeping. This was not a deep sleep. They were in a drowse. They had a limited sense of their Lord's suffering and anguish. In tenderness Jesus stood for a moment bending over them, and regarding them with mingled feelings of love and pity. In these sleeping disciples he sees a representation of a sleeping church. When they should be watching, they are asleep.

"Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house

cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." The church of God is required to fulfill her night-watch, however perilous, and whether long or short. Sorrow is no excuse for her to be less watchful. Tribulation should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by his own example, to the source of their strength in times of need, distress and peril. The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God's people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world, and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.

How cruel it was for the disciples to permit sleep to close their eyes, and slumber to chain their senses, while their divine Lord was enduring such inexpressible mental anguish. If they had remained watching, they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This important night-watch should have been signalized by noble mental struggles and prayers which would have brought them strength to witness the terrible agony of the Son of God. It would have prepared them, as they should behold his sufferings upon the cross, to understand something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which he endured in the garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to recall the words he had spoken to them in reference to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; and amid the gloom of that trying hour some rays of hope would have lighted up the darkness, and sustained their faith.

Christ had told them before that these things would take place; but they did not understand him. The scene of his sufferings was to be a fiery ordeal to his disciples, hence the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. Their faith needed to be sustained by an unseen strength, as they should experience the triumph of the powers of darkness. He knew the power which the prince of darkness used to paralyze the senses of his disciples at this time when they should be watching. At this crisis, when they would meet with a great loss, they are found asleep. Again the powers of darkness press upon him with

renewed force, bowing him to the earth. He leaves his disciples with a determination to conquer the prince of darkness, that man may not be held in chains of hopeless despair. Giving his disciples one look of the tenderest compassion he left them and bowed a third time in prayer, using the same words as before. The divine sufferer shuddered with amazement at this mysterious and terrible conflict.

Human minds cannot conceive of the insupportable anguish which tortured the soul of our Redeemer. The holy Son of God had no sins or griefs of his own to bear. He was bearing the griefs of others, for on him was laid the iniquities of us all. Through divine sympathy he connects himself to man, and submits as the representative of the race to be treated as a transgressor. He looks into the abyss of woe opened for us by our sins, and proposes to bridge the gulf with his own person. Those who cannot see the force of the sacred claims of God's law cannot have a clear and definite understanding of the atonement.

It was soul-anguish that wrenched from the lips of God's dear Son these mournful words: "Now is my soul troubled,--my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Christ's soul was bearing a weight of anguish because of the transgression of God's law. He was overwhelmed with horror and consternation at the fearful work sin had wrought. His burden of guilt was so great because of man's transgression of his Father's law, that human nature was inadequate to bear it. His inexpressible anguish forced from his pores large drops of blood, which fell upon the ground and moistened the sods of Gethsemane.

The sufferings of martyrs can bear no comparison with the sufferings of Christ. The divine presence was with them, in their physical sufferings. There was the hiding of the Father's face from his dear Son. Humanity staggered and trembled in that trying hour. It was anguish of soul beyond the endurance of finite nature. It was woe condensed that brought from the

trembling lips of the noble sufferer these words: "Now is my soul troubled." "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again from his pale lips are heard these words: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." The awful moment had come which was to decide the destiny of the world. Angels are waiting and watching with intense interest.

The fate of the world is trembling in the balance. The Son of God may even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. He may wipe the blood sweat from his brow, and leave the world to perish in their iniquity. Will the Son of the infinite God drink the cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the curse of God to save the guilty? It was here the mysterious cup trembled in his hand, and the destiny of a ruined world was balanced. The world's Redeemer sees that the transgressors of his Father's law must perish under his displeasure. He sees the power of sin and the utter helplessness of man to save himself.

The woes and lamentations of a doomed world come up before him, and his decision is made. He will save man at any cost of himself. He has accepted his baptism of blood, that perishing millions through him might gain everlasting life. He left the heavenly courts where all was purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world which had fallen by transgression. He will not leave man in his sins. He will reach to the very depths of misery to rescue him. The sleeping disciples see not that their beloved Teacher is fainting. He falls to the earth, and is dying. Where are his disciples to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their suffering Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? Our Saviour trod the wine-press alone and of all the people there was none with him.

Christ suffered not alone. Saith he, "I and my Father are one." God suffered with his Son. The sacrifice that an infinite God has made in giving

up his Son to reproach and agony, cannot be comprehended by man. In giving his Son for the sins of the world, God has evidenced his boundless love to man. The angels who had learned to do Christ's will in Heaven, were anxious to comfort him. But what can they do? Such sorrow, such agony, is beyond their power to alleviate. They have never felt the sins of a ruined world, and with astonishment they behold the object of their adoration subject to grief. Although the Father does not remove the cup from the trembling hand and pale lips of his Son, he sends an angel to give him strength to drink it. The angel raises the Son of God from the cold ground, and brings him messages of love from his Father. He is strengthened and fortified. He has the assurance that he is gaining eternal joy for all who will accept redemption. (To be Continued.)

August 21, 1879

The Sufferings of Christ

The fearful hour in Gethsemane is passed. Our divine Saviour has accepted the cup to drain it to the dregs. In behalf of man he has conquered in the hour of temptation. Serenity and calmness are now seen in the pale and blood-stained face. And the third time he comes to his disciples and finds them overcome with sleep. Sorrowfully and pityingly he looked upon them, and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Even while these words were upon his lips, he heard the footsteps of the mob that was in search of him. Judas took the lead, and was closely followed by the high priest. Jesus aroused his disciples with these words. "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." The countenance of Christ wore an expression of calm dignity. The traces of his recent agony were not visible as he walked forth to meet his betrayer.

Jesus steps out in front of his disciples, and inquires, "Whom seek ye?" They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replies, "I am he." At these words the mob stagger backward; and the priest, the elders, the hardened soldiers, and even Judas, fall powerless to the ground, giving ample opportunity for Christ to release himself if he chose. But he stands as one glorified amid that coarse and hardened band. As Jesus said, "I am he," the angel which had ministered to him in his anguish, moved between him and the murderous mob. They see a divine light glorifying the Saviour's face, and a dove-like form overshadowing him. Their sinful hearts are filled with terror. They cannot stand for a moment in the presence of divine glory, but fall as dead men to the ground.

The angel withdrew, and left Jesus standing calm and self-possessed,

with the bright beams of the moon upon his pale face, and still surrounded by prostrate, helpless men, while the disciples were too much amazed to utter a word. As the angel removes, the hardened Roman soldiers start to their feet, and, with the priests and Judas, they gather about Christ as though ashamed of their weakness, and fearful that he would yet escape out of their hands. Again the question is asked by the world's Redeemer. "Whom seek ye?" Again they answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way." In this hour of humiliation Christ's thoughts are not for himself, but for his beloved disciples. He wishes to save them from any further trial of their strength.

Judas, the betrayer of our Saviour, does not forget his part, but comes close to Jesus, and takes his hand as a familiar friend, and bestows the traitor's kiss. Jesus says to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" His voice trembled with sorrow as he addressed deluded Judas. "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" This most touching appeal should have aroused the conscience of Judas, and touched his stubborn heart; but honor, fidelity, and even human tenderness seemed to have left him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to the control of Satan, to work wickedness, and he had no will to resist. Jesus did not resist the traitor's kiss. In this he gives us an example of forbearance, love, and pity, that is without a parallel.

Though the murderous throng are surprised and awed by what they have seen and felt, their assurance and hardihood returns as they see the boldness of Judas in touching the person of Christ, whom so recently they had seen glorified. They lay violent hands upon Jesus, and are about to bind those precious hands that had ever been employed in doing good.

As the disciples saw that band of hardened men lie prostrate and helpless on the ground, they thought surely their Master would not suffer himself to be taken. The same power that prostrated that hireling mob could have kept

them there, and Jesus could have passed on his way unharmed. They are disappointed and indignant as they see the cords brought forward to bind the hands of him whom they love. Peter in his vehement anger strikes rashly, and cuts off an ear of the servant of the high priest.

When Jesus saw what Peter had done, he released his hands, already held by the Roman soldiers, and, saying, "Suffer ye thus far," he touched the ear of the wounded man, and instantly it is made whole. Even to his enemies, who are bound to take his life, he here gives unmistakable evidence of his divine power. Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Jesus said unto the chief priest, and captains of the temple, who helped compose that murderous throng, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

When the disciples saw that Jesus did not deliver himself from his enemies, but permitted himself to be taken, they forsook him and fled, leaving their Master alone. Christ had foreseen this desertion, and had told them in the upper chamber before it took place, of what they would do: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

The Saviour of the world was hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided and condemned to death, by sinful men. There the glorious Son of God was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until his "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons

of men."

Who can comprehend the love here displayed? The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief Him who had been the majesty of Heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, who were fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient sufferer! Upon his head is the thorny crown! His life blood flows from every lacerated vein! All this was in consequence of sin! Nothing could have induced Christ to leave his honor and majesty in Heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected, by those he came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery.

Wonder, O Heavens, and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed! A vast multitude inclose the Saviour of the world. Mockings and jeerings are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy.

His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and the vulgar jest and insulting derision are passed from lip to lip. Satan was having full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he commences with the chief priests and elders, and imbues them with religious frenzy. They are actuated by the same satanic spirit which moves the most vile and hardened wretches.

There is a corrupt harmony in the feelings of all, from the hypocritical priests and the elders down to the most debased. Christ, the precious Son of God, was led forth, and the cross was laid upon his shoulders. At every step was left blood which flowed from his wounds. Thronged by an immense crowd of bitter enemies and unfeeling spectators, he is led away to the crucifixion. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her

shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

His sorrowing disciples follow him at a distance, behind the murderous throng. He is nailed to the cross, and hangs suspended between the heavens and the earth. Their hearts are bursting with anguish as their beloved Teacher is suffering as a criminal. Close to the cross are the blind, bigoted, faithless priests and elders, taunting, mocking, and jeering: "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him with the scribes and elders, said, he saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said I am the Son of God."

Not one word did Jesus answer to all this. Even while the nails were being driven through his hands and the sweat-drops of agony were forced from his pores, from the pale quivering lips of the innocent sufferer a prayer of pardoning love was breathed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." All Heaven was gazing with profound interest upon the scene. The glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law. He was about to ransom his people with his own blood. He was paying the just claims of God's holy law. This was the means through which an end was to be finally made of sin and Satan, and his vile host to be vanquished.

Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of his Father's displeasure which made his cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of his Father's wrath that broke his heart. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon him, and forced from his pale and quivering lips the

anguished cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus had united with the Father in making the world. Amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God, blind and deluded men alone remain unfeeling. The chief priests and elders revile God's dear Son while in his expiring agonies. Yet inanimate nature groans in sympathy with her bleeding, dying Author. The earth trembles. The sun refuses to behold the scene. The heavens gather blackness. Angels have witnessed the scene of suffering, until they can look on no longer, and hide their faces from the horrid sight. Christ is in despair! He is dying! His Father's approving smile is removed, and angels are not permitted to lighten the gloom of the terrible hour. They could only behold in amazement their loved Commander suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law.

Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb. Bright hope did not present to him his coming forth from the tomb a conqueror, and his Father's acceptance of his sacrifice. The sin of the world with all its terribleness was felt to the utmost by the Son of God. The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty which was death, were all that he could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of his Father that he could not be reconciled to his Son. The fierce temptation that his own Father had forever left him, caused that piercing cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (To be Continued.)

August 28, 1879

The Sufferings of Christ

Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like a pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever, separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory, for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt even by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the near future, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are

heard by the amazed spectators the dying words of the Man of Calvary, "It is finished."

Nature sympathized with the sufferings of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, and the terrific darkness, proclaimed that it was the Son of God that died. There was a mighty earthquake. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they beheld the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of the rocks. The mocking and jeering of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way in the darkness to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God?"

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished!" Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is finished." The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had thus far been carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! What amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. And oh! what is man that such a price should be paid for his redemption?

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man's stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian's heart. Praises to

God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man's redemption.

All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to redeem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.

Christ has shown that his love was stronger than death. Even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness, his love for perishing sinners increased. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul-struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and appear as if frozen in the cause of God. But here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotions. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully reach, so that we can comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless love of the Saviour, should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I

determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And we may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the portion of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ, yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ!

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, the evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright hope. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the history of the humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not stir the soul and affect the life any more, nor awaken deeper interest, than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures. Others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others for his dear sake have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs.

But bodily pain was only a small part of the agony of God's dear Son.

The sins of the world were upon him, and also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffered the penalty of the law. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And he was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that Christ was in his hands, and that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son, and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God, why need he die? God could save him from death.

Christ yielded not in the least degree to the torturing foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the worth of everlasting life everything else sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been despised by many. The heart's devotions have been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice, and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels awaiting to execute his commands. Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful men. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is love that no language can express. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love, preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

September 4, 1879

The Work for This Time

When we reflect upon the amazing love of God to fallen man, and view the small returns we make to him for this great love, we feel deeply humbled. Love of self, and selfish love of the things of the world, cannot find room in the hearts of true Christians. To be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Self is so interwoven in the nature of some that it is the ruling sin of their lives, and not only stands in their own way of attaining Christian perfection, but is a constant stumbling-block to sinners. A vast army might be brought to Jesus Christ through personal effort if selfishness did not obstruct the way.

Many professed Christians will talk and weep over the sacrifice of Christ, the cross he bore up Calvary, his crucifixion, and ascension to Heaven; while at the same time they refuse to co-operate with Christ in working as he worked, in self-denial and sacrifice for the good of souls. They refuse to drink of the cup, or be baptized with the baptism.

Let all those who profess to believe in Christ follow his example, and they will be doing a great work for Jesus. It is easy to cry, when it is popular to do so, "Never man spake like this man," and to echo the hosannas to the Son of David; though we do not the things he bids us, and do not follow his example in self-denial, and in working to do others good. True religion has to do with the heart and life. All who are true followers of Jesus will have a special interest to work for the Master, whose servants they profess to be, in gathering souls into the ranks of Christ. The Christian life does not consist altogether of meditation and prayer, although these are essential, but of earnest, active working, as well as meditating and praying.

Those who are truly converted to the truth and who love Christ will feel

their individual responsibility to make personal efforts for the salvation of others. They cannot be indifferent in this respect. They will see and feel the dangerous position of their friends, and of all who oppose the truths which to them are sacred and dear. They will desire to be actively employed in the work of seeking to win them to the truth. When men and women are convinced of the truth and decide to obey it, they have then only enlisted as Christ's soldiers. The work is all before them, to be doers as well as hearers of the word, and receivers of the heavenly gift. To be merely a passive Christian, receiving blessings, and not an earnest worker, is to be a novice and a dwarf in spiritual things.

The moon and the stars would not essentially benefit us if they retained for themselves their beauty and glory, and did not give to us the light they receive from the sun. The earth itself responds to the showers of rain, and the gentle dew, and the warming rays of the sun, and returns to us its bounties in grains, fruits, and flowers.

Man, the noblest work of God, made in his divine image, is found the most ungrateful. Christ comes to every individual to see what he is doing, and frequently finds neither fruits, nor blossoms, but only leaves.

Some are hearers of the word but not doers. They receive the heavenly benefits, but feel no responsibility to advance the cause of truth and save souls by their personal efforts. The divine command is two-fold; to not only be hearers, but doers, of the word. We are to receive the word ourselves and impart to others the precious light we have received. As we accept the truth, we virtually pledge ourselves to be workers with Christ, and to be consecrated to his service, and no longer live to do our will, and serve ourselves, but to be faithful servants of the Master to whom we have yielded ourselves servants to obey. The commission of Christ to his disciples was, to go and preach the gospel to every creature. We have a worldwide message.

After men and women have received the truth, it is not to their advantage to depend upon their more experienced brethren to hold them up, and carry them to Heaven. They should be instructed that in order to grow spiritually strong, they must be earnest workers to lead others to the truth, as they were led. If those who receive the truth value its importance they will receive ten-fold more encouragement and confidence in seeing their more experienced brethren and the ministers of Christ laboring in new fields, preaching the gospel to unbelievers, and bringing scores to the knowledge of the truth, than to be devoting their precious time and talents to taking care of them.

Missionaries are wanted throughout the great harvest field, self-sacrificing, and who will do as their Master has given them an example in his life.

Ministers to whom is intrusted the most sacred message of warning ever given to the world, have confined their labors too much to looking after the few who have embraced the truth, when their principal labor should have been for those who have not heard the message. There are those who think it is their duty to preach the truth, but they dare not venture from the shore, and they catch no fish. They will choose to go among the churches, over and over the same ground. They report a good time, a pleasant visit, but we look in vain for the souls that are converted to the truth through their instrumentality. These ministers hug the shore too closely. Let them launch out into the deep, and cast their net where the fish are. There is no lack of work to be done. There could be hundreds employed in the vineyard of the Lord where there is now one.

God never does what man can do. We have individually, as servants of Jesus Christ, a work to do in unison with Christ, in saving our fellow-men from perdition. While we do with heart and might what we can in the use of means, God alone can make our efforts effectual. He can clothe the humblest

and weakest with wonderful power, and manifest his excellence in our sincere human efforts.

If, after souls have embraced the truth, and have had years of experience, they have not strength to stand alone in the truth with the help God has promised them, and if they are incapable of helping others to the light, they are like the barren fig tree which Jesus cursed. Because, although apparently flourishing, he found upon the tree neither blossoms nor fruit, nothing but leaves.

There are in our churches those who profess the truth who are only hindrances to the work of reform. They are clogs to the wheels of the car of salvation. This class are frequently in trial. Doubts, jealousies, and suspicion, are the fruits of selfishness, and seem to be interwoven with their very natures. I shall name this class chronic church-grumblers. They do more harm in a church than two ministers can undo. They are a tax to the church and a great weight to the ministers of Christ. They live in an atmosphere of doubts, jealousies, and surmisings. Much time and labor of the ambassadors of Christ are required to undo their work of evil, and restore harmony and union in the church. This takes from the courage and strength of God's servants and unfits them for the work he has for them to do in saving perishing souls from ruin. God will reward these troublers of Zion according to their works. The ministers of Christ should take their position, and not be hindered in their work by these agents of Satan. There will be enough of these to question, and quibble, and criticise, to keep the ministers of God constantly busy, if they will allow themselves to be detained from the great work of giving the last saving message of warning to the world. If the church has no strength to stand against the unsanctified, rebellious feelings of church-grumblers, it is better to let church and grumblers go overboard together than lose the opportunity of saving hundreds who would make better churches, and have the elements existing within themselves of strength and union and power.

The very best way for ministers and churches is to let this fault-finding, crooked class fall back into their own element and pull away from the shore, launch out into the deep, and cast out the gospel net again for fish that may pay for the labor bestowed upon them. Satan exults when men and women embrace the truth who are naturally fault-finding and who will throw all the darkness and hindrance they can against the advancement of the work of God. Ministers cannot now in this important period of the work be detained to prop up men and women who see and have once felt the force of the truth. They should fasten believing Christians on Christ, who is able to hold them up and preserve them blameless unto his appearing, while they go forth to new fields of labor.

I entreat you, my brethren and sisters, to be self-reliant in the strength of Jesus. Do not hang the weight of your perplexities and burdens upon your ministers. Christ has invited you to come to him, your burden-bearer. If you pass along in a state of unbelief and lack of consecration to God, you hang your weight upon the heart of your ministers, and you take just so much time and strength from them which God requires them to use in giving the message to those who have not heard it. Brethren, will you not rather work yourselves in union with the ambassadors of Christ in seeking to win souls to the truth? When tempted to become unbelieving and discouraged, you will find the very best cure for this in talking faith to others, and in presenting the truth to those who are in darkness. Extend your efforts to your neighbors, and to those who have not the privileges of meetings. Sow the seeds of truth beside all waters, and encourage the hearts of the servants of God when they visit you by showing that you have not been idle, but through your instrumentality one or more have been brought from darkness to light. You can keep above despondency and doubt by making it your practice to daily pray for the blessing of God to rest upon the men who are presenting the solemn message of warning to the world. Let your prayers follow the servants of God like sharp sickles in the harvest field. God will hear the

earnest entreaties of his people. The prayer of faith will move the arm of God.

A great work is before us. We need the help of every one. The cause will need not only money but earnest workers. We believe that the time has fully come when the work should be enlarged and extended on the Pacific coast. The men who work for God in faith, willing to endure, and suffer toil, privation, and reproach, will be the very men whom God will accept, and make powerful to do his great work. We shall not be stinted for means if we will only work, trusting and believing in God.

Missionaries are wanted to carry the message of warning to other lands. God will accept of men who have devoted hearts, whom he can teach, and impress, and polish, by his own divine hand. God will require personal service at the hands of every one to whom he entrusts his truth. Not one is excused. Some may feel that if they give their substance they are excused from personal efforts. But God forbid that they should deceive themselves in this. Gifts of means do not meet the requirement of God, for the duty is but half done. He will accept nothing short of yourselves. You must work to save souls. All will not be called to go to foreign missions, but you may be missionaries at home in your own families and in your neighborhoods. There is work for you to do for God that you do not see and do not feel, because you have not wanted to see, and know, and do, because your worldly interests and your arrangements in business would be interrupted.

Christ called fishermen from their nets to do his work, and they left them and followed him. He called Matthew, a publican, from his business to follow him, and he obeyed the invitation joyfully. He may call men from their farms, from their merchandise, and from their various trades, and send them forth to warn the world.

With the love of Christ in the heart, Christians will work. All who have

made a profession of Christ have virtually pledged themselves to preach the gospel of salvation to sinners. Some may never be required to stand in the pulpit; but there are many ways to preach Christ. By deeds, by a godly, consistent life, and by letting our light shine forth to others, we may preach Christ. In acts of self-denial for others' good, and showing a love for precious souls that is paramount to love for riches or earthly enjoyment, we may preach Christ.

In doing the works of Christ, the Christian worker will become strong in spiritual strength. God is a present help in every time of need. Those who work for the salvation of souls feel their inefficiency and lack of heavenly wisdom, and in their emergency they flee to their tower of strength, and God meets their necessities, and they are obtaining a valuable experience. They are gaining spiritual strength, and growing in the knowledge of the truth. They are not spiritual dwarfs, or bodies of death; but are shining lights, gathering daily strength from God, and conferring blessings upon others.

September 18, 1879

Christian Temperance

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6, 19, 20.

We are not our own. We do not belong to ourselves. But we have been purchased with a dear price. We have cost an immense sum, even the suffering and death of the Son of God. If we can understand this, and fully realize it, then shall we feel great responsibility resting upon us to keep ourselves in the very best condition of health, that we may render to God perfect service.

But when we take any course which decreases our strength, expends our vitality, beclouds the intellect, and destroys the powers of the mind, we sin against God. In pursuing this course we are not glorifying him in our bodies and spirits which are his; but are committing a great wrong in his sight.

Has Jesus given himself for us? Has this dear price been paid to redeem us? And is it so, that we are not our own? Is it true that all the powers of our being our bodies, our spirits, all that we have, and all we are, belong to God? Is this so? It certainly is. And when we realize this, what obligation does it lay us under to God to preserve ourselves in that condition that we may honor him upon the earth in our bodies and in our spirits which are the Lord's.

We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us. It is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for

years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are preparing for the Judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who is to appear in the clouds of heaven with the holy retinue of angels, to escort Him on his way, to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When he comes he is not to cleanse us of our sins. He is not then to remove from us the defects in our characters. He will not then cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. He will not do this work then. Before that time this work will all be accomplished, if wrought for us at all. Then those who are holy will be holy still. They are not to be made holy when the Lord comes. Those who have preserved their bodies, and their spirits, in holiness, and in sanctification, and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. And when he comes, those who are unjust, and unsanctified, and filthy, will remain so forever. There is then no work to be done for them which shall remove their defects, and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue his refining process, and remove their sins, and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.

We embrace the truth of God with our different organizations, and as we come under the influence of truth, it will accomplish the work for us which is necessary to be accomplished, and give us a moral fitness for the kingdom of glory, and for the society of the heavenly angels. We are now in God's workshop. We are, many of us rough stone from the quarry. As we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence must affect us. It must elevate us. It must remove from us every imperfection. It must remove from us sins of whatever nature. And it must fit us, that we may be prepared to see the king in his beauty, and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. This work is to be accomplished for us here. Here we are, with these bodies and spirits, which are to be fitted for immortality.

We are in a world that is in opposition to righteousness, holiness, a growth in grace, and to purity of character. Everywhere we look we see

deformity and sin. We see corruption. We see defilement on every hand. And what is the work that we are to undertake here just previous to immortality? It is to preserve our bodies holy, our spirits pure, that we may stand forth unstained amid the corruptions teeming around us in these last days. And if this work is to be performed for us, we need to engage in it heartily, and engage in it at once. We want to take hold of the work now. We want to understand it just as it is. Selfishness should not come in here to control us. We want the Spirit of God to have perfect control of us. It should influence us in all our actions. And if we have a right hold on Heaven, a right hold of the power that is from above, we shall feel the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God upon our hearts.

When we have tried to present to the people the health reform, and have spoken of the importance of their eating, and drinking, and in all that they do, to do it to the glory of God, many, by their actions, have said, "It is nobody's business whether I eat this or that. Whatever we do we are to bear the consequences ourselves." Dear friends, you are greatly mistaken. You are not the only sufferers from a wrong course. The society you are in bears the consequences of your wrongs, in a great degree, as well as yourselves. If you are suffering from your intemperance in eating or in drinking, we that are around you, or associated with you, are affected by your infirmities. We have to suffer on account of the course you pursue, which is wrong. If it has an influence to lessen your powers of mind or body, we are affected by it. We have to feel it. When in your society, instead of your having a buoyancy of spirit, you are gloomy, and cast a shadow upon the spirits of all around you. If we are sad, and depressed, and in trouble, you could, if in right conditions of health, have a clear brain to show us the way out, and speak a comforting word to us. If your brain is so benumbed by your wrong course of living that you cannot give us the right counsel, do we not meet with a loss? Does not your influence seriously affect us? We may have a good degree of confidence in our own judgment, yet we want to have counsellors; for in many counsellors there is safety. We desire that our course should look

consistent and proper to those we love, and we wish to seek their counsel, and have them able to give it with a clear brain. But what care we for your judgment, if your brain nerve power has been taxed to the utmost to take care of improper food, or an enormous quantity of even healthful food' placed in your stomachs, and the vitality withdrawn from the brain? What care we for the judgment of such persons? They see through a mass of undigested food. Therefore your course of living affects us. It is impossible for you to pursue any wrong course without others suffering beside yourself.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In running the race, in order to obtain that laurel which was considered a special honor, those who engaged in running were temperate in all things. They were temperate, that their muscles, and their brains, and every part of them, should be in the very best condition to run. If they were not temperate, they would not have that elasticity that they would have if they were temperate in all things. If temperate, they could run that race successfully. They were more sure of receiving the crown. But notwithstanding all their efforts in the direction of temperance, and to subject themselves to a careful diet, in order to be in the best condition, yet they only ran at a venture. They might do the very best they could, and yet after all not receive the token of honor; for another might be a little in advance of them, and take the prize. One only received the prize. But we can all run in the heavenly race, and all receive the prize. It is not an uncertainty. It is not to run at a risk. We must put on the heavenly graces, with the eye directed upward to the crown of immortality, keeping the Pattern ever before us. He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The self-denying life of our divine Lord we are to keep constantly in view. His life of poverty,

humbleness, and self-denial, we must not forget. And then as we seek to imitate him, keeping our eye upon the mark of the prize, we can run this race with certainty, knowing that if we do the very best we can we shall certainly secure the prize. Men ran to obtain a corruptible crown, one that would perish in a day. All this self-denial practiced by those who ran these races was to obtain a corruptible crown, which was only a token of honor from mortals here.

But we are to run the race, at the end of which is a crown of immortality and everlasting life. Yes, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory will be awarded to us as the prize when the race is run. "We," says the apostle, "an incorruptible." And if they could be temperate in all things, who engaged in this race here upon earth for a temporal crown, cannot we be temperate in all things, who have in view an incorruptible crown, an eternal weight of glory, and a life which measures with the life of God? When we have this great inducement before us, cannot we run, with patience, this race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith? He has pointed out the way for us. He has marked it for us by his own footsteps all the way along. It is the path that he traveled. You may, with Christ, experience the self-denial, and the suffering, and walk in this pathway imprinted by his own blood.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." There is work to do here, for every man, woman, and child. Satan is constantly at work, that he may have control of your bodies and spirits. But Christ has bought you, and you are his property. And now it is for you to work in union with Christ, in union with the holy angels that minister unto you. It is for you to keep the body under, and bring it into subjection. Unless you do this, you will certainly lose everlasting life, and the crown of immortality.

And yet some will say, "What business is it to anybody what I eat? or

what I drink?" I have shown you what relation your course has to others. You have seen that it has much to do with the influence you exert in your families. It has to do with your manner of acting. It has much to do with moulding the characters of your children.

As I said before, it is a corrupted age in which we live. It is a time when Satan seems to have almost complete control of minds that are not fully consecrated to God. Therefore there is a very great responsibility resting upon parents and guardians who have children to bring up. Parents have taken the responsibility of bringing these children into existence. And what now is their duty? Is it to let them come up just as they may? and just as they will? Let me tell you, a weight of responsibility rests upon these parents. Whether you eat, or whether you drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Do you do this when you are preparing food for the table, and when you place it upon your tables, and call your family to partake of it? Are you placing only the food before these children that you know will make the very best blood? Is it that food that will preserve their systems in the least feverish condition? Is it that which will place them in the very best relation to life and health? Is this the food that you are studying to place before your children? Or are you careless and reckless of their future good? and provide for them unhealthful, stimulating, irritating food? Let me tell you that the children from their very birth are born to evil. Satan seems to have control of them. He seems to take possession of their young minds, and they are corrupted. Why do fathers and mothers act as though a lethargy was upon them? They do not mistrust that Satan is sowing evil seed in their families. They are as blind, and careless, and reckless, in regard to these things as it is possible for them to be. Why do they not awake, and study these things? Why are they not reading up? Says the apostle, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience," etc. Here is work resting upon every one who professes to follow Jesus Christ. From Report of an Address.

October 9, 1879

The Offering of Love

Jesus stopped at the house of Lazarus in Bethany. He was on his way from Jericho to attend the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, and chose this retreat for rest and refreshment. Crowds of people passed on to the city, bearing the tidings that Jesus was on his way to the feast, and that he would rest over the Sabbath at Bethany. This information was received with great enthusiasm by the people; for the news had spread everywhere of the wonderful works wrought by Jesus, the last and most astonishing of which was the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Many flocked to Bethany, some from curiosity to see one who had been raised from the dead, and others because their hearts were in sympathy with Jesus, and they longed to look upon his face and hear his blessed words.

They returned with reports that increased the excitement of the multitude. All were anxious to see and hear Jesus, whose fame as a prophet had spread over all the land. There was a general buzz of inquiry as to who the wonderful Teacher was, from whence he had come, if Lazarus who had been raised from the dead would accompany him to Jerusalem, and if it was likely that the great prophet would be crowned king at the feast. The attention of the people was entirely engrossed in the subject of Jesus and his wondrous works. The priests and rulers saw that they were losing their hold upon the minds of the people, and their rage against Jesus was increased; they could hardly wait for him to come and give them the desired opportunity of gratifying their revenge and removing him forever from their way. As the time passed, they became excited and restless, fearing that after all Jesus might not come to Jerusalem. They were fearful that he had read their purposes against him, and would therefore remain away. They remembered how often he had divined their thoughts, exposed their hidden

motives, and baffled their murderous designs. They could illy conceal their anxiety, and questioned among themselves, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"

A hasty council of the priests and Pharisees was called to determine how to proceed with regard to Jesus, in view of the excitement and enthusiasm of the people on his account. They decided that it would be dangerous to seize upon him openly on any pretext, for since the raising of Lazarus the sympathies of the people were greatly in favor of Jesus. So they determined to use craft and take him secretly, avoiding all uproar or interference, carry on the mockery of a trial as quietly as possible, and trust to the fickle tide of public opinion to set in their favor when it was known that Jesus was condemned to death.

But another consideration came up: If they should execute Jesus, and Lazarus should remain as a witness of his miraculous power to raise from the dead, the very fact that a man existed who had been four days in the grave, and whose body had begun to decay, yet had been called to life and health by a word from Jesus, would sooner or later create a reaction and bring disaster upon themselves for sacrificing the life of Him who could perform such a miracle for the benefit of humanity. They therefore decided that Lazarus must also die. They felt that if the people were to lose confidence in their rulers, the national power would be destroyed.

To such lengths do envy and bitter prejudice lead their slaves. In rejecting Christ, the Pharisees placed themselves where darkness and superstition closed around them, until, continually increasing in hatred and unbelief, they were ready to imbrue their hands in blood to accomplish their unholy ends, and would even take the life of one whom Infinite power had rescued from the grave. They placed themselves where no power, human or divine, could reach them; they sinned against the Holy Spirit, and God had no reserve power to meet their case. Their rebellion against Christ was

settled and determined; he was a stumbling-block and a rock of offense to them; they would not have this man Jesus to reign over them. While all this plotting was going on at Jerusalem, Jesus was quietly resting from his labors at the house of Lazarus. Simon of Bethany, whom Jesus had healed of leprosy, wishing to show his Master special honor, made a supper and invited him and his friends as guests. The Saviour sat at the table, with Simon, whom he had cured of a loathsome disease, on one side, and Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, on the other. Martha served at the table, but Mary was earnestly listening to every word that fell from the lips of Jesus. She saw that he was sad; she knew that immediately after raising her brother from the dead, he was obliged to seclude himself in order to escape the persecution of the leading Jews. As she looked upon her brother in the strength of perfect health, her heart went out in gratitude to Jesus who had restored him to her from the grave.

Jesus in his mercy had pardoned the sins of Mary, which had been many and grievous, and her heart was full of love for her Saviour. She had often heard him speak of his approaching death, and she was grieved that he should meet so cruel a fate. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of precious ointment with which to anoint the body of Jesus at his death. But she now heard many express an opinion that he would be elevated to kingly authority when he went to Jerusalem, and she was only too ready to believe that it would be so. She rejoiced that her Saviour would no longer be despised and rejected, and obliged to flee for his life. In her love and gratitude she wished to be the first to do him honor, and, seeking to avoid observation, anointed his head and feet with the precious ointment, and then wiped his feet with her long, flowing hair.

Her movements had been unobserved by the others, but the odor filled the house with its fragrance and published her act to all present. Some of the disciples manifested displeasure at this act, and Judas boldly expressed his disapprobation at such a wasteful extravagance. Simon the host, who was a

Pharisee, was influenced by the words of Judas, and his heart filled with unbelief. He also thought that Jesus should hold no communication with Mary because of her past life. Judas, the prime instigator of this disaffection among those who sat at the table, was a stranger to the deep devotion and homage which actuated Mary to her deed of love. He had been appointed treasurer of the united funds of the disciples, and had dishonestly appropriated to himself means which were designed for the service of God.

He had indulged a spirit of avarice until it had overpowered every good trait in his character. This act of Mary was in such marked contrast with his selfishness that he was ashamed of his avarice, and sought to attribute his objection to her gift, to a worthier motive. Turning to the disciples he asked, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Thus he sought to hide his covetousness under apparent sympathy for the poor, when, in reality, he cared nothing for them.

He longed to have the avails of the expensive ointment in his own hands to apply to his own selfish purposes. By his professed sympathy for the poor he deceived his fellow disciples, and by his artful insinuations caused them to look distrustfully upon the devotion of Mary. Whispered hints of prodigality passed round the table: "To what purpose is this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." Mary was abashed as the eyes of the disciples were bent sternly and reproachfully upon her. She felt that her deed of devotion must have been wrong, and tremblingly expected Jesus to condemn it also.

But the Saviour had observed all that had transpired, and knew the motives of all who were there assembled. He read the object of Mary in her costly offering. Though she had been very sinful, her repentance was sincere, and Jesus, while reproving her guilt, had pitied her weakness and forgiven her. Mary's heart was filled with gratitude at the compassion of Jesus. Seven times she had heard his stern rebuke to the demons which then controlled her

heart and mind, and she had listened to his strong cries to his Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive everything impure was to the unsullied mind of Christ, and she overcame her sin in the strength of her Saviour. She was transformed, a partaker of the divine nature.

Mary had offered her gift in the grateful homage of her heart, and Jesus explained her motive and vindicated her deed. "Let her alone," he said. "Why," he asked, "trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me." He justified her work to all present as evincing her gratitude to him for lifting her from a life of shame to one of purity, and teaching her to believe in him. Said he, "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." The ointment so sacredly kept to anoint the dead body of her Lord she had poured upon his head in the belief that he was about to be lifted to a throne in Jerusalem. Jesus might have pointed out Judas to the disciples as the cause of such severe judgment being passed on Mary. He might have revealed to them the hypocrisy of his character; he might have made known his utter want of feeling for the poor, and his embezzlement of money appropriated to their relief. He could have raised their indignation against him for his oppression of the widow, the orphan, and the hireling; but he refrained from exposing the true character of Judas. He reproached him not, and thus avoided giving him an excuse for his future perfidy.

But he rebuked the disciples, saying, "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could. She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Jesus, looking into the future, spoke with certainty concerning his gospel: That it was to be preached throughout the whole world. Kingdoms would rise and fall; the names of monarchs and conquerors would be forgotten; but the memory of this woman's deed would be immortalized upon the pages of sacred history.

Had the disciples rightly appreciated the exalted character of their Master, they would have considered no sacrifice too costly to offer to the Son of God. The wise men of the East understood more definitely his true position, and the honor due him, than his own followers, who had received his instruction and beheld his mighty miracles. They brought precious gifts to the Saviour, and bent in homage before him, while he was but a babe, and cradled in a manger.

The look which Jesus cast upon the selfish Judas convinced him that the Master penetrated his hypocrisy and read his base, contemptible character. He was stirred with resentment. His heart burned with envy that Jesus should be the recipient of an offering suitable to the monarchs of earth. He went directly from that supper to the chief priests, and agreed to betray him into their hands. The priests were greatly rejoiced at this, and "they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

In the case of Judas we see the fearful result of covetousness and unholy anger. He begrudged the offering made to Jesus, and although not personally rebuked, he was irritated to combine revenge with his avarice, and sell his Lord for a few pieces of silver. Mary showed how highly she prized the Saviour when she accounted the most precious gift none too costly for him; but Judas valued Jesus at the price for which he sold him; his niggardly soul balanced the life of the Son of God against a paltry sum of money. The same cold, calculating spirit is manifested by many who profess Christ today. Their offerings to his cause are grudgingly bestowed or withheld altogether under various plausible excuses. A pretense of wide philanthropy, unlimited by church or creed, is not unfrequently one of them, and they plead, like Judas, It is better to give it to the poor. But the true Christian shows his faith by investing in the cause of truth; he is known by his works, for "faith without works is dead."

Jesus read Simon's heart, and knew how he had been influenced by the insinuations of Judas, and that he had questioned in his mind, saying, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." When Judas had left the house, Jesus turned to his host and said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Simon replied, "Master, say on." Then Jesus proceeded to speak a parable, which illustrated the contrast between the gratitude of his host, who had been healed of the leprosy, and that of Mary, whose sins had been pardoned. Said he, "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?"

Simon did not discern the application which Jesus designed to make, but he answered him, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Jesus replied, "Thou hast rightly judged." This answer condemned Simon. He had been a great sinner, and also a loathsome leper, avoided by all. He had come to Jesus piteously imploring his help, and He who never turned a deaf ear to human woe, had cleansed him from sin and from the terrible disease that was upon him. Simon was humbled, but he had been a proud Pharisee, and he did not look upon himself as being so great a sinner as he really was, and he had now become self-sufficient and lifted up in his own estimation. He had exalted himself as far superior to the poor woman who anointed the feet of her Lord. In entertaining Jesus at his house, he thought he was paying him marked respect; but the Saviour was lowered in his estimation when he permitted the devotion of Mary, who had been so great a sinner. He overlooked the miracle which Jesus had wrought upon him in saving him from a living death, and coldly reasoned with himself if Jesus could be the Messiah, and yet stoop to receive the gift of this woman. He thought that if he were the Christ, he would know that a sinner had approached him and repel her. He did not realize that he himself had been a greater sinner than

she, and that Christ had forgiven him as well as Mary. He was ready to doubt the divine character of his Master because he imagined that he detected in him a want of discernment.

On the other hand, Mary was thoroughly penitent and humbled because of her sins. In her gratitude for his pardoning mercy she was ready to sacrifice all for Jesus, and no doubt as to his divine power troubled her mind for a moment. It was not the comparative degrees of obligation which should be felt by the two persons, which Jesus designed to illustrate by this parable, for both were unable to cancel their debt of gratitude; but he took Simon on his own ground, as feeling himself more righteous than the woman, and showed him that though the sins which had been forgiven him were great, he had not repaid his Benefactor with that respect and love which casts out all unbelief. His sense of obligation to his Saviour was small, while Mary, prizing the gift of mercy bestowed upon her, was filled with gratitude and love.

Jesus drew the contrast sharply between the two. Said he: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

The proud Pharisee had considered that he had sufficiently honored Jesus by inviting him to his house; and in his self consequence had neglected to show him the proper regard due to so exalted a guest, and to one who had wrought upon him a miracle of mercy. Jesus encouraged acts of heart felt courtesy, and the woman, whose gratitude and love was expressed in her act of attention, was highly commended by the Saviour: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Simon's eyes were opened to his neglect and unbelief. He was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before all the guests. He perceived that Jesus did not wish to exhibit his guilt and his want of gratitude to others, but desired to convince his mind by a true statement of his case, and to subdue his heart by pitying kindness. Stern denunciation would have closed the heart of Simon against repentance; but patient admonition convinced him of his error and won his heart. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord, and became a humble, self-sacrificing man.

When we realize the full debt of obligation to our Saviour, we are united to him by closer bonds, and our love will be expressed in all our acts. Jesus will remember every good work done by his children. The self-sacrificing and benevolent will live in his memory and be rewarded. No act of devotion to his cause will be forgotten by him. There is no sacrifice too costly to be offered on the altar of our faith.

October 16, 1879

Love and Power of Jesus

The mission of Christ brought him to Capernaum. When the news spread abroad that Jesus was a guest at the house of Peter, men, women, and children flocked from every direction to hear the wonderful Teacher. There was a man in the vicinity who was reduced to utter helplessness by the incurable disease of palsy. He had given up all hope of recovery. But his friends and relatives had heard the gracious instruction of Jesus; they had witnessed his wonderful miracles; they saw that he turned none away, that even the loathsome lepers found access to his presence, and were healed, and they began to hope that the paralytic might be relieved if he could be brought under the notice of Jesus.

They tried to encourage the sufferer, telling him of the miraculous power of Jesus to cure every malady, of the words of mercy he had spoken to the despairing, and of those who are set free from the power of Satan by a word of his sublime authority. As the palsied man listened to the good tidings, hope revived in his heart that he might be relieved of his terrible infirmity. He longed to see Jesus and place himself in his hands. But when he reflected that dissipation had been the main cause of his affliction, hope sank, for he feared that he would not be tolerated in the presence of the pure Physician. He had loved the pleasures of sin, his life had been a transgression of the law of God, and his bodily affliction was the penalty of his crime.

He had long before placed his case in the hands of the Pharisees and doctors, entreating their interest and sympathy, hoping that they would do something to relieve his tortured mind and physical sufferings. But they had looked coldly upon him and pronounced him incurable. They had added to his woe by telling him that he was only suffering the righteous retribution of

God for his misdemeanors. It was the custom of the Pharisees to hold themselves aloof from the sick and needy. They held that sickness and distress were always an evidence of God's anger toward the transgressor. Yet frequently these very men, who exalted themselves as holy and enjoying the peculiar favor of God, were more corrupt in heart and life than the poor sufferers whom they condemned.

The palsied man had sunk into despair, seeing no help from any quarter, till news of the miracles of mercy performed by Jesus had aroused hope again in his breast. Yet he feared that he might not be allowed in his presence; he felt that if Jesus would only see him and give him relief of mind by pardoning his sins, he would be content to live or die according to his righteous will. His friends assured him that Jesus had healed others who were in every respect as sinful and helpless as himself, and this encouraged him to believe that his own petition would be granted.

He felt that there was no time to lose; already his wasted flesh was beginning to decay. If anything could be done to arrest mortality, it must be done at once. The despairing cry of the dying man was, Oh that I might come into his presence! His friends were anxious to assist him in gratifying his wish, and several projects were suggested to bring about this result, but none of them seemed feasible. The sick man, although racked with bodily pain, preserved the full strength of his intellect, and he now proposed that his friends should carry him on his bed to Jesus. This they cheerfully undertook to do.

As they approached the dense crowd that had assembled in and about the house where Jesus was teaching, it seemed doubtful that they could accomplish their purpose. However, they pressed on with their burden, till their passage was completely blocked up and they were obliged to stop before they arrived within hearing of the Saviour's voice. Jesus was within, and, as was customary, his disciples sat near him; for it was most important

that they should hear his words, and understand the truths which they were to proclaim by word or pen over all lands and through all ages.

The haughty Pharisees, the doctors and the scribes, were also gathered near with wicked purposes in their hearts, and a desire to confuse and confound the sacred Teacher, that they might accuse him of being an impostor, and condemn him to death. Jealous of his power and wisdom, they concealed their intense hatred, for the purpose of closely watching his words, and calling him out upon various subjects with the hope of surprising him into some contradiction or forbidden heresy that would give them an excuse to prefer charges against him. They were present when Jesus healed the withered hand upon the Sabbath day, and these men, who claimed to enjoy the special favor of God, were filled with madness because he had presumed to do this good work upon the Lord's day.

Outside of these magnates thronged the promiscuous multitude, drawn there from various motives. Some felt an irresistible impulse to hear the words of Jesus, yet dimly comprehended their import. They were eager to catch every syllable of the sacred utterances; and, in many cases, seeds of life lodged in their hearts, to spring up afterward and bear blessed fruit. Others came from wonder and curiosity, or a love of excitement,--the desire to see and hear some new thing. All grades of society were represented there, and many different nationalities.

Through this surging crowd, the bearers of the paralytic seek to push their way; but the attempt is useless. They urge the necessity of their case, in order to prevail upon the people to fall back, but it is of no avail. The sufferings of the invalid are increased by his anxiety, and his friends fear that he will die in this scene of confusion. The sick man gazes about him with inexpressible anguish. Must he relinquish all hope when the longed-for help is no near? He feels that he cannot endure so bitter a disappointment. He suggests that they bear him to the rear of the house, and break through the

roof and let him down into the immediate presence of Jesus.

Seeing that it is his only chance of life, and fearing that he cannot live to be taken home, his friends follow his suggestion. The roof is opened, and the sick man is let down at the very feet of Christ. The discourse is interrupted; the Saviour looks upon that mournful countenance, and sees the pleading eyes fixed upon him with a silent entreaty. He understands the case, for it was he who had led the perplexed and doubting spirit to himself. He had come to the world to give hope to the guilty and wretched. John had pointed to him as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." The divine spirit of Jesus stirred the heart of this poor sinner, and while he was yet at home, had brought conviction to his conscience. He had watched the first glimmer of faith deepen into a belief that Jesus was his only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into his presence.

The sufferer had wealth, but it could not relieve his soul of guilt, nor remove disease from his body. But divine power attracted him to the Friend of sinners, who alone could relieve him. Jesus acknowledges the faith that is evidenced by the sick man's efforts, under such perplexing difficulties, to reach the presence of his Lord, and lifting up his voice in melodious tones, addressed him: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." The burden of darkness and despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of perfect love and forgiveness rests upon his spirit and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed before the eyes of the astonished multitude. The helpless paralytic is healed, the guilty sinner is pardoned! He has now received the evidence he so much desired. Yet not here, but at home, when he had repented of his sins and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, had the life-giving mercies of the Saviour first blessed his longing heart.

The simple faith of the paralytic accepted the words of the Master, as the boon of new life. He preferred no further request, he made no noisy

demonstration, but remained in blissful silence too happy for words. The light of Heaven irradiated his countenance, and the people looked with awe upon the scene before them. Christ stood with a serene majesty that lifted him above the dignitaries of the synagogue and the doctors of the law. The Pharisees, the scribes, and the doctors had waited anxiously to see what disposition Jesus would make of this case. They recollected that the sufferer had appealed to them for help, and that they had entrenched themselves in the sanctity of their office and refused him one ray of encouragement. They had even expressed annoyance at being troubled with so disagreeable a matter. They had looked with horror upon his shriveled form, and said, We cannot raise one from the dead; dissolution has already commenced.

Not satisfied with the agony thus inflicted, they had declared that he was suffering the curse of God for his sins. All these things came fresh to their minds when they saw the sick man before them. They also perceived that the people, most of whom were acquainted with these facts, were watching the scene with intense interest and awe. They felt a terrible fear that their own influence would be lost, not only over the multitude present, but also over all who should hear the news of this marvelous event.

These lofty men did not exchange words together, but looking into one another's faces, they read the same thought expressed upon every countenance: Something must be done to arrest the tide of popular sentiment. Jesus had declared that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven. The Pharisees caught at these words as an assumption of infinite power, a blasphemy against God, and conceived that they could present this before the people as a crime worthy of death. They did not express their thoughts, but these worshipers of forms and symbols were saying in their minds, He is a blasphemer! Who can forgive sins but God alone? They were laying hold of the Saviour's words of divine pardon, to use a means by which to accuse him. But Jesus read their thoughts, and, fixing his reproofing glance upon them, beneath which they cowered and drew back, addressed them thus: "Why

reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

Then he who had been borne to Jesus on a litter, and whose limbs were then useless, rises to his feet with the elasticity and strength of youth. The life-giving blood bounds through his veins, seeking its natural channels with unerring precision. The lagging human machinery springs into sudden activity, the animating glow of health succeeds the pallor of approaching death. "And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

Oh! wondrous love of Christ, stooping to heal the guilty and the afflicted! Divinity sorrowing over and soothing the ills of suffering humanity! Oh! marvelous power thus displayed to the children of men! Who can doubt the message of salvation! Who can slight the mercies of a compassionate Redeemer!

The effect of this wonderful miracle upon the people was as if Heaven had opened and revealed the glories of the better world. As the man who had been cured of palsy passed through the crowd, blessing God at every bounding step, and bearing his burden as if it were a feather's weight, the people fell back to give him room, and with awe-struck faces gazed upon him, and whispered softly among themselves, saying, "We have seen strange things today." The Pharisees were dumb with amazement, and overwhelmed with defeat. They saw that here was no opportunity for their prejudice and jealousy to inflame the multitude. The wonderful work wrought upon the man whom they, in their arrogance, had given over to death and the wrath of God, had so impressed the minds of the people that the influence of these

leading Jews was, for the time, forgotten. They saw that Christ possessed a power, and claimed it as his own prerogative, which they thought belonged to God alone. The gentle dignity of his manner, united with his miraculous works, was in such marked contrast with their own proud and self-righteous bearing that they were disconcerted and abashed, recognizing, but not confessing, the presence of a Superior Being.

Had the scribes and Pharisees been honest before God, they would have yielded to the conclusive evidence they had witnessed that Jesus was the Promised One of Israel. But they were determined that nothing should convince them of this fact. They were in haughty and determined opposition to this meek and humble Teacher, who came from the workshops of Nazareth, yet by his wonderful works threatened to annihilate their dignity and station. So they yielded in no degree their hatred and malice, but went away to invent new schemes for condemning and silencing the Son of God.

These men had received many and repeated proofs that Jesus was the promised Saviour, but none had been so convincing and unquestioned as this miracle of mercy. Yet the stronger the evidence that was presented to their minds that Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, as well as to heal the sick, the more they armed themselves with hatred and unbelief, till God left them to the forging of chains that would bind them in hopeless darkness. There was no reserve power to reach hearts so hardened with malice and skepticism.

Many in these days are taking the same course as the unbelieving Jews. God has given them light which they refuse to accept. His Spirit has rebuked them; but they have made his reproofs a stumbling-block in their way, over which they trip and fall. They have rejected his offered mercies, they have scorned to believe his truth, till they are left unrestrained to pursue their downward course.

There was great rejoicing in the home of the healed paralytic, when he came into the midst of his family, carrying with ease the couch upon which he had been slowly borne from their presence but a short time before. They gathered round with tears of joy, scarcely daring to believe their eyes. He stood before them in the full vigor of manhood. Those arms that they had seen lifeless were quick to obey his will; the flesh that had been shrunken and leaden-hued was now fresh and ruddy with health; he walked with a firm, free step; hope was written in every lineament of his countenance; all gloom had disappeared, and an expression of peace and purity had taken the place of the marks of sin and suffering. Glad thanksgivings went up from that house, and God was glorified through his Son, who had restored hope to the hopeless, and strength to the stricken one. This man and his family were ready to lay down their lives for Jesus. No doubt could dim their faith, no unbelief could mar their perfect fealty to Christ, who had brought light into their darkened home.

October 23, 1879

Wisdom and Compassion of Jesus

While Jesus was engaged in teaching, the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman whom they accused of the sin of adultery, and said to him, Master, "now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

The scribes and Pharisees had agreed to bring this case before Jesus, thinking that whatever decision he made in regard to it, they would therein find occasion to accuse and condemn him. If he should acquit the woman, they would accuse him of despising the law of Moses, and condemn him on that account; and if he should declare that she was guilty of death, they would accuse him to the Romans as one who was stirring up sedition and assuming authority which alone belonged to them. But Jesus well knew for what purpose this case had been brought to him; he read the secrets of their hearts, and knew the character and life-history of every man in his presence. He seemed indifferent to the question of the Pharisees, and while they were talking and pressing about him, he stooped and wrote carelessly with his finger in the sand.

Although doing this without apparent design, Jesus was tracing on the ground, in legible characters, the particular sins of which the woman's accusers were guilty, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. At length the Pharisees became impatient at the indifference of Jesus, and his delay in deciding the question before him, and drew nearer, urging the matter. But as their eyes fell upon the words written in the sand, fear and surprise took possession of them. The people, looking on, saw their

countenances suddenly change, and pressed forward to discover what they were regarding with such an expression of astonishment and shame. Many of those who thus gathered round also read the record of hidden sin inscribed against these accusers of another.

Then Jesus "lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground." The accusers saw that Jesus not only knew the secrets of their past sins, but was acquainted with their purpose in bringing this case before him and had in his matchless wisdom defeated their deeply laid scheme. They now became fearful lest Jesus would expose their guilt to all present, and they therefore "being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

There was not one of her accusers but was more guilty than the conscience stricken woman who stood trembling with shame before him. After the Pharisees had hastily left the presence of Christ, in their guilty consternation, he arose and looked upon the woman, saying, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

Jesus did not palliate sin nor lessen the sense of crime; but he came not to condemn; he came to lead sinners to eternal life. The world looked upon this erring woman as one to be slighted and scorned; but the pure and holy Jesus stooped to address her with words of comfort, encouraging her to reform her life. Instead of to condemn the guilty, his work was to reach into the very depths of human woe and degradation, lift up the debased and sinful, and bid the trembling penitent to "sin no more." When the woman stood before Jesus, cowering under the accusation of the Pharisees and a sense of the enormity of her crime, she knew that her life was trembling in

the balance, and that a word from Jesus would add fuel to the indignation of the crowd, so that they would immediately stone her to death.

Her eyes droop before the calm and searching glance of Christ. Stricken with shame, she is unable to look upon that holy countenance. As she thus stands waiting for sentence to be passed upon her, the words fall upon her astonished ears that not only deliver her from her accusers, but send them away convicted of greater crimes than hers. After they are gone, she hears the mournfully solemn words: "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more." Her heart melts with penitential grief; and, with gratitude to her Deliverer, she bows at the feet of Jesus sobbing out in broken accents the emotions of her heart, and confessing her sins with bitter tears.

This was the beginning of a new life to this tempted, fallen soul, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In raising this woman to a life of virtue, Jesus performed a greater act than that of healing the most grievous bodily malady; he cured the sickness of the soul which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of the firmest friends of Jesus. She repaid his forgiveness and compassion, with a self-sacrificing love and worship. Afterward, when she stood sorrow-stricken at the foot of the cross, and saw the dying agony on the face of her Lord, and heard his bitter cry, her soul was pierced afresh; for she knew that this sacrifice was on account of sin; and her responsibility as one whose deep guilt had helped to bring about this anguish of the Son of God, seemed very heavy indeed. She felt that those pangs that pierced the Saviour's frame were for her; the blood that flowed from his wounds was to blot out her record of sin; the groans which escaped from his dying lips were caused by her transgression. Her heart ached with a sorrow past all expression, and she felt that a life of self-abnegating atonement would poorly compensate for the gift of life, purchased for her at such an infinite price.

In his act of pardoning, and encouraging this fallen woman to live a

better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of a perfect righteousness. Knowing not the taint of sin himself, he pities the weakness of the erring one, and reaches to her a helping hand. The self-righteous and hypocritical Pharisees denounce, and the tumultuous crowd is ready to stone and slay, and the trembling victim waits for death--Jesus, the Friend of sinners, bids her, "Go and sin no more."

It is not the true follower of Christ who turns from the erring with cold, averted eyes, leaving them unrestrained to pursue their downward course. Christian charity is slow to censure, quick to detect penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of virtue, and stay his feet therein.

The wisdom displayed by Jesus on this occasion, in defending himself against the designs of his enemies, and the evidence which he gave them that he knew the hidden secrets of their lives, the conviction that he pressed home upon the guilty consciences of the very men who were seeking to destroy him, were sufficient evidence of his divine character. Jesus also taught another important lesson in this scene: That those who are ever forward to accuse others, quick to detect them in wrong, and zealous that they should be brought to justice, are often guiltier in their own lives than those whom they accuse. Many who beheld the whole scene were led to compare the pardoning compassion of Jesus with the unrelenting spirit of the Pharisees, to whom mercy was a stranger; and they turned to the pitying Saviour as unto one who would lead the repentant sinner into peace and security.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jesus had represented himself, in his relation to fallen man, as a fountain of living water, to which all who thirst come and drink. The brilliant lights in the temple illuminated all Jerusalem, and he now used these lights to represent his relation to the world. In clear and thrilling tones he

declared: "I am the light of the world." As the radiant lamps of the temple lit up the whole city, so Christ, the source of spiritual light, illuminated the darkness of a world lying in sin. His manner was so impressive, and his words carried with them such a weight of truth, that many were there convicted that he was indeed the Son of God. But the Pharisees, ever ready to contradict him, accused him of egotism, saying, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." Jesus, answering their objections, asserted again his divine commission:

"Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I came and whither I go." They were ignorant of his divine character and mission because they had not searched the prophecies concerning the Messiah, as it was their privilege and duty to do. They had no connection with God and Heaven, and therefore did not comprehend the work of the Saviour of the world, and, though they had received the most convincing evidence that Jesus was the Saviour, yet they refused to open their minds to understand. At first they had set their hearts against him, and refused to believe the strongest proof of his divinity, and, as a consequence, their hearts had grown harder until they were determined not to believe nor accept him.

"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." Thus he declared that he was sent of God, to do his work. He had not consulted with priests nor rulers as to the course he was to pursue; for his commission was from the highest authority, even the Creator of the universe. Jesus, in his sacred office, had taught the people, had relieved suffering, had forgiven sin, and had cleansed the temple, which was his Father's house, and driven out its desecrators from its sacred portals; he had condemned the hypocritical lives of the Pharisees, and reproved their hidden sins; and in all this he had acted under the instruction of his Heavenly Father. For this reason they hated him and sought to kill him. Jesus declared to them: "Ye are from beneath; I am

from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

"When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me." "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." These words were spoken with thrilling power, and, for the time, closed the lips of the Pharisees, and caused many of those who listened with attentive minds to unite with Jesus, believing him to be the Son of God. To these believing ones he said, "If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But to the Pharisees who rejected him, and who hardened their hearts against him, he declared: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come."

But the Pharisees took up his words, addressed to those who believed, and commented upon them, saying, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free:" Jesus looked upon these men,--the slaves of unbelief and bitter malice, whose thoughts were bent upon revenge,--and answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." They were in the worst of bondage, ruled by the spirit of evil. Jesus declared to them that if they were the true children of Abraham, and lived in obedience to God, they would not seek to kill one who was speaking the truth that was given him of God. This was not doing the works of Abraham, whom they claimed as their father.

Jesus, with startling emphasis, denied that the Jews were following the example of Abraham. Said he, "Ye do the deeds of your father." The Pharisees, partly comprehending his meaning, said, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." But Jesus answered them: "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." The Pharisees had

turned from God, and refused to recognize his Son. If their minds had been open to the love of God, they would have acknowledged the Saviour who was sent to the world by him. Jesus boldly revealed their desperate condition:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." These words were spoken with sorrowful pathos, as Jesus realized the terrible condition into which these men had fallen. But his enemies heard him with uncontrollable anger; although his majestic bearing, and the mighty weight of the truths he uttered, held them powerless. Jesus continued to draw the sharp contrast between their position and that of Abraham, whose children they claimed to be:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." The Jews listened incredulously to this assertion, and said, sneeringly, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham:" Jesus, with a lofty dignity that sent a thrill of conviction through their guilty souls, answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." For a moment, silence fell upon all the people, as the grand and awful import of these words dawned upon their minds. But the Pharisees, speedily recovering from the influence of his words, and fearing their effect upon the people, commenced to create an uproar, railing at him as a blasphemer. "Then took they up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

October 23, 1879

Sanctification

The following is from a letter written by sister white, October 8:--Our camp-meeting at Rochester, Ind., is now ended. We came upon the ground in an exhausted condition, took cold from dampness gathered in the tent, which caused us to labor with great difficulty through the meeting. But this has been a good meeting, and very profitable for Indiana. I felt the burden of urging upon the people the necessity of obtaining an individual experience in the things of God, that their spiritual prosperity depended upon close and constant connection with him.

Many were so absorbed in the cares of this life, they were neglecting their higher interests. I felt the danger of this people and the Lord gave me a special testimony for them. Sabbath there was deep feeling in the meeting; quite a number came, forward for prayers, several who were making their first move on the Lords side. After prayer was offered for these, they repaired in small companies to several tents, and a minister was chosen for each tent where they were gathered, and the work was carried forward that had begun in the large tent. These meetings were characterized by deep feeling. Several stated that they came to the meeting prejudiced, but they were going home to keep the Sabbath and unite with this people.

The attendance on Sunday was good. The congregation seemed to be of the best class of society, and listened with attention.

Monday at five o'clock, by the call of the bell, we assembled under the tent. During the night I had been so burdened that I could not sleep, and spent these wakeful hours in pleading with God in my own behalf, and in behalf of the ministers of the Indiana Conference. I had the assurance that

God would reveal himself to us, and give us help in our time of need. The Lord strengthened me to bear the testimony he had given me, to the ministers in particular.

The false theory of sanctification had threatened not only the unity and harmony of families, but the peace and prosperity of the church. Upon this subject I had a special testimony to bear.

This false sanctification is most dangerous and deceptive in its influence upon all who accept it. A peculiar atmosphere surrounds them, an influence which, when brought in contact with others, if not discerned, is breathed in unconsciously by the receiver. This atmosphere is charged with poison which is death to spirituality. There are no snares of Satan more hard to be discerned and defined, and souls be rescued from, than this delusion.

Those who accept this bogus sanctification do not hesitate to draw away from the body and set themselves up as criteria. They claim that the Lord is leading them, and do not seek counsel of the church, but move out independently, deceived in themselves and deceiving others. The poison of this so-called sanctification is inhaled, and the atmosphere, apparently so balmy, is intoxicating and destructive to those who are charmed with it. Each individual will have an independence of his own, claiming to be taught of God; therefore no one must get in their way or interfere with their course of action. This is as Satan would have it. The voice of the church, God's delegated power upon earth, is set aside and despised. These professedly sanctified ones are filled with vain conceit, and with presumption move on in their own wisdom, exhorting others to come up to the exalted standard of themselves. They disregard the teachings and prayer of Christ that his disciples may be one as he was one with the Father, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The unity and oneness of the church was to be the living epistle, known and read of all men. The world was to see in their harmony and love for each other the life of Christ exemplified.

Individuals who will strike out upon some new light and some new truth, independent of the body, are pursuing a course directly contrary to the word of God. If they have any influence over others, it is to disaffect them and lead them away from the watchcare, counsel, and strength of the body. And the very ones who claim sanctification, have in their hearts insubordination, pride, envy, jealousy, and evil surmising of their brethren. They sit as judges upon the life and character of their brethren. These are the fruits generally to be found growing upon the tree of false sanctification. This class have graduated. They suppose they have come to the knowledge of the truth. If they attend camp-meetings, they will think they are so far ahead of the servants of God who labor in the meetings that they cannot learn anything, therefore the word or message of instruction God gives his servants for the people is not for them. They will generally be found drawing one or two away, holding them in conversation, imparting to them the great light they suppose they have; and thus some are deprived of hearing the message of God to the people. These self deceived men are drawing away souls from the body, scattering from Christ, and bringing in dissension and division. Individual experience is set above the authority of the church, and their example leads others whom they deceive to regard lightly the voice of counsel and admonition of the church. This course has worked the ruin of very many souls in every age of the world. As children in the family of God we need the wisdom and experience of matured Christians to direct, to encourage, and to defend us in times of danger, and to lead on to constant growth in grace, and to seek daily attainments in the knowledge of the truth and true holiness.

In the ministry of Christ and his apostles, those who were converted to the truth were brought into church relationship; and every stray, lost sheep that was found, was brought to the fold of the church, that under the direction of the Master, through the undershepherds, they might go in and out and find pasture. God has instituted his church and delegated to it his authority and

power. He has given it the inspired oracles, provided it with pastors and teachers to carry forward his work on the earth when he should leave it. At a later date, when the church was weakened by its individual members being led into errors, and spiritual life was chilled and palsied by backslidings, the inspired apostle exclaimed, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy." "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Nothing is so demoralizing, so enfeebling to the church, as to have her individual members obtain a burden upon this false sanctification, which leads them away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Satan always leads this class away from the church, and leads them to regard the church far behind them in spirituality and experience. The power and glory of God is revealed in his church. Here God gives the blessings of his grace. Here he reveals the mysteries of his will.

There have been and always will be tares among the wheat, the foolish virgins with the wise, those who have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. There was a covetous Judas in the church Christ formed on earth, and there will be Judases in the church in every stage of her history. But because there are such, it does not do away with the fact that God has a church. There were murmurers, envious and jealous ones in the tribes of Israel, journeying to the promised Canaan; but, notwithstanding, God led them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The deceitful hearts of individuals will lead them astray because they see imperfections in the church, but these very ones have defective characters that they do not discern. These very ones are capable of being useful in the church were they connected with the great Head of the church. But if they choose to be presumptuous, and in self-sufficiency draw off on some tangent, the church will move on without them. Every member of the church is bound by the most solemn vow to advance its interests and to labor unselfishly and devotedly for its success.

The prosperity of the church depends upon the faithfulness, purity, and

zealous action of its individual members. Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

If all who are ambitious for distinction above their brethren could estimate to what a depth of humiliation Christ submitted for their sakes, and learn from the cross of humiliation to be subject one to another, there would exist in the church a simplicity and power which would have a telling influence on the world. Through the cross we may learn the love we should have for our fellowmen, and the value of souls for whom Christ died, and our works, in self-denial to save the perishing souls around us will correspond with our faith.

November 20, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 13--Jacob and the Angel

The sinful course which Jacob had pursued in deceiving his father was ever before him. He knew that his long exile was the result of his own deviation from strict integrity, the law of right. He pondered over these things day and night, his conscience accusing him, and making his journey very sad. How he longed to again go over the ground where he had stumbled and brought the stain of sin upon his soul. Before his transgression he had a sense of God's approval which made him brave under difficulties, and cheerful amid trouble and gloom. To this deep, abiding peace, he had long been a stranger. Yet he remembered with gratitude the favor which God had shown him, the vision of the shining ladder, and the promises of help and guidance. In solemn review of the mistakes and errors of his life, and the dealings of God with him, he humbly acknowledged his own unworthiness, the great mercy of God, and the prosperity which had crowned his labors.

As the hills of his native land appeared before him in the distance, the heart of the patriarch was deeply stirred. He had proved his God, and found his promises unfulfilling; he believed that God would be with him; yet as he drew near to Edom he had many fears of Esau, who was now able to do his younger brother great injury if so disposed. Again the Lord encouraged the heart of his servant with a token of divine care and protection. Directly before him, as if leading the way, he beheld two armies of heavenly angels marching as a guide and guard; and when he saw them he broke forth in language of praise, and exclaimed, "This is God's host." And he called the name of the place Mahanaim, which signifies two hosts, or camps.

Although Jacob had so great evidence that God would protect him, he felt that he himself had something to do for his own safety. He therefore sent his servants with a conciliatory message to Esau, who dwelt at Mount Seir, in the country of Edom. He did not claim the precedence for himself, but courteously addressed his brother as a superior, hoping thus to appease the anger which his former course had excited. Esau was informed of his younger brother's safe return with abundant possessions of cattle and servants, and that he would be most happy to meet him with fraternal feelings. The messengers returned to their master with the tidings that Esau was advancing to meet him attended by four hundred men; and no response was sent to the friendly message.

It appeared certain that Esau was coming in anger to seek revenge. A feeling of terror pervaded the entire camp. Jacob was in distress. He could not go back, and he feared to advance. His company was few in numbers, and wholly unprepared for an encounter. He accordingly divided them into two bands, that if one should be attacked, the other might have an opportunity to escape. He would not fail to do all in his power to preserve his own life and the life of those dependent upon him, and then he pleaded with God for his presence and protecting care. He did not rely upon his feelings, nor upon any goodness which he possessed, but on the sure promise of God: "Thou saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children."

Jacob halted in his journey to mature plans for appeasing the wrath of his brother. He would not rush recklessly into danger, but sent large presents to Esau by the hands of his servants, with a message well calculated to make

a favorable impression. He sent his wives and children, with all his substance forward on the journey, while he himself remained behind. He thought the sight of that helpless little company would touch the feelings of Esau, who, though bold and revengeful, was yet pitiful and tender toward the weak and unprotected. If his eye rested first upon Jacob, his rage might be excited, and they would all perish.

Jacob wished to be alone with his God. It was midnight. All that made life dear to him was at a distance, exposed to danger and death. The bitterest drop in his cup of anguish was the thought that his own sin had brought this great peril upon his wives and children, who were innocent of the sin of which he was guilty. He had decided to spend the night in humiliation and prayer. God could soften the heart of his brother. God was his only refuge and strength. In a desolate place, infested by robbers and murderers, he bowed in deep distress upon the earth; his soul was rent with anguish, and with earnest cries mingled with tears he made his prayer before God. Strong hands are suddenly laid upon his shoulders. He immediately grapples his assailant, for he feels that this attack is a design upon his life; that he is in the hands of a robber or murderer. The contest is severe; neither utters a word; but Jacob puts forth all his strength, and does not relax his efforts for a moment. Thus the struggle continued, until near the break of day, when the stranger placed his finger upon Jacob's thigh, and he was crippled instantly. The patriarch now discerns the character of his antagonist. He knows that he has been in bodily conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this is why his almost superhuman efforts did not gain for him the victory. He is now disabled and suffering keenest pain, but he will not loosen his hold. He falls, a conquered foe, all penitent and broken, upon the neck of the angel.

In the inspired history of this event, the one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man; Hosea calls him the angel; while Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face." He is also said to have had power with God. It was the Majesty of Heaven, the Angel of the covenant, that came, in the form and appearance

of a man, to Jacob. The divine messenger uses some force to release himself from the grasp of Jacob; he pleads with him, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob had been pleading the promises of God; he had been trusting his pledged word, which is as sure and unfailing as his throne; and now, through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal, can make terms with Jesus Christ: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." What boldness is here manifested! What lofty faith, what perseverance and holy trust! Was this presumption and undue familiarity on the part of Jacob? Had it been of this character he would not have lived through the scene. His was not a self-exalted, boastful, presumptuous claim, but the assurance of one who realizes his weakness and unworthiness and the ability of God to fulfill his promise. The mistake which had led to Jacob's sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now opened before him. He had not trusted God and his promises as he should have done. He had sought by his own works and power to bring about that which God was abundantly able to perform in his own time and way.

"And when he saw that he prevailed not against him"--the Majesty of Heaven prevailed not against a man of dust, a sinful mortal! The reason is, that man has fastened the trembling hand of faith upon the promise of God, and the divine messenger cannot leave him who is hanging repentant, weeping, helpless upon his neck. His great heart of love cannot turn away from the suppliant without granting his request. Christ did not wish to leave him unblest when his soul was shrouded with despair; for he is more willing to give good things to them that ask him than are parents to give to their children.

The angel inquired of Jacob, "What is thy name?" and on being informed he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, [the supplanter] but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob had received the blessing for which his soul had longed; his sin as a supplanter and deceiver was pardoned. The crisis in his life had

passed. God shows, in his dealing with Jacob, that he will not sanction the least wrong in any of his children; neither will he cast off and leave to despair and destruction those who are deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin. Doubt, perplexity, and remorse had embittered Jacob's life; but now all was changed, and how sweet was the rest and peace in God, in the assurance of his restored favor.

"Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial." What a morning of light and joy dawned upon Jacob. The dark, despairing shadows brooding over him the previous night had disappeared. The brightness of the sun, shining in its glory, fitly represented the heavenly light that filled his soul. He was crippled in body, but his spirit was strong in God. He bore some marks of the battle, but the victory was his.

In this instance we see of what value is man in the sight of the infinite God. When a teacher of men upon the earth, the One who appeared to Jacob said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." The promises of God are so sure to those who trust in him that he will suffer the heavens and the earth to pass away, rather than fail to fulfill the desire of them that fear him. The great lessons of peace, humility, and trust, are to be learned by all the followers of Christ.

While Jacob was wrestling with the angel on that eventful night, another angel, one of the host which the patriarch had seen guarding him in the way, was sent to move upon the heart of Esau in his sleeping hours. In his dream he saw his brother an exile from his father's house for twenty years through fear of his anger; he witnessed his sorrow to find his mother dead; and he beheld him encompassed with the hosts of God. Esau related this dream to

his four hundred armed men, and charged them not to injure Jacob, for the God of his father was with him.

The two companies at last approach each other; the sturdy chieftain with his soldiers on one side, and on the other, Jacob, pale from his recent conflict, and halting at every step, yet with a benignity and peaceful light reflected upon his countenance; in the rear an unarmed company of men, women, and children, followed by the flocks and herds. Supported by his staff the patriarch went forward to meet that band of warriors, bowing himself repeatedly to the ground as a token of respect, while his little retinue awaited the issue with the deepest anxiety. They saw the arms of Esau thrown about the neck of Jacob, pressing to his bosom him whom he had so long threatened with direst vengeance. Revenge is now changed to tender affection, and he who once thirsted for his brother's blood shed tears of joy, his heart melted with the softest endearments of love and tenderness. The soldiers in Esau's army saw the result of that night of weeping and of prayer; but they knew nothing of the conflict and the victory. They understood the feelings of the patriarch, the husband and father, for his family and his possessions; but they could not see the connection that he had with God, which had gained the heart of Esau from Him who has all hearts in his hand. Thus it has ever been with worldlings; the secret of the Christian's strength is not discerned by them. His inner life they cannot understand.

Esau looked with pleasure upon his brother's possessions. He acknowledged the presents tendered to him by Jacob, but declined to accept them, as he already possessed abundance. But Jacob urged the matter. He was a prince with God, yet as subdued and humble as a little child. "And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it."

Esau invited Jacob to his home in Seir, and offered to accompany him on the journey. But Jacob had no disposition to accept the offer. He knew that Esau was now under the direct influence of the Spirit of God; when another spirit should come upon him he might greatly change in feelings. Jacob did not refuse the offer, but presented the true condition of his party, his flocks and herds; that they could not travel with the expedition which would be agreeable to Esau and his band. He urged him to return to his own place, while the party would follow on slowly. Esau desired to leave with his brother soldiers to guard him and his company; but Jacob had evidence that they were guarded by a mighty host of heavenly angels, and he courteously declined the favor. The brothers parted with tender feelings. (To be Continued.)

November 27, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 13--Jacob and the Angel (Continued)

Jacob and Esau represent two classes. Jacob, the righteous; and Esau, the wicked. Jacob's night of wrestling and anguish represents the time of trouble through which the people of God must pass just prior to the second coming of Christ. Jeremiah refers to this time: "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Daniel, in prophetic vision looking down to this point, says: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Isaiah speaks of the same time: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy door about thee, hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

In his distress, Jacob laid hold of the angel, and held him and wrestled with him all night. So also will the righteous, in the time of their trouble wrestle with God in prayer. Jacob prayed all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau. The righteous in their mental anguish will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the hands of the wicked who surround them. Jacob confessed his unworthiness: "I am not worthy of the least of all the

mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." The righteous will have a deep sense of their shortcomings, and with many tears will acknowledge their utter unworthiness, and, like Jacob, will plead the promises of God through Christ, made to just such dependent, helpless, repenting sinners.

Jacob took firm hold of the angel and would not let him go. As he made supplication with tears, the angel reminded him of his past wrongs, and endeavored to escape from him, to test and prove him. So will the righteous in the day of their anguish, be tested, proved, and tried, to manifest their strength of faith, their perseverance, and unshaken confidence in the power of God to deliver them.

Jacob would not be turned away. He knew that God was merciful, and he appealed to his mercy. He pointed back to his past sorrow for, and repentance of, his wrongs, and urged his petition for deliverance from the hand of Esau. Thus his importuning continued all night. As he reviewed his past wrongs, he was driven almost to despair. But he knew that he must have help from God or perish. He held the angel fast, and urged his petition with agonizing, earnest cries, until he prevailed. Thus will it be with the righteous. As they review the events of their past lives, their hopes will almost sink. But as they realize that it is a case of life or death, they will earnestly cry unto God, and appeal to him in regard to their past sorrow for, and humble repentance of, their many sins, and then will refer to his promise: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Thus will their earnest petitions be offered to God day and night. God would not have heard the prayer of Jacob, and mercifully saved his life, if he had not previously repented of his wrongs in obtaining the blessing by fraud. Every effort was put forward by Satan and his host to discourage Jacob and break his hold upon God by forcing upon him a sense of the sin of his falsehood and deception. But Jacob was not left alone; the Captain of the Lord's host, attended by an army of angels, was close beside

the depressed, fear-stricken man, that he might not perish.

The righteous, like Jacob, will manifest unyielding faith and earnest determination, which will take no denial. They will feel their unworthiness, but will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. If they had sins, unconfessed and unrepented of, to appear then before them, while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed. Despair would cut off their earnest faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God thus earnestly for deliverance, their precious moments would be spent in confessing hidden sins, and bewailing their hopeless condition.

In these days of peril those who have been unfaithful in their duties in life, and whose mistakes and sins of neglect are registered against them in the book in Heaven, unrepented of and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. Every one is to be tested and severely tried. Satan will exert all his energies, and call to his aid his evil host, who will exercise all their experience, artifice, and cunning, to deceive souls and wrest them from the hands of Jesus Christ. He makes them believe they may be unfaithful in the minor duties of life, and God will not see, God will not notice; but that Being who numbers the hairs of our head, and marks the fall of the little sparrow, notices every deviation from truth, every departure from honor and integrity in both secular and religious things. These errors and sins corrupt the man, and disqualify him for the society of heavenly angels. By his defiled character he has placed himself under the flag of Satan. The arch deceiver has power over this class. The more exalted their profession, the more honorable the position they have held, the more grievous their course in the sight of God, the more sure the triumph of Satan. These will have no shelter in the time of Jacob's trouble. Their sins will then appear of such magnitude that they will have no confidence to pray, no heart to wrestle as did Jacob. On the other hand, those who have been of like passion, erring and sinful in their lives, but who have repented of their sins, and in genuine sorrow confessed them, will have pardon written against their names in the heavenly

records. They will be hid 'in the day of the Lord's anger. Satan will attack this class, but like Jacob they have taken hold of the strength of God, and true to his character he is at peace with them, and sends angels to comfort and bless and sustain them in their time of peril. The time of Jacob's trouble will test every one, and distinguish the genuine Christian from the one who is so only in name.

Those professed believers who come up to the time of trouble unprepared, will, in their despair, confess their sins before the world in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. The case of all such is hopeless. When Christ stands up, and leaves the most holy place, the time of trouble commences, the case of every soul is decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin and pollution. As Jesus leaves the most holy, he speaks in tones of decision and kingly authority: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Those who have delayed a preparation for the day of God, cannot obtain it in the time of trouble, or at any future period. The righteous will not cease their earnest, agonizing cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sins; but in their whole life they can see little good. Their sins have gone before hand to judgment, and pardon has been written. Their sins have been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they can not bring them to remembrance. Certain destruction threatens them, and, like Jacob, they will not suffer their faith to grow weak because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the pangs of hunger, they will not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the angel; and the language of their soul is, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

That season of distress and anguish will require an effort of earnestness and determined faith that can endure delay and hunger, and will not fail under weakness, though severely tried. The period of probation is the time granted to all to prepare for the day of God. If any neglect the preparation, and heed not the faithful warnings given, they will be without excuse. Jacob's course in wrestling with the angel, should be an example for Christians. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. All who desire the blessing of God, as did Jacob, and who will lay hold of the promises as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. The reason there is so little exercise of true faith, and so little of the weight of truth resting upon many professed believers, is they are indolent in spiritual things. They are unwilling to make exertions, to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for the blessing, and therefore they do not obtain it. That faith which will live through the time of trouble must be developed now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith, will be unable to stand in the day of trouble.

At the transfiguration, Jesus was glorified by his Father. From his lips came these words: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Before his betrayal and crucifixion he was strengthened for his last dreadful sufferings. As the members of Christ's body approach the period of their final conflict they will grow up into him, and will possess symmetrical characters. As the message of the third angel swells to a loud cry, great power and glory will attend the closing work. It is the latter rain, which revives and strengthens the people of God to pass through the time of Jacob's trouble referred to by the prophets. The glory of that light which attends the third angel will be reflected upon them. God will preserve his people through that time of peril.

By self-surrender and confiding faith Jacob gained what he had failed to gain by conflict in his own strength. God would here fully make known to his servant that it was divine power and grace alone that could give him the

life and peace he so much craved. This lesson is for all time. Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy. It is the design of God to arouse the dormant energies of his people to look out of and away from self to One who can bring help and salvation, that the promises given for just such a time may be seen in their preciousness, and relied upon with unwavering trust. Here faith is proved.

Deep anguish of soul will be felt by the people of God, yet their sufferings cannot be compared with the agony endured by our adorable Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane. He was bearing the weight of our sins; we endure anguish on our own account. Wrestling with God--how few know what it is! To wrestle with God is to have the soul drawn out with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch, while waves of despair that no language can express sweep over the soul; and yet the suppliant will not yield, but clings with deathlike tenacity to the promise.

Jacob specified no particular thing for the Lord to bestow upon him; he sought only a blessing; he knew that the Lord would give him a blessing appropriate to meet the necessities of the case at that time. God blessed him then and there; and on the field of conflict he was made a prince among men. Thus will it be with the agonized ones who prevail with God in the time of Jacob's trouble. Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters his voice from his holy habitation. The captivity of his people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, God is our friend. We shall be safe from the power of wicked men. In

solemn awe they listen to the words proceeding from the throne of God. Those surrounding the righteous are then in their time of distress and inexpressible fear. The horror of despair seizes them, and these poor infatuated ones seem now to understand themselves. Those who have been deceived by the fables preached to them by their ministers now charge upon them the loss of their souls: You have preached to us falsehoods. We have believed a lie, and are lost, forever lost.

This is the time referred to by Malachi: "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

December 4, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 14--Jacob's Second Visit to Bethel

Jacob made his home in Shechem, and having purchased a piece of land he erected his tent, and close beside it his altar, and dedicated them to God. The sons of Jacob were not all governed by religious principle. Their inhuman treatment of the Shechemites was offensive to God. Their father was kept in ignorance of their purpose until the work of cruelty was accomplished; and when he learned what had been done he severely rebuked them for their treacherous, revengeful course. Simeon and Levi attempted to defend themselves by urging that they had thus avenged the wrong done to their sister. But Jacob assured them that nothing could justify their conduct; for the sin of one man they had caused the innocent inhabitants of a whole city to suffer. These people had placed confidence in them, and thus had been shamefully betrayed. The God of Israel had been dishonored. Jacob felt deeply humiliated; he knew that deception and cruelty had been practiced, and he felt that he would now be hated and despised by the inhabitants of the country around them.

He saw, too, that treachery and cruelty was growing upon his sons, and that they were forgetting God, and allowing infidelity to come into their hearts. He knew that there was cause for self-condemnation in this matter, and he began to reflect upon his own conduct in allowing his beloved Rachel to conceal her father's gods which she had stolen, when he should have destroyed at once everything which would lead to infidelity.

There were false gods in the camp of Israel, and he had not used prompt

means to destroy them; and idolatrous worship was more or less practiced by his household. He knew that should God deal with them, in the present instance, according to their crime, he would permit the surrounding nations to take vengeance upon them.

While Jacob was thus bowed down with trouble, the Lord had compassion upon him, and directed him to leave his place and move southward to Bethel. At the mention of this name the patriarch is reminded not only of his vision of the angels, ascending and descending, and of God above them speaking to him words of comfort, but also of the vow which he had made there, that if God would keep and bless him, the Lord should be his God. And he reflects thus: Have I been as faithful to my promise as God has been to me? He saw and felt the necessity of being more thorough and decided in his family, to put away everything that savored of idolatry. He determined to cleanse the camp, that his company might go to this sacred spot free from defilement. He therefore stands up and addresses them: "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

He then, with trembling voice and quivering lip, related to them his perplexity; when but a youth he left his father's tent, a lonely traveler, afraid of his life, with no earthly friend to comfort or encourage. Passing Hebron and Moriah, he came, in the evening of the second day, to Bethel, the spot made sacred by the sacrifices and prayers of Abraham. He felt heart-sick and friendless in his solitude, and lay down to sleep. It was here that God gave him that encouraging dream of the heavenly ladder which reached from earth to Heaven. Angels of God were ascending and descending upon this ladder of shining brightness, and the Lord himself stood above it, and spoke to him these encouraging words: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy

seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land."

On awaking from this dream, Jacob felt that the spot was peopled with angels, and that God was looking with tender love and compassion upon him, and he there set up a memorial signifying that he would ever remember the loving-kindness of God.

As Jacob thus reviewed the goodness and mercy of God to him, his own heart was subdued and humbled; and he had taken the most effectual way to reach the hearts of his children, and lead them to reverence the God of Heaven when they arrived at Bethel. Not in the least did any of his family hesitate to obey his commands. All that were with him delivered up their idols, and also their earrings, and he buried them under an oak near Shechem. The patriarch felt that humiliation before God was more in keeping with their position than was the wearing of gold and silver ornaments.

Jacob had now done his duty in cleansing his household from idolatry, and he set out with them on his journey to Bethel. For the sake of his servant Jacob, who had no part in the cruelty practiced on the Shechemites, the Lord caused fear to fall upon the inhabitants of the land, that they did not arise to avenge the deed done to Shechem. The travelers moved on their way unmolested, and came to Bethel. Here Jacob, in obedience to the divine command, immediately erected an altar, upon which he performed the vow made when on his journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia. Of all the substance that had been placed with him in trust, he rendered an offering to God, although it took from him quite a large share of his possessions. The self-denial and beneficence here manifested, rebukes the self-indulgence of many professed Christians, and the meager offerings which they bring to

God. Many put into the Lord's treasury a sum less than the price of their cigars, and far less than the cost of the ornaments that adorn their persons and their houses, and the hurtful luxuries upon their tables. Eternity will reveal the narrowness and selfishness of these minds. What will be their feelings when Christ shall reveal to them the value of souls, and the infinite importance of their salvation?

The Lord accepted the offering of Jacob, and met with and blessed him, and renewed his covenant with him. As a lasting memorial of this additional token of divine favor, Jacob again erected a pillar of stone, which he consecrated in the usual manner.

Jacob's heart yearned to visit his early home once more, and look again upon his aged father's face. With his family, he journeyed toward Hebron. Before they had proceeded far on the way, Rachel gave birth to Benjamin. She had only a moment's space of life in which to name him, when she died, calling him Benoni, the son of my sorrow. But Jacob named him Benjamin, the son of my right hand, and my strength. Rachel was buried where she died, and above her grave was placed a stone monument to perpetuate her memory.

Rebekah, his mother, was dead; and while they were at Bethel, Deborah, his mother's nurse, also died, and was there buried with expressions of great sorrow, for she had been an honored member of his father's family. The meeting of Jacob with his father was a joyful one to both father and son. Isaac was very old, blind, and dependent; but he lived some years after the return of his son.

At the death-bed of their father, the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, met and united their grief. Once Esau had looked forward to this event as a time when he would be revenged upon Jacob for stealing from him his father's blessing; but his feelings had greatly changed. Jacob was now wealthy, and

he returned to Esau the blessing of possession so recklessly sold for a mess of pottage. Therefore the two brothers, no longer separated by enmity, jealousy, and hatred, parted from each other because of their possessions. Jacob also knew that their religious faith was so unlike it would be better for them to live apart. Jacob's character was greatly modified and refined by the blessing received from the angel in that night of terrible conflict, and ever after he was revered by all who knew him. His trials had not been in vain.

December 11, 1879

Christ's Followers the Light of the World

So far as human sympathy was concerned, Christ was as though alone in our world. His nearest friends and relatives did not understand him. They could not understand the nature of the kingdom of which he spoke, nor comprehend the vastness of that love which embraced humanity.

His knowledge extended, not only to this world, but to the future, unseen world. He had lived in eternal light in the heavenly courts, and was one with the Father, but in the world which he had created, he was in solitude.

Fallen men, in one sense, could not be companions for Christ, for they could not enter into sympathy with his divine nature, and hold communion with the world's Redeemer. When woe, and want, and suffering demanded his help, they found relief; for human suffering ever touched a responsive chord in the Saviour's heart. His work was to elevate men through his condescension, through his lessons of instruction, and by means of his example, lifting them heavenward by the might of his divine power. But companions he had none upon earth. He was fully understood in Heaven alone.

After the toils of the day the Redeemer of the world was frequently found all night in prayer. Crowds throng him through the day so that he has not a moment for rest or prayer. The fame of his work and of his wonderful teachings brought vast multitudes from all the region round about, not only to listen to his life-giving words, but to receive power from him that they might be healed of their maladies. All are eager to receive his first attention.

Some ply him with questions to gratify their curiosity, some to show

their aptness and learning; and the jealous, caviling Pharisees watch to find some pretext to denounce him as an impostor. Some selfishly think that they may be advantaged by his great knowledge, and receive help in their personal difficulties, while others, hungering and thirsting for clearer light, and a better knowledge of the true way, humbly listen as for their lives, drinking in every word that falls from the Master's lips.

The restless throng sways to and fro, as some are continually coming and striving to press nearer, while others are passing away with greater zeal in their own worldly interests than in the words of eternal life.

The suffering ones call for his sympathy, the feeble, the distorted, the decrepit, the blind, and the palsied, all turn imploringly to him, and faint voices plead earnestly for help. The crowd is so dense it seems impossible to urge a passage to Christ, and hope almost dies out of some hearts. They fear their chance will come too late, for they feel that life is fast ebbing. Can they reach the mighty Healer through the dense masses before it is too late?

But not one passes from his presence unrelieved. He repulses none, but speaks kindly and patiently with all, and in clear, calm, earnest tones he utters the truths that search to the very souls of his hearers. He is often interrupted with the cry of the demoniac, and the suffering and dying ones are urged through the crowd and laid at his feet.

His disciples see the pressure of care and burdens upon the Master, and decide that they must interfere and draw him away from the crowd. They invite him to find rest from his physical weariness before he shall faint with exhaustion. But Jesus continues his work notwithstanding the urgency of his disciples to draw him away for refreshment and rest. They say one to another, He must be beside himself to continue this taxing labor longer. They think that force will have to be used to save his life. He has not had sleep, or food, or a moment's repose. He makes his way toward the sea-shore, and the

surging crowd urge him to the very water's edge. He beckons to Peter to receive him in his boat, and there upon the swaying seat of a fisherman's boat he teaches his disciples upon the shore.

When the sun was set, and the night came on, and the people had dispersed to their homes, the disciples felt relieved. They felt sure that the Master would rest in some quiet home, and they would have him a little period all to themselves; but they were disappointed. Weary, exhausted, and faint as he was, he would not consent to go with them to seek refreshment or repose. He dismissed his disciples, and would not allow them to accompany him, but repaired to the solitary mountains, telling them where they may meet him in the morning.

All night he must be alone in the mountain sanctuary with his God. All night he spent in prayer, pouring out his soul with strong crying and tears, not because he had sins to confess, or to bring remorse to his heart, not because he had troubles of his own to be relieved. A world in the darkness of error is weighing upon his soul, and while it sleeps in security he prays that it may not perish in its sin and impenitence. Thus passed the night, and when nature's choristers tuned their songs of praise in the early morning, Christ was prepared for the day of active, earnest work.

The day after the scene at Capernaum was to be one of great importance. The memorable sermon upon the mount was to be given to his disciples, and so come down through the ages to us. The day before he had not place sufficiently large to accommodate the people, and had taken his seat in Peter's boat to address the people on the shore. This day he led the people to the high table-land overlooking the lake, where the tall grass was waving in the breeze, and wild flowers bloomed in rich profusion of beauty and variety at their feet, and nature was clothed in her most beautiful garments. Yonder were sharp mountain peaks outlined against the sky, bearing testimony to the majesty and power of God in his created works.

Christ seated himself upon an eminence, while the people gathered on the large grassy plain at its foot. The place was well chosen for the discourse. The sun had not yet appeared above the mountains; the incense of flowers perfumed the air, and the singing birds seemed to attune their songs responsive to the words uttered by the God of nature to impress souls with the truths falling from his divine lips.

The contrast of this morning's scene with that of Sinai was marked. Then the millions of people gathered before the mountain whose lofty peaks seemed to reach to the very heavens. The lightnings flashed, and the groaning, muttering thunders, like supernatural voices filled the air, and God's voice was heard in trumpet-like tones by all the congregation. Moses was commanded to come up and talk with God. He obeyed the mandate, and climbed far up the solitary heights, and God talked with him. On the morning of the third day a thick cloud began to cover the mountain, increasing in denseness every moment, while its billowy form surged violently. The earth shook and trembled as if convulsed, and the thunder peals were caught up in reverberations from peak to peak, far and near. The stately tread of the Lord Jehovah and of his Son was upon that mountain. At intervals, between the bursts of the thunder were sounds as of a trumpet swelling louder and louder till it rose above the war of the elements.

The people stood terror-stricken, every face pale as the dead, with eyes fixed in awe upon the fearful manifestations of the awful presence of God. Then was spoken amid flame and smoke the law of God. The people about the mount receded from its base in awe and fear. Their souls were overwhelmed with the grandeur and terrible majesty of the scene. They saw the two men go up amid the awful glory to receive the law from the lips of God. When Moses and Aaron again stood in their midst, the people implored them that the word of God might come to them through Moses, and not by the direct and terrible voice of God, lest they could not live.

"Fear not," said Moses, "for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." All the majesty of this scene was necessary to impress its solemnity upon the minds of the children of Israel, whose lives had been spent among the symbols and ceremonies of the Egyptian worship.

Christ, who had led the children of Israel in the wilderness, who revealed his majesty and spoke the law from Sinai, was now to define the principles of that law, which was to be carried out and exemplified in practical life. The multitude close about the great Teacher, interested and eager to catch every word that fall from his lips. Yet there are no grand and awful demonstrations on this occasion, as at Sinai. The beauties of nature in the luxuriant vegetation and adornment of flowers speak to the senses of the love of God in his created works.

There was no eloquence of words used in the lessons of Christ, no overdrawn language hiding the simple grandeur of the thought, nothing to bewilder the mind or mislead the imagination. The language was simple, the utterance slow and forcible, and the enunciation clear and distinct. God was speaking to the soul of man in kindness and love. The countenance of Christ beamed with the glory of heaven's light. His eyes expressed love and sympathy for man. Divinity flashed through humanity as the deep and earnest words of eternal life were spoken to the interested hearers.

The sun was climbing above the mountain tops, reflecting its bright beams upon the hills and mountains, distinctly revealing the cities upon their slopes.

He pointed to the bright beams of the sun, saying impressively, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid.... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify

your Father which is in Heaven." (To be Continued.)

December 18, 1879

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 15--Jacob and Joseph

Of the twelve sons of Jacob, the one for whom he had special love was Joseph; for he was the son of his beloved wife Rachel, and one of the children of his old age. He was a son of remarkable beauty. His oldest sons had arrived at manhood, and had developed unhappy traits of character. There was continual strife among the eleven; they were neither just nor benevolent toward each other. The envy and jealousy which were cherished by the several mothers making the family relation very unhappy, were instilled by word and example into the minds and hearts of the children, who grew up revengeful, jealous, and uncontrollable. They would not endure provocation, for they had too long cherished hatred and revenge. These evils will ever be found to be the result of polygamy. Each of the mothers is envious and jealous lest her own children shall not receive due attention from the father; and again they experience bitterness and discontent whenever they are made to feel that another is preferred before them. Children who grow up together surrounded by such elements are most likely to indulge in resentment for every supposed slight, and revenge for any imaginary wrongs. There is that in polygamy which dries up human affection, and tempts to the loosening of ties which should be held sacred.

Jacob's life was made very bitter by the conduct of his sons. Joseph had another spirit; he was cheerful and happy, and possessed great love for his father whose heart was bound up in his child. This preference for Joseph was unwisely manifested, and called out the revengeful disposition of his other sons. When Joseph saw the wicked course pursued by his brethren he

remonstrated with them; but they hated him for his entreaties, and for daring to reprove them who were so much older than he, and accused him of being a spy upon their actions. As Joseph saw that his words and entreaties only excited wrath against himself, he laid the plans and evil purposes of his brethren before his father, which gave him knowledge of many things he otherwise would not have known. The fathers of children among the Hebrews were made responsible in a great degree for the sins of their children, when they were left without the exercise of authority and restraint. When the father's solicitude was expressed to his sons in a voice tremulous with grief, and he implored them to have respect for his gray hairs and not make his name a reproach, and to be despised because of their course, the sons felt sorry and ashamed before their father, because their wickedness was known, but felt envious and jealous of Joseph because he had informed his father of their course of sin. Jacob flattered himself that his sons repented of their wickedness, and he trusted they would reform.

Jacob unwisely gave expression to his love for Joseph in making him a present of a coat of beautiful colors. This only increased the hatred of his brothers against him; for they thought Joseph had stolen their father's affections from them, and they considered themselves ill treated and deprived of their father's confidence and love. They did not see that their own wicked course was a continual shame and disgrace to his gray hairs, and that his affections centered upon Joseph because of his purity and true excellence of character.

The Lord gave Joseph a dream which he related; Jacob would have been alarmed had he suspected the hatred and malicious feelings this dream aroused in the hearts of his sons against his beloved child. Joseph dreamed that while they were all engaged binding sheaves of grain, his sheaf arose and stood upright, and the sheaves of all the rest stood round about and bowed before his sheaf. No sooner was his dream related than they all understood its significance. His brothers exclaimed with indignation, "Shalt

thou indeed have dominion over us?" Their hatred toward him burned deeper in their hearts than before. Soon the Lord gave Joseph another dream of the same import, but more strikingly significant. This dream he also related to his father and his brethren. He said, "Behold I have dreamed a dream more, and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." The interpretation of this dream was quite as quickly discerned as was that of the first. "And his father rebuked him, and said unto him, what is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying."

Like a youthful prophet Joseph stood before them in the simplicity of virtuous innocence, his beautiful countenance lighted up with the spirit of inspiration. His brethren could but admire his purity and goodness; but they did not choose to leave their wicked course and become virtuous and noble like him. The spirit that actuated Cain was fastening upon them. Like him they hated their brother because he was innocent and righteous and beloved of his father, while they were wicked and a source of grief to their father as Cain was to his father.

Joseph's father had confidence that the Lord was revealing the future to his son; but his words of apparent severity did not satisfy his elder sons, for the voice of tremulous affection betrayed his true feelings. He called to mind the promise of God to Abraham, to Isaac, and to himself. His heart had been grieved and disappointed in his older sons, but as he saw the qualities of mind possessed by Joseph, his hopes centered in him. He hoped that God would wonderfully bless him, the eldest son of his beloved Rachel. The favor with which Jacob regarded Joseph could not be concealed, and the gorgeous colored coat which he had given him was a clear evidence to his sons of his partiality. This they thought gave them sufficient reason for harboring jealousy, hatred, and revenge in their hearts.

These brothers were obliged to move from place to place in order to secure better pasturage for their flocks, and sometimes they did not see their father for months. At one time Jacob directed them to go to Shechem, a place which he had purchased. After they had been gone some time, and he had received no word from them he feared that evil might have befallen them, knowing that they were near where their cruelty had been practiced upon the Shechemites. So he sent Joseph to Shechem to find his brethren, and bring him word of their condition. Had Jacob known the true feelings of his sons toward Joseph, he would not have trusted him alone with them; but they had concealed their wicked purposes from him.

When Joseph arrived at the place where his father supposed his brethren were, he did not find them. As he was traveling from field to field in search of them, a stranger learned his errand and told him they had gone to Dothan. He had already traveled fifty miles, and, a distance of fifteen more lay before him. This was a long journey for the youth; but he performed it cheerfully, desiring to relieve the anxiety of his beloved father, and longing to see his brethren who were enshrined in his affections. But he was illy repaid for his love and obedience.

At length he saw his brethren in the distance and hastened to greet them. They also saw him coming, his gay colored coat making him easily recognized; but as they beheld it, their feelings of envy, jealousy, and hatred, were aroused. They did not consider the long journey he had made on foot to meet them; they did not think of his weariness and hunger, and that as their brother he had claims upon their hospitality, their tender consideration and brotherly love. The sight of that coat which signalized him in the distance filled them with a Satanic frenzy. "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh."

There seemed to be a common feeling of deadly hatred in their hearts.

They had engaged in carnage and destruction until their feelings had become calloused. The indulgence of one known sin deadens the conscience so that it is more easily overcome with the next temptation. Thus step by step the course of sin and transgression is pursued until there is a harvest of crime through the indulgence of the first sin. These men regardless of the consequences, had passed on from stage, to stage hardening their hearts in the indulgence of sin until they had to all intents and purposes the spirit of Cain. They were enraged that Joseph had heretofore informed against them, and they looked upon him as a spy.

They had ere this decided that if a favorable opportunity offered they would slay him; the proposition was made, "Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

This terrible purpose would have been carried out had not Reuben shrunk from participating in the murder of his brother. He plead for Joseph, showing with clear arguments what guilt would ever rest upon them, and, that the curse of God would come upon them for such a crime. He proposed to have him cast alive into a pit, and left there to perish, meaning to take him out privately and return him to his father. He left their company, fearing that his feelings would betray his design.

Joseph came on, glad and joyful that the object of his long search was accomplished. But, instead of a pleasant greeting, he met only scorn, abuse, and fierceness of looks which terrified him. He was immediately seized, and the coat which had created so much hatred, was stripped from him with the most taunting remarks. He had never before received such treatment and he expected his brethren would immediately kill him. His mind runs back to his home, his father, and the blessing he had received as he parted from him, and then he anticipated the sorrow he would feel at his death and the guilt of his murderers. He entreated them to spare his life, but all to no avail; he was

helpless in the hands of infuriated men whose hearts were insensible to pity, and whose ears were deaf to the cry of anguish. But the eye of God was upon him, and Joseph's cries of distress reached his throne. His brethren thrust him into a dark pit and then sat down to enjoy their customary meal. But while they were eating, they saw a company of Ishmaelites approaching, and Judah, who was beginning to regret what had been done, suggested that here was an opportunity to sell their brother and obtain money, which would be better than leaving him to perish in the pit; for said he, is he not our own flesh? Then, too, Judah thought that he could be disposed of by being removed entirely from them. All agreed to the proposition of Judah; Joseph was drawn up out of the pit, and heartlessly sold as a slave. (To be Continued.)

January 8, 1880

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 16--Joseph in Egypt

The Lord was with Joseph in his new home. He was in exile, not for any wrong that he had done, but through the injustice of his brothers. Yet he did not cherish a gloomy, sullen spirit, he did not yield to despondency, as many would have felt excused in doing. He was not in a position of his own choosing, and he would not make his condition worse by useless repining. With cheerful alacrity he performed the duties which were assigned him, laboring for the best interest of those to whom he then belonged. In contributing to the happiness of others he was happy.

The marked prosperity which attended everything placed under Joseph's care was not the result of a direct miracle. With the divine blessing, his persevering industry, his diligence, his thoughtful care-taking were crowned with success, and won for him the highest regard of his master. This success could never have been gained, and Joseph himself could not have become what he was, without steadfast, well-directed effort. The exercise of the physical and mental powers is necessary to their full and perfect development. Without bodily exercise the laboring man's arm would lose its strength, and unless the mental powers are taxed they will become weak.

Although surrounded with idolatry, which was most repulsive to his principles, Joseph preserved his simplicity, his purity, and his God-fearing fidelity. The discordant notes of vice and revelry often fell upon his ear, but he would not allow his thoughts to linger for a moment upon forbidden subjects. Had Joseph sacrificed principle to please the Egyptians, he would

have been overcome by temptation. But he was not ashamed of the religion of his fathers, and he made no effort to conceal the fact that he loved and feared God. The Lord designed that the light and power of heavenly grace should shine forth amid the darkness of heathen superstition and idolatry; that the purity, the faithfulness, and steadfast integrity of the true believer in God should appear in contrast with the darkened characters of those who served idols.

Joseph gave the credit of his prosperity to the Lord, and his master believed that the Lord was with him, and that he caused all that he did to prosper. Thus God was glorified by the faithfulness of his servant. The confidence which Potiphar reposed in Joseph daily increased, until he promoted him to be his steward, placing him in charge of all his affairs. But fiery trials were to test still more severely the faith and integrity of Joseph. The morals of the Egyptians were very low. His master's wife was a licentious woman, and now a temptation to deviate from the path of right, to transgress the law of God, is presented before the youthful exile. His future welfare depends upon the decision of the moment. Will Satan triumph? Will principle now garrison Joseph's heart? Will he now have the fear of God before him? Will he be loyal and true to the divine law? Angels were regarding this servant of God with intense interest. The elevating power of religious principle was evidenced in his answer to his master's wife. After speaking of the great confidence which his master had reposed in him by trusting him with all he had, he exclaims, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Many will take liberties under the inspecting eyes of holy angels and of God that they would not be guilty of before their fellow men. This class are an abomination in the sight of God. Joseph's first thought was of God; Thou "God seest me," was the great truth controlling the thoughts of his mind, influencing the motives of his actions. He looked upon God, not as a tyrant watching his actions to condemn and punish him, but as a tender, loving

friend, guarding his interests. He would not be persuaded by inducements or threats to deviate from the path of strictest integrity. He would not violate God's law.

Joseph's firm adherence to right brought him into a trying position. He lost his situation, his reputation, and his liberty. Crime and falsehood for a time seemed to triumph, while innocence and virtue suffered. Had Potiphar fully believed the charges of his wife, Joseph would have lost his life. But his past conduct, his modesty and firm integrity, were convincing proof of his innocence; and yet, to save the reputation of his master's house, Joseph was sacrificed, while the sinful wife was exalted in the estimation of her friends as if a model of virtue.

When the base crime was laid to the charge of Joseph, and he was covered with reproach, he stood in nobility of soul, in conscious innocence. He knew that the eye of God was upon him, and he could confide his case to his care who had hitherto supported him. He was condemned as a criminal to a gloomy prison, yet he did not become morose and look upon the discouraging features of his case. He kept his patience and his hope and faith. He did not close his heart against suffering humanity, he did not turn his attention to himself, but entered into the troubles of his fellow-prisoners, giving them his kindly sympathy. He found work to do, even in the prison. He was indeed a servant of servants. God was fitting him, in the school of affliction, for greater usefulness. He was learning to govern himself. From a position of honor and trust he had been suddenly abased to one of apparent degradation; but integrity, innocence, and virtue can never be degraded. God's will had been his ruling motive in prosperity, and he shows the same high regard for that will now that he is inclosed in prison walls. He carried his religion with him wherever he went, and in whatever situation he was placed.

Those who love God will have an all-pervading influence shedding a

grateful fragrance. If man will discharge his duties faithfully wherever he may be, he will become a power for good. God gave Joseph favor with the keeper of the prison, and to faithful Joseph was committed the charge of all the prisoners.

Here is an example to all generations who should live upon the earth. Although they may be exposed to evil influences, they should ever realize that there is a defense at hand, and it will be their own fault if they are not preserved. God will be a present help, and his Spirit a shield. Although surrounded with the severest temptations, there is a source of strength to which they can apply, and obtain grace to resist them. How fierce was the assault upon Joseph's morals. It came from one of influence, the most likely to lead astray. Yet how promptly and firmly was it resisted. He suffered for his integrity; for she who would lead him astray, revenged herself upon the virtue she could not subvert, and by her influence caused him to be cast into prison, by charging him with a foul wrong. But Joseph had placed his reputation and interests in the hands of God. And although he was suffered to be afflicted for a time, the Lord safely guarded that reputation that was blackened by a wicked accuser, and afterward, in his own good time, caused it to shine. God made even the prison the way to his elevation. Virtue will in time bring its own reward. The shield which covered Joseph's heart was the fear of God, which caused him to be faithful and just to his master, and true to God. He despised that ingratitude which would lead him to abuse the confidence of his master, although he might never learn the fact. The grace of God he called to his aid, and then fought with the tempter. He nobly says, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He came off conqueror.

Amid the snares to which all are exposed, they need strong and trustworthy defenses on which to rely. Many, in this corrupt age, have so small a supply of the grace of God, that in many instances their defense is broken down by the first assault, and fierce temptations take them captive.

The shield of grace can preserve all unconquered by the temptations of the enemy, though surrounded by the most corrupting influences. By firm principle and unwavering trust in God, their virtue and nobleness of character may shine; and, although surrounded with evil, no taint need be left upon them. And if, like Joseph, they suffer calumny and false accusations, Providence will overrule all the enemy's devices for good, and in his own time, exalt them as much higher, as for a while they were debased by wicked revenge.

The part which Joseph acted in connection with the scenes of the gloomy prison, was that which raised him finally to prosperity and honor. God designed that he should obtain an experience by temptations, adversity, and hardships, to prepare him to fill an exalted position. (To be Continued.)

January 8, 1880

Christ's Followers the Light of the World

In the work of creation, when the dawn of the first day broke, and the heavens and the earth, by the call of infinite power, came out of darkness; responsive to the rising light, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." In the rising sun, gilding the mountains of Judah with its bright beams, Jesus saw the symbol of the gospel light to be proclaimed in the earth by his disciples, dispelling by its bright beams, superstition, error, and tradition, and ushering in truth and righteousness, bringing back to allegiance those who have been disobedient to the law of God. Christ taught that all true goodness and greatness of character, all peace and joy in the soul, must come through perfect and entire submission to his Father's will, which is the highest law of duty. The lessons connected with their great commission, which they were to put to a practical use, were given to the disciples upon this occasion. They were to carry the light of truth to the world.

The Light of the world, the "Sun of righteousness," was imparting his beams of light to his disciples, and illuminating their minds, sweeping away their traditions and man-made requirements, and enforcing the real principles of God's law upon them. He taught them lessons which they should put to a practical use in order to be the lights of the world. He taught them that they should exhibit in their character the graces of his Spirit which he pronounced blessed. The acceptance of the light he urged upon his hearers, as essential for their restoration to spiritual life. And for them to have a sound, healthful, happy experience, they must exercise the best and noblest faculties of the soul. He would have them understand that if they would make their lives pleasant, and useful to others, they must be obedient to the requirements of God. He always directs safely, and we shall not go astray while following

where he leads. Said Christ, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Christ represents the disciples who have the attributes which characterize them as children of God, as the light of the world. Without these attributes they cannot be the light of the world, and they would not correctly represent Christ who is the Light of the world. As the sun goes forth in the heavens on its errand of mercy and love, and as the golden beams of day flood the canopy of the heavens and beautify forests and mountains, and awaken the world from their slumbers by dispelling the darkness of night, so should his followers go forth on their mission. They should gather the divine rays of light from the Light of the world, and let it shine forth in good works upon those who are in the darkness of error. Through the ministration of his ordained servants he carries forward his work through all time.

The message of light given to the assembled multitude on the mount was not alone for them, but was to be sounded in the ears of the church all along the line, through successive generations, resting with more solemn weight upon Christ's ambassadors in the last days. Sinners are to be turned from the darkness of error to the light of truth, by the foolishness of preaching. He who accepts the light is to claim no authority himself; but as God's messenger, with light reflected to him from the Source of light, he may claim the highest authority.

God might write the messages of truth upon the firmament of the heavens as easily as he placed the stars in their position. He might proclaim the truth and let it shine to the world through angel visitors, but this is not the way he ordained. He delegated power to his disciples to carry the light which he would communicate to them, to all parts of the world. Through his ambassadors God graciously infuses light to the understanding and warmth to the souls of those who acknowledge the message he sends, bearing light to those in darkness.

Paul writes to Timothy: "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." The ambassador must be obedient and faithful in the performance of his work as an instrument of God in the salvation of others. He cannot be saved himself if he is an unfaithful servant. He must be the light of the world. He must erect the standard of Christ in families, in villages, and cities, and in the hearts of men.

God does not select angels who have never fallen, but fallen man who has felt the redeeming power of the grace of Christ sanctifying his own life, and the bright beams of truth warming his own heart. As they have been in peril themselves, they are acquainted with the dangers and difficulties of others, and the way to reach others in like peril.

Said Paul, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." This is the reason why angels were not chosen to preach the truth. The gospel was committed to weak and erring men that God might have all the glory. The supremacy of God is to be discerned in the frail instrument chosen to proclaim the message of truth.

Our Saviour often spent all night in prayer to his Father, coming forth with the rising sun to shed his beams of light upon the world. With his heart all full of sympathy for the poor, the ignorant and afflicted, he labored that he might elevate fallen man, and dispel the moral darkness by the light reflected from himself. (To be Continued.)

January 15, 1880

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 16--Joseph in Egypt (Continued)

While Joseph was still confined in prison, an event occurred which formed a turning-point in his life. Pharaoh became offended with two of his officers, the chief baker and the chief butler, and they were cast into prison, and, as it appears, were placed under Joseph's especial care. One morning he observed that they were looking very sad. He kindly inquired, "Wherefore look ye so sadly today? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you." Then the butler related to Joseph his dream, which he interpreted, that after three days the butler would be restored to the king's favor, and deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand as he had formerly done.

The chief butler was filled with gratitude to Joseph because of the interest he had manifested for him, and the kind treatment he had received at his hands; and, above all, for relieving his distress of mind, by interpreting the dream. Then Joseph, in a very touching manner, alluded to his own captivity, and entreated him, "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into a dungeon."

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he was encouraged to make known his dream. As soon as he had related it, Joseph

looked sad. He understood its terrible meaning. Joseph possessed a kind, sympathizing heart, yet his high sense of duty led him to give the truthful interpretation. He told the chief baker that the three baskets upon his head meant three days; and that, as in his dream, the birds ate the baked meats out of the upper basket, so they would eat his flesh as he hung upon a tree.

"And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." The butler was guilty of the sin of ingratitude. After he had obtained relief from his anxiety by Joseph's cheering interpretation, he thought that he should, if restored to his position, certainly remember the captive Joseph, and speak in his favor to the king. He had seen the interpretation of the dream exactly fulfilled, yet in his prosperity he forgot Joseph in his affliction and confinement. Ingratitude is regarded by the Lord as among the most aggravating sins. But although abhorred by God and man, it is of daily occurrence.

Two years longer Joseph remained in his gloomy prison. The Lord then gave Pharaoh remarkable dreams. The king was troubled because he could not understand them. He called for the magicians and wise men of Egypt, and related his dreams to them, but was greatly disappointed to find that with all their magic and boasted wisdom, they could not explain them. The perplexity and distress of the king increased. As the chief butler saw his anxiety, the thought of Joseph came to his mind, and at the same time a conviction of his forgetfulness and ingratitude. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day." He then related to the king the dreams which he and the chief baker had, which troubled them as the dreams now troubled the king, and said, "And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told

him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

It was humiliating to Pharaoh to turn away from the magicians and wise men of his kingdom to a Hebrew servant. But his learned and wise men have failed him, and he will now condescend to accept the humble services of a slave, if his troubled mind can obtain relief.

"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Joseph's answer to the king shows his strong faith and humble trust in God. He modestly disclaims all honor of possessing in himself superior wisdom to interpret. He tells the king that his knowledge is not greater than that of those whom he has consulted. "It is not in me." God alone can explain these mysteries. "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; and behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and they fed in a meadow; and behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and the ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

"And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good; and behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good

ears; and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.

"And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one. God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine."

Joseph told the king that there would be seven years of great plenty. Everything would grow in abundance. Fields and gardens would yield more plentifully than ever before. And these seven years of abundance were to be followed by seven years of famine. The years of plenty would be given that he might prepare for the coming dearth. "And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt."

The king believed all that Joseph had said. He felt assured that God was with him, and was impressed with the fact that he was the most suitable man to be placed at the head of affairs. He did not despise him because he was a Hebrew slave, for he saw that he possessed an excellent spirit. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath sheweth thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

January 15, 1880

Christ's Followers the Light of the World

That religion which leads its subjects to enclose themselves in monastic walls, excluding themselves from their fellow men, and not doing the good they might, cannot be the light of the world. The world is no better for their living in it, because they shed no beams of light in good works. These live for themselves, and bring no glory to the Master, for they hide away from man as though ashamed of the light which they claim to have.

The "well done" will not be spoken to this class. Christ is our example. He sought for men wherever he could find them; in private houses, in the public streets, in the synagogues, or by the lake side, that he might let his light shine upon those who in the darkness of error, needed it so much.

The messengers of God should labor as Christ labored. They may look to him in faith expecting that he will help them. We cannot trust him too much. We cannot place too high an estimate upon his power and willingness to save to the uttermost all who come unto him. Ministers who are trying to teach others the way to life are not all acquainted with the way themselves. They have not received from Jesus, the light of the world, beams of light to shine forth to others in good works. They are not willing to give up their will and their plans and be led by the divine hand, and thus connect with the Lord of light that they may not walk in darkness. Many will not deny self and lift the cross and follow where Jesus leads. He has said "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

When the soul is illuminated by God's Spirit, the whole character is elevated, the mental conceptions are enlarged, and the affections no longer centering upon self, shine forth in good works to others, attracting them to

the beauty and brightness of Christ's glory.

The dear Saviour loved his disciples. His own heart was grieved and wounded at the disappointment they would experience in the near future, for he knew his steps were already leading in the path to Calvary. He sought opportunities to speak with them alone, without the jealous eyes of the Pharisees upon them. He would tell them plainly in regard to the trials which they must endure for his name's sake. Their physical and moral courage was to endure a severe test and he would prepare them for the ordeal. His lessons to them were at a time of a positive and exacting character. He could make his discourses terribly impressive. He said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven." He would have them understand that unless they were guarded, outward forms and a round of ceremonies would take the place of the inner work of the grace of God upon the heart. It was not the sticklers of the law that would be justified, but the doer of the will of our Father which is in Heaven.

He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; for what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his holy angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Those teachers who ignore works and would teach that all you have to do is to believe in Christ, are rebuked by the Saviour of the world. Faith is made perfect by works. The cry will come to us from the servers of Mammon: You are too exacting; we cannot be saved by works. Was Christ exacting? He placed the salvation of man, not upon his believing, not upon his profession, but upon his faith made perfect by his works. Doing, and not saying merely, was required of the followers of Christ. Principle is always exacting. Our country claims of fathers and mothers, their sons, the brothers, the husbands, to be given up, to leave their

homes for the field of carnage and bloodshed. They must go and face peril, endure privation and hunger, weariness and loneliness; they must make long marches, footsore and weary, through heat of summer and through winter's cold; they run the risk of life. They are compelled to follow the commander. Sometimes they are not even allowed time to eat. And all this severe experience is in consequence of sin. There is an enemy to meet, an enemy to be resisted; enemies of our country will destroy her peace and bring disaster and ruin, unless driven back and repulsed. Conquer or die is the motto.

Thus it is with the Christian warfare. We have an enemy which we must meet, who is vigilant; who is not off his guard one moment. The claims of our country are not higher than the claims of God. If hardships are borne and trials endured by our soldiers fighting in behalf of the country to obtain the mastery and bring into obedience the rebellious, how much more willing should the soldiers of Christ endure privation, self denial, and any taxation for Christ's sake. The captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering that he might bring many sons and daughters to the Lord. We are standing under the blood-stained banner of the cross of Christ. We are to meet Satan and his host. We must conquer in the name of Jesus or be conquered. Armed with the mind of Christ we shall be more than overcomers. As faithful soldiers of the cross we are not to fight against principalities and powers, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is no rest in this war, no release. Obedience and faith must characterize us as Christ's servants. Our Redeemer unfolded before his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the chief priests and elders, and be killed and be raised again from the dead the third day. He was already standing under the shadow of the cross. He fully comprehended the great work he came to do, and he would have his disciples understand the greatness of this work, and the responsibilities which would rest upon them in the performance of their duty in carrying forward his work when he should leave them. The grandeur and glory of the future life is in the thoughts and feelings which exercise the minds of the disciples while they

are listening to the words spoken by the great Teacher. If ministers of Christ, who attempt to teach the truth to others, would look constantly to Jesus as to a tried friend, believing in him that he will relieve their necessities and that they will have his sympathy and support, they would find the blessedness and joy that can come only from the Light of the world.

This light, shining upon man, quickens the paralyzed capacities, kindles to a flame the spiritual life. It is the work of Christ to enlighten, to lift up man, darkened and degraded, because the slave of sin, and make him a fit companion of the holy angels in the highest Heavens. He calls men to carry forward his work, not by the words of eloquence and oratory alone, but in letting their light shine forth to others in good works. The love which was exhibited by Christ for fallen man, is the golden chain which binds the believing heart in union with the heart of Christ. Christians connected with him, answer to his claims of willing service to love and labor for the souls for whom he died.

Prayer, earnest, humble prayer, offered in faith amid the hours of darkness and gloom, brings light from Heaven to the soul. Peace comes to every heart for every prayer offered in faith. The soul is lifted above the clouds of darkness and error, conflicts and passion. Light, precious light, flashes from the throne of God, and is fitting up feeble man to become God's messengers in shedding light to the world. Trials patiently borne, blessings gratefully received, temptations manfully resisted, meekness, kindness, mercy and love exhibited, are the lights which shine forth in the character before the world, revealing the contrast with the darkness which comes of selfishness and unrestrained passion of the natural heart, into which the light of life has never shone.

At each large gathering of the people, the disciples of Christ anticipated that the time had come for him to commence his reign as Prince upon the throne of David.

As they witnessed his power from day to day in works no other man had ever done or ever could do, they kept hope active in their hearts that he would one day surprise them with an open avowal of his kingly authority. They did not fully renounce the idea that his earthly kingdom would be established, the Roman yoke be broken from their necks, and they enjoy with him great honor and glory. This sermon upon the mount disappointed their expectations of earthly glory. Upon this occasion Christ more clearly revealed the character of his kingdom and the principles which should govern it given in the beatitudes. Matthew 5. In this discourse was embodied the principles of the moral law, laying down at once the whole sum and substance of the plan of true religion in specifying the kind of characters which would be essential for the subjects of his kingdom.

He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God, while many who have a form of godliness and not the power, may be content to speak the truth in a spirit of contention, engaging in controversy, talking long and loud in a bitter spirit. Such reflect no light, while the servant of God who has kindled his taper from the divine altar and is obeying the truth, is a living, walking, working representative of the power of the truth upon the heart. He is a living epistle known and read of all men. Such a life is the light of the world; of such Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren. He will say of them as of Nathanael "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Those who obey the commandments of God are here represented by Christ as the fit subjects of his kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, who feel that all their hopes of Heaven and happiness depend wholly upon the merit of Christ, that there is no merit or worthiness in them. Happy are they that mourn their own unlikeness to Christ, mourn their own sinfulness and grieve over the sins of their neighbors.

These are represented by the prophet of God as the sighing and crying ones because of the abominations done in the land. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful and the pure in heart, and happy are the peace-makers. Blessed are they who shall suffer persecution, because they cherish and exemplify in their life these heavenly attributes, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Jesus prayed! The majesty of Heaven prayed! He wept in behalf of man. Prayer, faithful, earnest prayer will move the arm that moves the world. The minister of Christ must pray if he would have the refreshing from the presence of God. The church must pray much if they would walk in the light, as he is in the light.

January 22, 1880

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 16--Joseph in Egypt (Continued)

Although Joseph was exalted as a ruler over all the land, he did not forget God. The thought that he was a stranger in a strange land, separated from his father and his brethren, often caused him sadness, but he fully believed that God's hand had overruled his course, to place him in an important position. And depending on God continually, he performed all the duties of his office, as ruler over the land of Egypt, with faithfulness. "And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities, the food of the field which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number."

Joseph traveled throughout all the land of Egypt, giving command to build immense storehouses, and using his clear head and excellent judgment to aid in the preparations to secure food necessary for the long years of famine. At length the seven years of plenty were ended. "And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said; and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt."

The famine was severe in the land of Canaan also. Jacob and his sons were troubled. Their supply of food was nearly exhausted, and they looked forward to the future with perplexity. Starvation stared them in the face. At length Jacob heard of the wonderful provisions which the King of Egypt had made, and that the people of all the surrounding countries journeyed to Egypt to buy corn. And he said to his sons, "Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him."

Jacob's sons came with the crowd of buyers to purchase corn of Joseph; and they "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." He knew them at once, but they failed to recognize him. There was, indeed, little semblance between the mighty governor of Egypt, and the stripling whom, twenty-two years previous, they had sold to the Ishmaelites. As he saw his brethren stooping and making their obeisance, his dreams came back to his memory, and the scenes of the past rose up vividly before him. His keen eye again surveyed the group before him, and he saw that Benjamin was missing. Had he also fallen a victim to the treacherous cruelty of those savage men? He determined to know the truth. "Ye are spies," he said, "to see the nakedness of the land, ye are come."

They answered, "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies." He wished to learn if they possessed the same haughty spirit as when he was with them, and also to lead them to make some disclosures in regard to their home, yet he well knew how deceitful their answers might be. He repeated the charge, and they replied, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is still with our father, and one is not." They felt humbled in their adversity, and manifested grief rather than anger at the suspicions of Joseph. He professed to doubt the

truthfulness of their story, and told them that he would prove them, and that they should not go forth from Egypt until their youngest brother come hither. He proposed to keep them in confinement until one should go and bring their brother, to prove their words, whether there was any truth in them. If they would not consent to this, he would regard them as spies.

The sons of Jacob felt unwilling to consent to this arrangement. It would require some time for one to go to their father for Benjamin, and meanwhile their families would suffer for food. And who among them would undertake the journey alone, leaving his brethren in prison? How could that one meet his father? They had seen his distress at the supposed death of Joseph, and now he would feel that he was deprived of all his sons. They said, further, It may be that we shall lose our lives, or be made slaves. And if one go back to our father for Benjamin, and bring him here, he may be made a slave also, and our father will surely die. They decided that they would all remain, and suffer together, rather than to bring greater sorrow upon their father by the loss of his much-loved Benjamin.

The three days of confinement were days of bitter sorrow with Jacob's sons. They reflected upon their past wrong course, especially their cruelty to Joseph. They knew that if they were convicted of being spies, and could bring no evidence to clear themselves, they must all die, or become slaves. They doubted whether any effort which any one of them might make would induce their father to consent that Benjamin should go from him, after the cruel death, which he supposed, that Joseph had suffered. They had sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them also to become slaves.

Joseph considers that his father and the families of his brethren may be suffering for food, and he is convinced that his brethren have repented of their cruel treatment of him, and that they would in no case treat Benjamin as they have treated him. On the third day he said to them, "This do, and live;

for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." They agreed to accept this proposition, but expressed to one another little hope that their father will let Benjamin return with them. They accuse themselves, and one another, in regard to their treatment of Joseph: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben, who had formed the plan for delivering him at Dothan, now added, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Joseph had been conversing with them through an interpreter, and they had no suspicion that he understood them. Their words opened the long-closed fountains of his heart, and he could scarcely restrain his feelings before the company. He went out and wept. On returning, he took Simeon and had him bound before them. In the cruel treatment of their brother, Simeon had been the instigator and principal actor, and it was for this reason that the choice fell upon him.

Before dismissing his brethren for their homes, Joseph directed his steward to fill every man's sack with grain, and to place at the mouth of each the silver that had been brought in payment. Provender for the beasts on the homeward journey was also supplied. On the way one of the brothers, opening his sack for such supply, was surprised to find his money there. On his hastening to make known the fact to the others, they were alarmed and perplexed, and said one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us? Shall we consider this as a token of good from the Lord, or has he suffered it to occur to punish us for our sins, and plunge us still deeper in affliction? They acknowledged that God had seen their sins, and that he was now visiting them for their transgressions.

Jacob was anxiously awaiting the return of his sons, and on their arrival

the whole encampment gathered eagerly around them as they related to their father all that had transpired. Alarm and apprehension filled every heart. One of their number was imprisoned in a strange land as a pledge for the appearance there of the youngest and now the favorite son of the grief-stricken patriarch. There was something mysterious in the conduct of the governor of Egypt, and this mystery was increased in their minds when, as they emptied their sacks, each was found to contain the owner's bag of money at its mouth. In his distress the aged father exclaimed, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." Reuben answered, "Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand and I will bring him to thee again." This rash speech did not relieve the mind of Jacob. His answer was, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

January 29, 1880

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 16--Joseph in Egypt (Continued)

The drouth still continued in the land of Canaan; and, as time passed on, the grain that had been brought from Egypt was consumed. The sons of Jacob well knew how useless and even dangerous it would be to present themselves, without Benjamin, before the prime minister of Egypt; they knew, too, how desperate must be any effort to change their father's resolution, and they awaited the issue in silence. The aged man saw the faces of all in the encampment grow pale and thin with hunger; he heard the cries of the children for bread; and at last he said, "Go again, buy us a little food."

Judah answered, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you." Seeing that the resolution of his father was giving way, he added, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones; and he offered to be surety for his brother, and to take upon himself the father's blame forever if he did not restore Benjamin to him.

Jacob could no longer withhold his consent, and he bade his sons prepare for the journey. They were to take to the ruler a present of such things as the destitute country afforded, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds, also "double money" in their sacks,-that formerly returned, and some for the present purchase. "Take also your

brother, and arise, go again unto the man."

As his sons were about to start on their doubtful journey, the aged father arose, and, standing in their midst, raised his hands to Heaven and pronounced on them a gracious benediction: "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

So they went down again into Egypt, and presented themselves before Joseph. As his eye fell upon Benjamin, from whom he had been so long separated, he was deeply moved. He gave no token of recognition, however, but ordered the ruler of his house to take them to his princely residence, and there prepare for an entertainment. They were greatly alarmed at this, fearing that it was for the purpose of calling them to account for the money found in their sacks. They thought that it might have been intentionally placed there, to furnish occasion to make them slaves, and that they were brought into the governor's palace better to accomplish this object. They sought the steward of the house, and related to him the circumstances, and in proof of their innocence informed him that they had brought back the money found in their sacks, also other money to buy food; and they added, "We cannot tell who put the money in our sacks."

The man replied, "Peace be to you; fear not; your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money." These words relieved their anxiety, and when Simeon, who had been released from prison, joined them, they felt that God was indeed gracious unto them, as their father had entreated that he would be.

When the governor came home, they offered him their presents, making before him the customary obeisance. Again his dreams came into his mind. There had been one including his father; and now, after the usual salutations to his guests, he hastened to ask, "Is your father well, the old man of whom

ye spake? Is he yet alive?" "Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive," was the answer with another obeisance. Then his eye rested upon Benjamin, his own mother's son, and as if to make the matter sure he asked, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? God be gracious unto thee, my son;"--but, overpowered by feelings of tenderness, he could say no more without betraying his emotion. He hastened to his own private chamber, and there found relief in tears.

Having recovered his self-possession and removed all traces of tears, he returned, and ordered the feast to be prepared. Among the Egyptians, caste was very strict, and they never ate with the people of another nation. Separate tables were therefore set for them, another for Joseph's brethren and still another for the governor of the kingdom. When seated at the table his brethren were surprised to see that they were arranged in exact order, the eldest being placed first, and the youngest last, as was customary when their ages were known. Joseph sent a portion of food to each, Benjamin's five times as large as any of the others. He did this, not only to show his particular regard for Benjamin, but to prove his brethren, to see if they regarded their youngest brother with the same feelings of envy and hatred which they had manifested toward himself. Still supposing that Joseph did not understand their language, they freely conversed with one another in his presence, therefore he had a good opportunity to learn the true state of their feelings.

Still he desired further proof. There could be no excuse for detaining them longer; and, after directing his steward to conceal his drinking-cup of silver in the sack of the youngest, he let them go.

Joyfully they set out on the homeward journey. Simeon was with them, their sacks were filled with grain, and they felt that they had escaped safely from the perils that had seemed to surround them. But they had only reached the outskirts of the city when they were overtaken by the governor's steward,

who uttered the scathing inquiry, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby, indeed, he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing." Kings and rulers had a cup from which they drank, which was considered a sure detective if any poisonous substance was placed in their drink. To the accusation of the steward the travelers answered, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen."

The steward said, "Now also will it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my servant and ye shall be blameless."

The search began immediately. The sacks were placed on the ground, and the steward examined them all, beginning with Reuben's and going down to the sack of the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack!

At this discovery all were speechless. To express their utter wretchedness they rent their garments, as was the custom when in deep affliction. As they sadly returned to the city they felt that the hand of God was against them for their past wickedness. The fears of their father, they thought, would now be fully realized. By their own promise, Benjamin was doomed to a life of slavery."

They followed the steward to the palace, and, finding the prime minister still there, they fell before him on the ground. "What deed is this that ye have done?" he said. "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? Joseph asked this question to draw forth from his brethren an acknowledgment of their past wrong course, that their true feelings might be more fully revealed. He did not claim any power of divination, but was willing his brethren

should believe that he could read the secret acts of their lives. Judah answered, "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." The reply was, God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

In his intense distress, Judah now drew near to the ruler, and exclaimed, "O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my Lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh;" and he related to him the reluctance of his father to let Benjamin come with them to Egypt, the father's deep grief at the loss of Joseph, and that Benjamin was all that was left of the mother whom Jacob loved. "Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life), it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest per- adventure I see the evil that come on my father."

Joseph was satisfied. He had proved his brethren and had seen in them the fruits of true repentance for their sins. He was so deeply affected that he could no longer conceal his feelings, and he gave orders that all but these men should leave the hall; then he wept aloud, and cried out, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" His brethren could not answer him, for surprise and terror. They could not realize that the ruler of Egypt was their brother Joseph, whom they had envied and would have murdered, but were finally content to sell as a slave. All their ill-treatment of him passed before them.

They remembered how they had despised his dreams; and had labored to prevent their fulfillment. Yet they had acted their part in fulfilling these dreams; and now they stood before him condemned and amazed. As Joseph saw the confusion he said to them, "Come near to me, I pray you;" they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." He nobly sought to make this occasion as easy for his brethren as possible. He had no desire to increase their embarrassment by censuring them. He felt that they had suffered enough for their cruelty to him, and he endeavored to comfort them. He went on, "For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him."

They humbly confessed the wrongs which they had committed against Joseph, and entreated his forgiveness. They were greatly rejoiced to find that he was alive; for they had suffered the keenest anxiety and remorse since

their cruelty toward him. Joseph gladly forgave his brethren, and sent them away abundantly supplied with provisions, and carriages, and everything necessary for the removal of all their families and attendants to Egypt. On Benjamin he bestowed more valuable presents than upon his other brethren. Then, fearing that disputes and divisions would rise among them on the homeward journey, he gave them, as they were about leaving him the significant charge, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

February 5, 1880

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels

Chapter 16--Joseph in Egypt. (Concluded)

The sons of Jacob returned to their father with the joyful tidings, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." At first the old man was overwhelmed; he could not believe what he heard, yet their words brought a faintness to his heart. But when he saw the carriages and the long line of loaded animals, and when Benjamin was at his side once more, he felt reassured, and, in the fullness of his joy, exclaimed. "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die." The brothers then made their humiliating confession to their father, and entreated his forgiveness, for their wicked treatment of Joseph. Jacob had not suspected them of such cruelty, but he saw that God had overruled it all for good, and he forgave and blessed his erring children.

Jacob and his sons, with their families and numerous attendants, were soon on their way to Egypt. With gladness of heart they pursued their journey, and when they came to Beersheba the aged patriarch offered grateful sacrifices, and entreated the Lord to grant them an assurance that he would go with them. In a vision of the night the divine words came to Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

The meeting of Joseph and his father was very affective. Joseph left his chariot, and ran to meet his father on foot, and embraced him, and they wept over each other. "And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die since I have

seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

Joseph took five of his brethren to present to Pharaoh, and receive from him a grant of land for their future home. He did not wish them to be exposed to the temptations which must surround them if engaged in the king's special service, amid the corrupting, idolatrous influences at court; therefore he counseled them, when the king should ask them of their occupation, to tell him frankly that they were shepherds. The monarch, on learning this fact, would not seek to exalt them to some honorable position for Joseph's sake; for the occupation of a shepherd was regarded in Egypt as degrading. When taken before Pharaoh they followed the wise counsel of their God-fearing brother; and the king gave Joseph permission to settle his father and his brethren in the best part of the land of Egypt. He selected Goshen, a well-watered, fertile country, affording good pasture for their flocks. Here, also, they could worship God, undisturbed by the ceremonies attending the idolatrous service of the Egyptians. The country round about Goshen was inhabited by the Israelites, until with power and mighty signs and wonders, God brought his people out of Egypt.

Not long after their arrival in Egypt, Joseph brought his father also to be presented to Pharaoh. The patriarch was unawed by the pomp of royalty, and the magnificence surrounding him. Amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh. The king struck by his venerable appearance, inquired, "How old art thou?" Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Jacob had seen much trouble and suffered much perplexity. The jealousy of his wives had brought a long train of evils, and the sinful course of some of his children had made the father's life very bitter. But his last years were more peaceful. His sons had turned from their evil ways, Joseph had been restored

to him, and, surrounded by every comfort which the prime minister of Egypt could bestow, and in the society of his children, he passed down gently and calmly toward the grave.

A short time before his death, his children gathered about him to receive his blessing, and to listen to his last words of counsel. As he addressed them for the last time the Spirit of God rested upon him and he laid open before them their past lives, and also uttered prophecies which reached far into the future. Beginning with the eldest, he mentioned his sons by name, presenting before those who had followed a sinful course the light in which God regarded their deeds of violence, and that he would visit them for their sins. Reuben had taken no part in selling Joseph, but previous to that transaction he had grievously sinned. Concerning him, Jacob uttered the following prophecy: "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power; unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.

He then prophesied in regard to Simeon and Levi, who had practiced deception to the Shechemites, and then, in a most cruel, revengeful manner, destroyed them. These brothers were also the most guilty in the case of Joseph. "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

In regard to Judah, the fathers words of inspiration were more joyful. His prophetic eye looked hundreds of years into the future, to the birth of Christ, and he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

Jacob predicted a cheerful future for most of his sons. Especially for Joseph he uttered words of eloquence of a happy character: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)" "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Jacob was an affectionate father. He had no resentful feelings toward his sorrowing children. He had forgiven them. He loved them to the last. But God, by the spirit of prophecy, elevated the mind of Jacob above his natural feelings. In his last hours, angels were all around him, and the power of God rested upon him. His paternal feelings would have led him to utter, in his dying testimony, only expressions of love and tenderness. But under the influence of inspiration he uttered truth, although painful.

After the death of Jacob, Joseph's brethren were filled with gloom and distress. They thought that Joseph had concealed his resentment, out of respect for their father; and now that he was dead, he would be revenged for the ill treatment he had suffered at their hands. They dared not appear before him, but sent a messenger, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." This message affected Joseph to tears, and, encouraged by this, his brethren came and fell down before him, with the words, "Behold, we be thy servants." He met them with the comforting and assuring reply, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto

good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. Joseph loved his brethren, and he could not bear the thought that they regarded him as harboring a spirit of revenge toward them.

The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ, Joseph's brethren purposed to kill him, but were finally content to sell him as a slave, to prevent his becoming greater than themselves. They thought they had placed him where they would be no more troubled with his dreams, and where there would not be a possibility of their fulfillment. But the very course which they pursued, God overruled to bring about that which they designed never should take place--that he should have dominion over them.

The chief priests and elders were jealous of Christ, fearing that he would draw the attention of the people away from themselves. They knew that he was doing greater works than they ever had done, or ever could perform; and they knew that if he was suffered to continue his teachings, he would become higher in authority than they, and might become king of the Jews. They agreed together to prevent this by privately taking him, and hiring witnesses to testify falsely against him, that they might condemn him and put him to death. They would not accept him as their king, but cried out, Crucify him! crucify him! But by murdering the Son of God, they were bringing about the very thing they sought to prevent. Joseph, by being sold by his brethren into Egypt, became a saviour to his father's family. Yet this fact did not lessen the guilt of his brethren. The crucifixion of Christ by his enemies made him the Redeemer of mankind, the Saviour of the fallen race, and ruler over the whole world. But the crime of his enemies was just as heinous as though God's providential hand had not controlled events for his own glory and the good of man.

Joseph walked with God. And when he was imprisoned, and suffered because of his innocence, he meekly bore it without murmuring. His self-

control, his patience in adversity, and his unwavering fidelity, are left on record for the benefit of all who should afterward live on the earth. When Joseph's brethren acknowledged their sin before him, he freely forgave them, and showed by his acts of benevolence and love that he harbored no resentful feelings for their former cruel conduct toward him.

The life of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was a pattern of benevolence, goodness, and holiness. Yet he was despised and insulted, mocked and derided, for no other reason than because his righteous life was a constant rebuke to sin. His enemies would not be satisfied until he was given into their hands, that they might put him to a shameful death. He died for the guilty race; and, while suffering the most cruel torture, meekly forgave his murderers. He rose from the dead, ascended up to his Father, and received all power and authority, and returned to the earth again to impart it to his disciples. He gave gifts unto men. And all who have ever come to him repentant, confessing their sins, he has received into his favor, and freely pardoned. And if they remain true to him, he will exalt them to his throne, and make them his heirs to the inheritance which he has purchased with his own blood.

February 12, 1880

The Great Controversy

Birth and Early Life of Moses

The children of Israel were not slaves. They had never sold their cattle, their lands, and themselves to Pharaoh for food, as many of the Egyptians had done. They had been granted a portion of land wherein to dwell, on account of the services which Joseph had rendered to the Egyptian nation. Pharaoh appreciated his wisdom in the management of all things connected with the kingdom, especially in the preparation for the long years of famine. As a token of his gratitude, he not only offered to Jacob and his sons the best part of the land of Egypt as a dwelling-place, but exempted them from all taxation, and granted to Joseph the privilege of supplying them liberally with food through the whole continuance of that dreadful famine. The king said to his counselors, Are we not indebted to the God of Joseph, and to him, for this abundant supply of food? While other nations are perishing, we have enough. His management has greatly enriched the kingdom.

"And Joseph died and his brethren, and all that generation." And "there rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," By this we are to understand, not one who was ignorant of Joseph's great services to the nation, but who wished to make no recognition of them, and, as much as possible, to bury them in oblivion. "And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land."

The Israelites had already become very numerous. "They were fruitful,

and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Under Joseph's fostering care, and the favor of the king who was then ruling, the Israelites had been advanced to positions of honor and trust, and had spread rapidly over the land. But they had kept themselves a distinct race, having nothing in common with the Egyptians in customs or religion; and their increasing numbers excited the fears of the king and his people, lest in case of war they should join themselves with the enemies of their masters. They had, however, become too useful to be spared. Many of them were able and understanding workmen, and the king needed such laborers for the creation of his magnificent palaces and halls. Accordingly he ranked them with that class of slaves who had sold their possessions and themselves to the kingdom. Taskmasters were set over them, and their slavery soon became complete. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor." "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew."

The king and his counselors had hoped to subdue the Israelites with hard labor, and thus decrease their numbers and crush out their independent spirit. And because they failed to accomplish their purpose they hardened their hearts to go still further. Orders were now issued to the women whose employment gave them facilities for such acts to destroy every Israelite male child at its birth. Satan was the mover in these matters. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Hebrews, and he thought that if he could move the king to destroy the children, the purpose of God would be defeated. The women feared God; they dared not murder the Hebrew children; and the command of the king was not obeyed. The Lord approved their course, and prospered them; but the king became very angry when he learned that his orders had been disregarded. He then made the command more urgent and extensive. He charged all his people to keep strict watch, saying, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every

daughter ye shall save alive."

While this cruel decree was in full force, Moses was born. His mother concealed him for three months, and then finding that she could keep him no longer with any safety, she prepared a little vessel of bulrushes, making it water-tight by means of lime and pitch, and after laying the child therein she placed it among the flags at the river's brink. His sister lingered near, apparently indifferent, yet all the time anxiously watching to see what would become of her little brother. Angels were also watching, that no harm should come to the helpless infant, placed there by an affectionate mother, and committed to the care of God by her earnest prayers. And these angels directed the footsteps of Pharaoh's daughter to the river, near the very spot where lay the innocent stranger. Her attention was attracted to the little vessel, and she sent one of her waiting-maids to fetch it. When she had removed the cover she saw a lovely babe; "and behold the babe wept, and she had compassion on him." She knew that a tender Hebrew mother had taken this means to preserve the life of her much-loved babe, and she decided at once that it should be her son. The sister of Moses immediately came forward and inquired, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And her mission was given.

Joyfully sped the sister to her mother, and related to her the happy news, and conducted her with all haste to Pharaoh's daughter. The child was committed to the mother to nurse, and she was liberally paid for the bringing up of her own son. Thankfully did this mother enter upon her now safe and happy task. She believed that God had preserved the life of her child, and she faithfully improved the precious opportunity of educating him for a life of usefulness. She was more particular in his instruction than in that of her other children; for she felt confident that he was preserved for some great work. By her faithful teachings she instilled into his young mind the fear of God, and love for truthfulness and justice. She earnestly pleaded with God that her son might be preserved from every corrupting influence. She taught him to

bow and pray to God, the living God, for he alone could hear him and help him in every emergency. She sought to impress his mind with the sinfulness of idolatry. She knew that he was soon to be separated from her influence, and given up to his adopted royal mother, to be surrounded with influences calculated to make him disbelieve in the existence of the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

The instructions which Moses received from his parents were such as to fortify his mind, and shield him from being corrupted with sin, and becoming proud amid the splendor and extravagance of court life. He had a clear mind and an understanding heart, and never lost the pious impressions he received in youth. His mother kept him as long as she could, but was obliged to separate from him when he was about twelve years old, and he then became the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Here Satan was defeated. By moving Pharaoh to destroy the male children, he had thought to turn aside the purposes of God, and destroy the one whom God would raise up to deliver his people. But that very decree, appointing the Hebrew children to death, was the means overruled by God to place Moses in the royal family, where he had advantages to become a learned man, and eminently qualified to lead his people from Egypt. Pharaoh expected to exalt his adopted grandson to the throne. He educated him to stand at the head of the armies of Egypt, and lead them to battle. Moses was a favorite with Pharaoh's host, and was honored because he conducted warfare with superior skill and wisdom. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." The Egyptians regarded him as a remarkable character.

Angels instructed Moses that God had chosen him to deliver the children of Israel. The rulers among the Israelites were also taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was nigh, and that Moses was the man whom God would use to accomplish this work. Moses thought that his people were to be

delivered by warfare, and that he would stand at the head of the Hebrew host, to lead them against the Egyptian armies. Having this in view, he guarded his affections that they might not be strongly placed upon his adopted mother or upon Pharaoh, lest it should be more difficult for him to remain free to do the will of God.

The pride and splendor displayed at the Egyptian court, and the flattery he received, could not make him forget his despised brethren in slavery. He would not be induced, even with the promise of wearing the crown of Egypt, to identify himself with the Egyptians, and engage with them in their idolatrous worship. He would not forsake his oppressed brethren, whom he knew to be God's chosen people. The king commanded that Moses should be instructed in the worship of the Egyptians. This work was committed to the priests, but they could not, by any threats or promises of reward, prevail upon Moses to engage with them in their heathen ceremonies. He was threatened with the loss of the crown, and that he would be disowned by Pharaoh's daughter, unless he renounced his Hebrew faith. But he was firm in his determination to render homage to no object save God, the maker of the heavens and the earth, to whom alone reverence and honor are due. He even reasoned with the priests and idolatrous worshipers upon their superstitious veneration of senseless objects. They could not answer him. Yet his firmness in this respect was tolerated, because he was the king's adopted grandson, and was a universal favorite with the most influential in the kingdom.

February 12, 1880

Retribution For Sin

The Lord gave Jeremiah a message of reproof to bear to his people, charging them with the continual rejection of God's counsel; saying, "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers."

God plead with them not to provoke him to anger with the work of their hands and hearts; "but they hearkened not." Jeremiah then predicted the captivity of the Jews, as their punishment for not heeding the word of the Lord. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise his disobedient people. Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence, and the warnings they had despised. God had long delayed his judgments because of his unwillingness to humiliate his chosen people; but now he would visit his displeasure upon them, as a last effort to check them in their evil course.

In these days he has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of his people. He entreats the erring ones who profess his name, to repent and turn from their evil ways, in the same manner that he did of old. He predicts the dangers before them, by the mouth of his chosen servants now as then. He sounds his note of warning, and reproves sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah. But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel, as did ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given his servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the

retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, he will not always stay his hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment.

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the people of Judah who came there to worship, those things which he would give him to speak, diminishing not a word; that they might hearken and turn from their evil ways. Then God would repent of the punishment which he had purposed to do unto them because of their wickedness. The unwillingness of the Lord to chastise his erring people is here vividly shown. He stays his judgments, he pleads with them to return to their allegiance.

He brought them out of bondage that they might faithfully serve himself, the only true and living God; but they had wandered into idolatry, they had slighted the warnings given them by his prophets; yet he defers his chastisement to give them one more opportunity to repent and avert the retribution for their sin. Through his chosen prophet, he now sends them a clear and positive warning, and lays before them the only course by which they can escape the punishment which they deserve. This is a full repentance of their sin, and a turning from the evil of their ways.

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to say to the people: "Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." They understood this reference to Shiloh, and the time when the Philistines overcame Israel and the ark of God was taken.

The sin of Eli was in passing lightly over the iniquity of his sons, who were occupying sacred offices. The neglect of the father to reprove and restrain his sons, brought upon Israel a fearful calamity. The sons of Eli were

slain, Eli himself lost his life, the ark of God was taken from Israel, and thirty thousand of their people were slain. All this was because sin was lightly regarded, and allowed to remain in their midst. What a lesson is this to men holding responsible positions in the church of God! It adjures them to faithfully remove the wrongs that dishonor the cause of truth.

Israel thought, in the days of Samuel, that the presence of the ark containing the commandments of God, would gain them the victory over the Philistines, whether or not they repented of their wicked works. Just so the Jews, in Jeremiah's time, believed that the divinely appointed services of the temple being strictly observed, would preserve them from the just punishment of their evil course.

The same danger exists today among that people who profess to be the repository of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments should preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reprov'd of evil, and blame God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep his law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey his word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today, as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which he will no longer delay his judgments. The correction of God through his chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity. The desolation of Jerusalem stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel.

When the priests and the people heard the message that Jeremiah delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they were very angry, and declared that he should die. They were boisterous in their denunciations of him, crying, "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying. This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house

of the Lord." Thus was the message of God despised, and the servant with whom he entrusted it threatened with death. The priests, the unfaithful prophets, and all the people turned in wrath upon him who would not speak to them smooth things and prophesy deceit.

The unfaltering servants of God have usually suffered the bitterest persecution from false teachers of religion. But the true prophets will ever prefer reproach and even death rather than unfaithfulness to God. The Infinite eye is upon the instruments of divine reproof, and they bear a heavy responsibility. But God regards the injury done to them through misrepresentation, falsehood or abuse, the same as though it were done unto himself, and will punish accordingly.

The princes of Judah had heard concerning the words of Jeremiah, and came up from the king's house, and sat in the entry of the Lord's house. "Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." But Jeremiah stood boldly before the princes and the people declaring, "The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threats of those in high authority, and the clamoring of the rabble, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life. But the courage with which he discharged his painful duty commanded the respect of the people, and

turned the princes of Israel in his favor. Thus God raised up defenders for his servant. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures which they advocated.

The influence of these powerful persons produced a reaction in the minds of the people. Then the elders united in protesting against the decision of the priests regarding the fate of Jeremiah. They cited the case of Micah, who prophesied judgments upon Jerusalem, saying, "Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountains of the house as the high places of a forest." They put to them the question: "Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and beseech the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls."

So, through the pleading of Ahikam and others, the prophet Jeremiah's life was spared; although many of the priests and false prophets would have been pleased had he been put to death on the plea of sedition; for they could not endure the truths that he uttered exposing their wickedness.

But Israel remained unrepented and the Lord saw that they must be punished for their sin, so he instructed Jeremiah to make yokes and bonds and place them upon his neck, and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, of the Ammonites, of Tyrus and Zidon, commanding the messengers to say that God had given all these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. That all these nations should serve him and his descendants for a certain time, till God should deliver them. They were to declare that if those nations refused to serve the king of Babylon they should be punished with the famine, with the sword, and pestilence, till they should be consumed. "Therefore," said the Lord, "Hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of

Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein."

Jeremiah declared that they were to wear the yoke of servitude for seventy years, and the captives that were already in the hands of the king of Babylon, and the vessels of the Lord's house which had been taken, were also to remain in Babylon till that time had elapsed. But at the end of the seventy years God would deliver them from their captivity, and would punish their oppressors, and bring into subjection the proud king of Babylon.

Ambassadors had come from the various nations named to consult with the king of Judah as to the matter of engaging in battle with the king of Babylon. But the prophet of God, bearing the symbols of subjection, delivered the message of the Lord to these nations, commanding them to bear it to their several kings. This was the lightest punishment that a merciful God could inflict upon so rebellious a people; but if they warred against this decree of servitude, they were to feel the full vigor of his chastisement. They were faithfully warned not to listen to their false teachers who prophesied lies.

The amazement of the assembled council of nations knew no bounds when Jeremiah, carrying the yoke of subjection about his neck, made known to them the will of God. But Hananiah, one of the false prophets against whom God had warned his people through Jeremiah, lifted up his voice in opposition to the prophecy declared. Wishing to gain the favor of the king, and his court, he affirmed that God had given him words of encouragement for the Jews. Said he: "Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon. And I will bring

again to this place Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon."

Jeremiah, in the presence of all the priests and the people, said that it was the earnest wish of his heart that God would so favor his people that the vessels of the Lord's house might be returned and the captives brought back from Babylon. But this could only be done on condition that the people repented and turned from their evil way to the obedience of God's law. Jeremiah loved his country and ardently wished that the desolation predicted might be averted by the humiliation of the people; but he knew the wish was vain. He hoped the punishment of Israel would be as light as possible; therefore he earnestly entreated them to submit to the king of Babylon for the time that the Lord specified.

He entreated them to hear the words that he spoke. He cited them to the prophecies of Hosea, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and others whose messages of reproof and warning had been similar to his own. He referred them to events which had transpired in their history in fulfillment of the prophecies of retribution for unrepented sins. Sometimes, as in this case, men had arisen in opposition to the message of God, and predicted peace and prosperity, to quiet the fears of the people, and gain the favor of those in high places. But in every past instance the judgment of God had been visited upon Israel, as the true prophets had indicated. Said he, "The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him." If Israel chose to run the risk, future developments would effectually decide which was the false prophet.

But Hananiah, incensed at this, took the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and broke it. "And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of

Babylon from the necks of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way."

He had done his work, he had warned the people of their danger, he had pointed out the only course by which they could regain the favor of God. But they had mocked his words; men in responsible positions had denounced him, and tried to arouse the people to put him to death. Yet his only crime was in faithfully delivering the message of God to an unbelieving people.

God pities the blindness and perversity of man; he sends light to their darkened understanding in reproof and threatenings which are designed to make the most exalted feel their ignorance and deplore their errors. He would cause the self-complacent to feel dissatisfied with their attainments and seek greater blessings by closer connection with Heaven.

God's plan is not to send messengers who will please and flatter sinners, he delivers no messages of peace to lull the unsanctified into carnal security. But he lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrong-doer, and pierces his soul with sharp arrows of conviction. The ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God to deepen the sense of his great need and prompt the agonizing cry "what shall I do to be saved?" The very hand that humbles to the dust, rebukes sin, and puts pride and ambition to shame, lifts up the penitent, stricken one, and inquires with deepest sympathy, "What wilt thou that I shalt do unto thee?"

When man has sinned against a holy and merciful God, there is no course for him to pursue so noble, as to sincerely repent and confess his errors in tears and bitterness of soul. This God requires of him and will accept of nothing less than a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Mrs. E. G. White

February 19, 1880

Moses

When Moses was forty years of age, an event occurred which seemed to change the whole current of his life. His soul was deeply stirred with a sense of the wrongs done to his people, and he would often leave the royal courts, to visit his brethren in their servitude, and encourage them with the assurance that it would not be always thus, that God would open the way for their deliverance. One day, while thus abroad, he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite. Moses sprang forward and slew the Egyptian. He had taken the precaution, even in this sudden burst of wrath, to see that he was unwatched, and he buried the body hastily in the sand. But the man whom he had rescued failed to keep the secret, and Moses soon found that it was known to others. The next day he saw two Hebrews contending, one of them clearly in the wrong. When Moses reproved the wrong-doer, he at once turned his rage upon his reprover and basely cast against him his previous act: "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

There could be no further hope of concealment. The whole matter was made known to the Egyptians by the envious Hebrew, and, greatly exaggerated, soon reached the ears of Pharaoh. The monarch was informed that Moses designed to make war upon the Egyptians, to overthrow their government, and make himself king. Pharaoh was exceedingly angry. He thought that this act of Moses meant much, and that there was no safety for his kingdom while the offender lived. He therefore commanded that Moses should be slain. But the servant of God became aware in season of Pharaoh's intent on his life, and he hastily left the palace and fled toward Arabia.

The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with the priest of

Midian, Jethro, a man who worshiped God, and who was highly honored by the people of all the surrounding country, for his far-seeing judgment. After a time, Moses married one of the daughters of his benefactor; and here, in the service of his father-in-law, as keeper of his flocks, he remained forty years.

Moses was too hasty in slaying the Egyptian. He supposed the people of Israel understood that God's special providence had raised him up to deliver them. But the Lord did not design to accomplish this work by warfare, as Moses thought, but by his own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to him alone. Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to bring about his purpose.

Moses had become, in every sense, a great man. As a writer, as a military leader, and as a philosopher, he had no superior. Love of truth and righteousness had become the basis of his character, and had produced a steadfastness of purpose which no fickleness of fashion, opinion, or pursuits, could influence. Courtesy, diligence, and a firm trust in God, marked his life. He was young and vigorous, overflowing with energy and manly strength. He had deeply sympathized with his brethren in their affliction, and his soul had kindled with a desire to deliver them. Surely, it would appear to human wisdom that he was in every way fitted for his work.

But God seeth not as man sees; his ways are not as ours. Moses is not yet prepared to accomplish this great work, neither are the people prepared for deliverance. He has been educated in the school of Egypt, but he has yet to pass through the stern school of discipline before he is qualified for his sacred mission. Before he can successfully govern the hosts of Israel, he must learn to obey, he must learn self-control. For forty long years he is sent into the retirement of the desert, that, in his life of obscurity, in the humble work of caring for the sheep and lambs of the flock, he may gain the victory over his own passions. He must learn entire submission to the will of God, before he can teach that will to a great people.

Short-sighted mortals would have dispensed with that forty years of training amid the mountains of Midian, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom placed him who was to be the mighty statesman, the deliverer of his people from slavery, in circumstances, during this period to develop his honesty, his forethought, his faithfulness and care-taking, and his ability to identify himself with the necessities of his dumb charge. Those to whom God has intrusted important responsibilities have not been brought up in ease and luxury; the noble prophets, the leaders and judges of God's appointment, have been men whose characters were formed by the stern realities of life.

God does not select for his work men of one mold and one temperament only, but men of varied temperaments. The human element is seen in all who have been chosen to accomplish a work for God. They have been men of intellect, of depth of feeling; men who would do and dare, whose powers could be directed in the right channel, and who would learn wisdom from God. Said Christ, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Those who, by earnest, anxious inquiry, seek to learn the will of God, who seize upon and improve every ray of light shining upon their pathway, God will lead. They will not be left to walk in doubt and darkness. Connected with God, the source of all wisdom, man may reach any height of moral excellence.

But inspiration will not come to man in darkness, while he makes no effort to press toward the divine light. Moses must realize his great weakness and deficiency, and his soul must be drawn out for special help from Him who can help. Moses must closely apply his mind to the great change to be wrought in himself. Had he taken matters in a listless, easy, and indifferent manner, shunning care, hardship, and disagreeable responsibilities, as do many young men of today, God would never have intrusted him with a sacred and important work. He was aroused to the highest kind of thought,

and to his great want of experimental knowledge of God; and his prayer came forth from a soul burdened with a sense of need and poverty. He hoped, he longed, he prayed, for close connection with God.

Moses had been learning much which he must unlearn. The influence which had surrounded him in Egypt,--the love of his adopted mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the enchantments of grandeur in art, the dissipation on every hand, the imposing display connected with the idolatrous worship, and the constant repetition, by the priests, of countless fables concerning the power of their gods,--all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind, and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character. These impressions, time, change of surroundings, and close connection with God, could remove. Yet it must be by earnest, persevering effort, a struggle as for life, with himself, to uproot the seeds of error, and in their place have truth firmly implanted. At every point, Satan would be prepared to strengthen error and dislodge truth; but while God designed that Moses should be self-trained by severe discipline, he himself would be his ever-ready helper against Satan when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

With the wild mountains surrounding him, alone with God, Moses had a precious opportunity to learn himself, to discern his pride and self-exaltation, and to overcome the habits formed amid the luxury, ease, and indulgence of court life. The magnificent temples of Egypt were no longer before his eyes, impressing his mind with their superstition and falsehood. Amid the towering rocks and everlasting hills he could behold the evidences of the Creator's greatness and majesty, and power, and contrast with the insignificance of the gods of Egypt. Every where the Creator's name was written. Moses was surrounded with his presence, and covered with his overshadowing glory. God himself was speaking to his servant through these mute representatives of his power.

The light of nature and that of revelation are from the same source, teaching grand truths and always agreeing with each other. As Moses saw that all God's created works act in sublime harmony with his laws, he realized how unreasonable it is for man to array himself in opposition to the law of God. The conflict was most trying, the effort long, to bring heart and mind on all points in harmony with truth and with Heaven; but Moses was finally a victor. He came forth from the proving of God, mild in spirit, patient in temper, generous toward the erring, kind, reverent, and humble, one of the meekest of men in his intercourse with the world. Every child of God will have a similar experience. It is only after sore discipline and severe instruction that man, in obedience to Christ an heir of glory, can learn to wear divine honors with grace and dignity becoming to his position as a member of the royal family.

As year after year passed by, and left the servant of God still in his humble position, it would have seemed to one of less faith than he, as if God had forgotten him; as if his ability and experience were to be lost to the world. But as he wandered with his silent flocks in solitary places, the abject condition of his people was ever before him. He recounted all God's dealings with the faithful in ages past, and his promises of future good, and his soul went out toward God in behalf of his brethren in bondage, and his fervent prayers echoed amid the mountain caverns by day and by night. He was never weary of presenting before God the promises made to his people, and pleading with him for their deliverance.

Those prayers were heard. Could his eyes have been opened, he would have seen the messengers of God, pure, holy angels, bending lovingly over him, shedding their light around him, and preparing to bear his petition to the throne of the Highest. The long years spent amid desert solitudes were not lost. Not only was Moses gaining a preparation for the great work before him, but during this time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis and also the book of Job, which would be read with the

deepest interest by the people of God until the close of time.

February 19, 1880

The Sacrifice Demanded of Us

Christ demands all. If he required less, the sacrifice made by him was too dear, and too great to bring us up to such a level. Our holy faith cries out separation. We should not be conformed to the world, or to dead, heartless professors, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This is a self-denying way. But if we think it too straight; if we think that there is too much self-denial in this narrow path; or if we say, How hard to give up all, let us ask ourselves this question, What did Christ give up for me?

The infinite sacrifice he made eclipses all we call self-denial. Behold him in the garden sweating great drops of blood. Follow him on his way to the judgment hall, while he is derided, mocked and insulted by that infuriated mob. Behold him clothed in that old purple robe. Hear the coarse jest and cruel mocking, see his enemies place upon that noble head the crown of thorns, and then smite him with a reed, causing the thorns to penetrate his temples, and the blood to flow from that holy brow; hear that murderous throng eagerly crying for the blood of the Son of God; see him delivered into their hands, and led away, pale, weak, and fainting, to his crucifixion; see him stretched upon the wooden cross, and the nails driven through his tender hands and feet; behold him hanging upon the cross in agony, until the sun refuses to shine, and the angels veil their faces from the horrid scene,--then ask yourself the question, Does he require too much in asking me to give up the world and deny self? No, no.

A divided, half-hearted life causes doubt and darkness. Persons living thus do not enjoy the consolations of religion, neither the pleasures which the world gives. It is a blessed privilege to give up all for Christ. It is safe to follow him who is the only true, unerring pattern. If others act on the

principle of the spiritual sluggard, we should leave them, and march forward to the elevation of Christian character. Let us not sleep at our post, but deal faithfully and truly with our own souls.

The indulgence of light reading and tales of fiction produces a false, unhealthy excitement of the mind, and unfits it for any spiritual exercise. It weans the soul from prayer, and love for spiritual things. Reading that will throw light upon the sacred volume, and increase one's desire to study it, is not dangerous, but beneficial. The oftener and more diligently the Scriptures are read, the more beautiful will they appear, and the less relish will one have for light reading. The daily study of the Scriptures will have a sanctifying influence upon the life. Then let us bind to our hearts this precious volume which will never fail to prove a friend and guide in perplexity.

How many have fixed their hopes on earthly objects, and how earnestly and perseveringly have they labored to obtain them, yet without realizing their anticipations. But there is an object before all worthy of a life-long effort. It is the salvation of our souls--everlasting life. And this demands self-denial, sacrifice and close study. If we gain eternal life, we must live for it and deny self; come out from the world and be separate. Our life must be marked with sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer. Angels are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. All our words and acts are passing in review before God.

It is a fearful, solemn time. The hope of eternal life should not be cherished upon slight grounds; it should be settled between God and our own souls. Some will lean upon the judgment and experience of others, rather than be at the trouble of a close examination of their own hearts; and thus pass along for months and years without any witness of the Spirit of God, or evidence of their acceptance. Such are deceiving themselves. They suppose they have a hope, but lack the essential qualifications of a Christian.

God's people are peculiar. Their spirit cannot mingle with the spirit and influence of the world. None desire to meet Jesus with a profession only, and thus be disappointed of eternal life. Then let us examine the grounds of our hope thoroughly, and deal truly with our own soul. Let us decide now whether we will follow Christ at any sacrifice or any cost.

February 26, 1880

The Call of Moses

To the oppressed and suffering Hebrews the day of their deliverance seemed to be long deferred; but in his own appointed time God designed to work for them in mighty power. Moses was not to stand, as he at first anticipated, at the head of armies, with waving banners and glittering armor. That people, so long abused and oppressed, were not to gain the victory for themselves, by rising up and asserting their rights. God's purpose was to be accomplished in a way to pour contempt on human pride and glory. The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod powerful in delivering his people from oppression, and in preserving them when pursued by their enemies.

Before Moses went forth, he received his high commission, his ordination to his great work, in a way that filled him with awe, and gave him a deep sense of his own weakness and unworthiness. While engaged in his round of duties he saw a bush, branches, foliage, and trunk, all burning, yet not consumed. He drew near to view the wonderful sight, when a voice addressed him from out of the flame. It was the voice of God. It was He who, as the angel of the covenant, had revealed himself to the fathers in ages past. The frame of Moses quivered, he was thrilled with terror, as the Lord called him by name. With trembling lips he answered, "Here am I." He was warned not to approach his Creator with undue familiarity: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." "And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

Finite man may learn a lesson that should never be forgotten,--to approach God with reverence. We may come boldly into his presence, presenting the name of Jesus, our righteousness and substitute, but never

with the boldness of presumption, as though he were on a level with ourselves. We have heard some address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would not address an equal, or even an inferior. We have seen some behave themselves in the presence of God as they would not dare to do in the presence of an earthly friend. These show that they have not a proper view of God's character and the greatness of his power. They should remember that God's eye is upon them; he reads the thoughts of their hearts concerning him. He will not be mocked. God is greatly to be revered; wherever his presence is clearly realized, sinful man will bow in the most humble attitude, and from the depths of the soul cry out, "How dreadful is this place!"

As Moses waited in reverent awe before God, the words continued: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Amazed and frightened at the command, Moses drew back, saying, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" The reply was,

"Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee. When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. Moses thought of the difficulties to be encountered, the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of his people, who were almost destitute of all knowledge of God.

"Behold," he said, "when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall

say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say to them?" The answer was,

"I am that I am. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Moses was commanded first to assemble the elders of Israel, the most noble and righteous among them, who had long grieved because of their bondage, and to declare to them a message from God, with a promise of deliverance. Then he was to take the elders before the king, and say to him,

"The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us, and now let us go, we beseech thee, three day's journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."

The Pharaoh before whom Moses was to appear was not the one who had decreed that he should be put to death. That monarch was dead, and another had taken the reins of government. The name Pharaoh was a title borne by nearly all the Egyptian kings.

Moses was forewarned that Pharaoh would resist the appeal to let Israel go. Yet the courage of God's servant must not fail; for the Lord would make this the occasion to manifest his power before the Egyptians and before his people. "And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that, he will let you go."

The mighty miracles wrought for the deliverance of the Hebrews, would give them favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when they should leave Egypt they were not to go empty-handed. They were to ask or seek from their Egyptian neighbors valuable articles, such as jewels of silver and gold, which could be easily transported. The Egyptians had been enriched by the labor unjustly exacted from the Israelites; and now, as the latter were to start

on their long journey to a new home, it was right that they should receive a portion of the wealth which they had fairly earned. This would be a small recompense for their many years of unpaid servitude.

Moses saw before him difficulties which seemed unsurmountable. What proof could he give his people that God had indeed sent him? "Behold," he said, "they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they will say, 'The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.'" Evidence which appealed to his own senses was now given. He was told to cast the rod in his hand upon the ground. He did so; it became a serpent, and he fled before it. He was recalled and commanded to seize it. As he obeyed, it became again a rod. He was bidden to put his hand into his bosom. He did so, and on taking it out, saw it all covered with the white scabs of leprosy. On being told, he put it again into his bosom, and on withdrawing it saw that it had become like the other. By these signs the Lord assured Moses that his own people as well as Pharaoh should be convinced that one mightier than the king of Egypt was manifest among them.

But the servant of God was still overwhelmed by the thought of the strange and wonderful work before him. In his distress and terror he now pleaded as an excuse a lack of ready speech: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." He had been so long from the Egyptians that he had not so clear knowledge and ready use of their language as when he was among them. This hesitancy on the part of Moses would seem to imply a fear that God was unable to qualify him for the great work to which he had called him, or that he had made a mistake in his selection of the man. The Lord said to him, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?" What an appeal! What a rebuke to the distrustful!

To this was added another assurance of divine aid: "Now, therefore, go,

and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say." But Moses still entreated the Lord to select a more competent person. These excuses at first proceeded from humility and self-diffidence. But after the Lord had promised to remove all his difficulties, and to give him final success, then any further shrinking back and complaining of his unfitness showed unbelief and distrust of God himself.

Moses was now directed to Aaron, his elder brother, who was eloquent, and who, having been in daily use of the language of the Egyptians, understood and could speak it perfectly. He was told that Aaron was coming to meet him, and when he came would rejoice at the meeting. The Lord then commanded Moses,

"Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

Moses could make no further resistance, for all ground for excuses was removed. He returned to his father-in-law's tent, and asked permission to visit his brethren in Egypt. Jethro gave it, with his blessing, "Go in peace." So, taking his wife and children, Moses set out on his journey. He had not dared to make known the object of his mission, lest they should not be allowed to accompany him. Before reaching Egypt, however, he himself deemed it best, for their own safety, to send them back to her father's tent.

The Lord said unto Moses, "When thou goest to return unto Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand; but I will harden his heart, that he will not let the people go." That is, the display of almighty power before Pharaoh, being rejected by him, would make him harder and more firm in his rebellion. But the Lord would overrule

the course of this haughty monarch, so that his obstinacy and perverseness would cause the name of God to be magnified before the Egyptians, and before his people also.

Moses was directed to say unto Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me. And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born." The Lord called Israel his first-born because he had singled out that people to be the depositaries of his law, obedience to which would preserve them pure amidst idolatrous nations. He conferred upon them special privileges, such as were generally granted to the first-born son.

As Moses journeyed to Egypt, the angel of the Lord met him, and assumed a threatening posture, as though he would slay him. He did not explain the reason for his appearance in this manner, but Moses knew that there was a cause. He was going to Egypt in obedience to the express command of God; therefore the journey must be right. He at once remembered that his youngest son had not been circumcised. In compliance with the wishes of Zipporah, he had postponed the ceremony, contrary to the divine requirement. Now the wife, fearful that her husband might be slain, overcame her feelings of undue affection for her son, and performed the rite herself. After this, the angel let Moses go. In his mission to Pharaoh, he was to be placed in a perilous position, where his life would be exposed to the will of the king, if God did not by his power, through the presence of angels, preserve him. While Moses was living in neglect of one of God's positive commands, his life would not be secure; for angels could not protect him in disobedience.

In the time of trouble, just previous to the coming of Christ, the lives of the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of holy angels. But there will be no security for the transgressor. Angels cannot then protect those who are living in neglect of a known duty or an express command of

Jehovah.

February 26, 1880

Duty of Parents to their Children

The youth of our day are ignorant of Satan's devices. Parents should therefore be awake in these perilous times, working with perseverance and industry, to shut out the first approach of the foe. They should instruct their children when sitting in the house, or walking by the way, when rising up or lying down. It should be line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. The mother's work should commence with the infant. She should subdue the will and temper of the child, and bring its disposition into subjection. Teach it to obey, and as the child grows older relax not the hand. Every mother should take time to reason with the child to correct its errors, and patiently teach it the right way.

Christian parents should labor to instruct and fit their offspring to become the children of God. Strict discipline may at times cause dissatisfaction, and children will want their own way; yet where they have learned the lesson of obedience to their parents, they are better prepared to submit to the requirements of God. Thus the training received in childhood influences the religious experience, and molds the character of the man.

When children decide to leave the pleasures of the world, and become the disciples of Christ, a great burden is lifted from the hearts of parents. But the labor and care should not cease at this point, since the children have but just commenced the warfare against sin in all its forms, and specially need the watch-care and counsel of faithful parents. They should encourage the children to confide in them and unburden to them their trials and griefs. Parents will thus learn to sympathize and pray with them, and they will be encouraged to press on in the way of life, trusting in God.

Children would be saved from many evils if they were more familiar with their parents. Parents should encourage in their children a disposition to be open and frank, and come to them with their difficulties, and lay the matter just as they view it before their parents, and ask advice of them. Who are so well calculated to see and point out their dangers as godly parents? Who can understand the peculiar temperaments of their own children as well as they? The mother who has watched every turn of the mind from infancy, and is acquainted with the natural disposition, is well prepared to counsel her children. Who can tell as well what traits of character to check and restrain, as the mother, counselled by the father?

Children who are Christians will prefer the love and approbation of their God-fearing parents above every earthly blessing. They will love and honor their parents. One of the principal studies of their lives should be, How can I make my parents happy? But children who do not receive right instruction, have but little sense of their obligation to their parents. It is often the case that the more parents do for them the more ungrateful they are, and the less they respect them. Children who have been petted and waited upon, always expect it; and if their expectations are not met, they are disappointed and discouraged. This same disposition will be seen through their whole lives, and they will be helpless, leaning upon others for aid, expecting others to favor them, and yield to them. And if they are opposed, even after grown to manhood and womanhood, they think themselves abused; and thus they worry their way through the world, murmuring and fretting because everything does not suit them.

Parents should deal faithfully with the souls committed to their trust. They should not encourage in them pride, extravagance or love of show. Habits formed when very young, are not easily forgotten. Parents should commence to discipline the minds of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. Let all your efforts be for their salvation. Act as though they were put in your care to be fitted as precious jewels to

shine in the kingdom of God. Beware how you lull your children to sleep over the pit of destruction, with the mistaken thought that they are not old enough to be accountable, and are not old enough to repent of their sins and profess Christ.

Many precious promises like the following are recorded for those who seek the Lord early: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Ecclesiastes 12:1. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Proverbs 8:17. The good Shepherd still entreats: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Teach the children to seek the Lord while young and thus devote the best of their strength to his service.

We are living in an unfortunate age for children. A strong tide is setting downward to perdition, and it needs more than childhood's experience and strength to press against the current, that would bear them down. All who have a desire to yield their hearts to God and obey his requirements, Satan will try to perplex, and overcome with his temptations, that they may become discouraged and give up the warfare.

Parents, help the children. Watch continually to cut off the current, and roll back the weight of evil which is pressing in upon them. The children cannot do this of themselves. Parents can do much. By earnest prayer and living faith they may bind their children upon the altar, and thus secure the watch-care of guardian angels; the guiding hand of God will lead them through the perils of the last days, and bring them off victorious over every foe.

March 4, 1880

Return of Moses to Egypt

Aaron, being instructed by angels, went forth to meet his brother, from whom he had been separated for many years; and they met, amid the desert solitudes, in the mount of God. Here they communed together, and Moses told Aaron "all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him." Together they journeyed over the Arabian wastes, toward Egypt; and having reached the land of Goshen, they proceeded to assemble together the elders of Israel. Aaron, the eloquent spokesman, communicated to them all the dealings of God with Moses, and then they gave the signs before the people. "The people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped."

The next work of the two brothers was to communicate with the king himself. They entered the great palace of the Pharaoh's as commissioners from Jehovah; they felt that God was with them there, and they spoke with authority: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness."

"Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" demanded the monarch; "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." They answered,

"The God of the Hebrews hath met with us; let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

The king had heard of them before, and of the excitement among the

people. He became very angry. "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let [hinder] the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens." Then he added, as a thought of the loss occasioned by this interruption in their work passed through his mind. "Behold, the people of the land are many, and ye make them to rest from their burdens."

The same day the king issued orders to all the officers superintending the work of the Israelites, to do that which made their slavery doubly severe and cruel. The buildings of that country were and still are made of sun-dried bricks, with cut straw intermixed to hold the earth together, even their finest edifices being so constructed, and then faced with stone. The king now commanded that no more straw should be issued to the workmen; but the same amount of brick was rigidly required.

This order produced great distress among the Israelites throughout the land. The Egyptian taskmasters had appointed Hebrew officers to oversee the work of the people, and these officers were responsible for the labor performed by those under their charge. When the unfeeling requirement of the king was put in force, the people scattered themselves throughout the land, to gather stubble instead of straw; but they found it impossible to accomplish the usual amount of labor. For this failure, the Hebrew officers, as well as the people, were cruelly beaten.

These officers supposed that their oppression came from their taskmasters, and not from the king himself; therefore they went to him with an account of their grievances, and the unjust treatment which they had received. Their remonstrance was met by Pharaoh with a taunting charge of idleness, to indulge which, he said, they were desirous of going into the wilderness for the purpose of sacrificing. They were ordered back to their work, which was to be in no wise diminished, but to be everywhere exacted. As they were returning, they met Moses and Aaron, and cried out to them: "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be

abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us."

As the Hebrew elders thus reproached Moses, he was greatly distressed. The sufferings of the people had been much increased. All over the country a cry of anguish went up from men, women, and children; and all united in charging upon Moses this disastrous change in their condition. Alone he went before God, with the bitter cry,

"Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." The reply to him from Jehovah was,

"Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." And then he was reminded of the covenant which God had made with his forefathers, and assured that it would be faithfully carried into effect.

The Hebrews had expected to be released from bondage without any particular trial of faith, or any suffering on their part. But they were not yet prepared to be delivered. They had but little faith, and were unwilling patiently to suffer their afflictions, until God should work for them a glorious deliverance.

Many years had the children of Israel been in servitude to the Egyptians. Only a few families went down into Egypt, but they had become a great multitude. And being surrounded with idolatry, many had lost the knowledge of the true God, and had forgotten his law. Yet there were some among them who still worshiped the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth. They were grieved to see their children daily witnessing, and even engaging in, the abominations of the idolatrous people around them, and bowing to

Egyptian deities, made of wood and stone, and offering sacrifice to these senseless objects. In their distress, the faithful cried unto the Lord for deliverance from the Egyptian yoke; that he would bring them out of Egypt, where they might be free from idolatry, and the corrupting influences which surrounded them.

They did not conceal their faith, but openly acknowledged before the Egyptians that they served the only true and living God. They rehearsed the evidences of his existence and power, from creation down. The Egyptians thus had an opportunity to become acquainted with the faith of the Hebrews, and their God. They tried to subvert the faithful worshipers of the true God by threats, by the promise of reward, and by cruel treatment.

The elders of Israel endeavored to encourage the sinking faith of their brethren, by referring to the promise made to Abraham, and the prophetic words of Joseph before his death, foretelling their deliverance from Egypt. Some would listen and believe. Others looked at their own sad condition, and would not hope. When the Egyptians learned the expectations of the children of Israel, they derided their hopes of deliverance, and spoke scornfully of the power of their God. They pointed them to their own situation, as merely a nation of slaves, and tauntingly said to them, If your God is so just and merciful, and possesses power above the Egyptian gods, why does he not make you a free people? Why not manifest his greatness and power, and exalt you? The Egyptians then called attention to their own people, who worshiped gods of their own choosing, which the Israelites termed false gods. They exultingly said that their gods had prospered them, and had given them food, and raiment, and great riches, and had also given the Israelites into their hands to serve them, and that they had power to oppress them, and destroy their lives, so that they should be no people.

Pharaoh boasted that he would like to see their God deliver them from his hands. These words destroyed the hopes of many of the children of Israel.

It appeared to them very much as the king and his counselors had said. They knew that they were treated as slaves, and that they must endure just that degree of oppression which their taskmasters and rulers might choose to inflict upon them. Their male children had been hunted and slain. Their own lives were a burden; and they were believing in, and worshiping, the God of Heaven. Then they contrasted their condition with that of the Egyptians. The latter worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, and also beasts, and even images, the work of their own hands; yet they were prosperous, and wealthy. And some of the Hebrews thought that if the Lord was above all gods, he would not thus leave them as slaves to an idolatrous nation.

The faithful servants of God understood that it was because of their unfaithfulness to him as a people, and their disposition to intermarry with other nations, thus being led into idolatry, that the Lord had suffered them to go into Egypt. And they firmly declared to their brethren that God would soon break their oppressive yoke.

But many of the Hebrews were content to remain in bondage, rather than to go to a new country, and meet the difficulties attending such a journey; and the habits of some had become so much like those of the Egyptians that they preferred to dwell in Egypt. Therefore the Lord did not deliver them by the first display of his signs and wonders before Pharaoh. He overruled events to more fully develop the tyrannical spirit of the Egyptian king, and also by manifestations of almighty power, to give the Israelites more exalted views of the divine character, that they might be anxious to leave Egypt and choose the service of the true and merciful God. The task of Moses would have been much easier, had not many of the Israelites become so corrupted that they were unwilling to leave Egypt.

March 11, 1880

The Plagues on Egypt

The Lord directed Moses to go again to the children of Israel, and repeat the promise of deliverance, with a fresh assurance of divine favor. Moses went as he was commanded; but the people were in no mood to receive him; their hearts were full of bitterness, the lash was still sounding in their ears, the cry of anguish and distress drowned all other sounds, and they would not listen. Moses bowed his head in humiliation and disappointment, and again God's voice was heard by him.--"Go in, speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land." The discouraged man replied, If the children of Israel, thine own circumcised people, will not hearken unto me, how then shall Pharaoh, who is uncircumcised and an idolater, hear me? Moses' heart seemed utterly crushed. Yet still he was kept to duty. He was told now to take Aaron with him, and directed, "Thou shalt speak all that I command thee;" told to go before Pharaoh and again request "that he send the children of Israel out of his land." He was informed that the monarch would not give his consent until God should lay his hand in judgment upon Egypt and bring Israel out by his almighty power. Every punishment which the king rejected would render the next chastisement more close and severe, until his proud heart should be humbled, and he should acknowledge the Maker of the heavens and the earth as the living and all-powerful God. The Lord would bring up his people from their long servitude in a signal manner, giving the Egyptians an opportunity to exhibit the feeble wisdom of their mighty men, and array the power of their gods in opposition to the God of Heaven. He would show them by his servant Moses that the Maker of the heavens and the earth is the living and all-powerful God, above all gods; that his strength is mightier than the strongest,--that Omnipotence could bring forth his people with a high hand and with an outstretched arm. He would punish the Egyptians for their idolatry, and for their proud

boasting of the mercies bestowed upon them by their senseless gods. God would glorify his own name, that other nations might hear of his power and tremble at his mighty acts, and that his people might be led to fully turn from their idolatry to render to him pure worship.

Obedient to the command of God, Moses and Aaron again entered the lordly halls of the king of Egypt. There, surrounded by the massive and richly sculptured columns, and the gorgeousness of rich hangings and adornments of silver and gold, and gems, before the monarch of the most powerful kingdom then in existence, stood these two men of the despised race, one with a rod in his hand, come once more to deliver their request that he would let their people go.

The king demanded a miracle. Moses and Aaron had been previously directed of God how to act in case such a demand should be made, and Aaron now took the rod and cast it down before the king. It became a serpent. The monarch sent for his "wise men, and the sorcerers," who at his command, "cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." The only effect on the king was to make him more settled and firm in his purpose than before.

The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents, but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, made them appear like serpents, to counterfeit the work of God. Satan assisted his servants, in order to deceive the people, and encourage them in their rebellion. Pharaoh would grasp at the least evidence he could obtain to justify himself in resisting the work of God performed by Moses and Aaron. He told these servants of God that his magicians could do all these wonders. The difference between the work of God and that of the magicians was, one was of God, the other of Satan. One was true, the other false.

Moses and his brother were next directed to meet the king as he visited

the river in the morning, and standing upon its bank they were again to repeat their message to him, and as proof that God had indeed sent them, they were to stretch out the rod over the waters in all directions, thus changing them into blood. It was done, and the river ran blood, and all the water in their houses was changed to blood, the fish died, and the water became offensive to the smell. But "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments," changing in the same way the water drawn from wells. Still the king hardened his heart, and refused to yield. For seven days the plague continued, the inhabitants being obliged to dig wells to supply themselves with water.

Another effort at moving the king was now made. The rod was again stretched out over the waters, and frogs came up from the river and spread over the country,--into the houses, and bed-chambers, and ovens, and kneading-troughs. The magicians with their enchantments appeared to bring up similar animals. The general nuisance soon became so intolerable that the king was earnest to have it removed. But although the magicians had succeeded in producing frogs, they could not remove them. When Pharaoh saw this he was somewhat humbled, and desired Moses and Aaron to entreat the Lord for him, that the plague might be stayed. They reminded the haughty king of his former boasting, and asked where was now the vaunted power of his magicians; then they requested him to appoint a time for their prayers, and at the hour specified the living cause was removed, though the effect remained; for the frogs, perishing, polluted the atmosphere.

The work of the magicians had led Pharaoh to believe that these miracles were performed by magic; but he had abundant evidence that this was not the case when the plague of frogs was removed. The Lord could have caused them to disappear and return to dust in a moment; but he did not do this, lest, after they should be removed, the king and the Egyptians should say that it was the result of magic, like the work of the magicians. The frogs died, and were then gathered together in heaps. Here the king and all Egypt

had evidence which their vain philosophy could not dispose of, that this work was not accomplished by magic, but was a judgment from the God of Heaven.

When the king was relieved of his immediate distress, he again stubbornly refused to let Israel go. Aaron, at the command of God stretched out his hand and caused the dust of the earth to become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh called upon the magicians to do the same with their enchantments, but they could not. The work of God was thus shown to be superior to the power of Satan. The magicians themselves acknowledged that their imitative power was at an end, saying, "This is the finger of God." But the king was still unmoved.

Still another trial was made, after another appeal to "let the people go." Flies filled the houses and swarmed upon the ground, so that "the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies." These were not such flies as harmlessly annoy us at some seasons of the year; but they were large and venomous. Their sting was very painful to man and beast. It had been previously stated that the land of Goshen would be exempt from this visitation, which was accordingly found to be true.

Pharaoh now sent for the two brothers, and told them that he would allow the Israelites to offer sacrifices in Egypt itself; but this offer was refused. Certain animals were regarded as objects of worship by the Egyptians, and such was the reverence in which these creatures were held that to slay one, even accidentally, was a crime punishable with death. Moses assured the king that it was impossible for them to sacrifice to God in the land of Egypt; for they might select for their offering some one of the animals which the Egyptians considered sacred.

Moses again proposed to go three days' journey into the wilderness. The king consented and begged the servants of God to entreat that the plague

might be removed. They promised to do this, but cautioned him against dealing deceitfully with them. The plague ceased at their prayer. But the king's heart had become hardened by his persistent rebellion, and he still refused to let the people go.

March 18, 1880

The Plagues on Egypt

Pharaoh was now forewarned of a still more terrible visitation, that of murrain upon all the Egyptian cattle which were out in the field. It was distinctly stated that the Hebrews should be exempted from this evil. The plague came, as predicted, and Pharaoh, on sending messengers to the homes of the Israelites, found that they had entirely escaped. Still the king was obstinate, and he was encouraged in his persistency by the priests and magicians.

But they also were to feel the judgments of God. Moses and Aaron were commanded to take ashes of the furnace and sprinkle them in the air before Pharaoh. As they did so, the fine particles spread as dust over all the land of Egypt, and where it settled became a "boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast." The magicians could not by any of their enchantments, shield themselves from the grievous plague. They could no longer stand before Moses and Aaron, because of this affliction. The Egyptians were thus permitted to see how useless it would be for them to put their trust in the boasted power of the magicians, when they could not protect even their own persons.

Still there was no yielding on the part of the monarch. And the Lord sent a message to him declaring, "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth." Then a plague of hail was threatened which would destroy the cattle and every man found in the field. Here was an opportunity to test the pride of the Egyptians, and to show how many were really affected by the wonderful dealings of God with his people. All who regarded the word of the Lord gathered their cattle into barns and

houses, while those who disbelieved the warning left their animals in the field. In thus providing a way of escape for all who chose to act upon the warning given, we see the mercy of God in the midst of judgment.

The storm came on the morrow as predicted,--thunder and hail, and fire mingled with it, destroying every herb, shattering trees, and smiting man and beast. Hitherto none of the lives of the Egyptians had been taken, but now death and desolation followed in the track of the destroying angel. The land of Goshen alone was spared. Here the Lord demonstrated to the Egyptians that the whole earth is under the command of the God of the Hebrews, that even the elements obey his voice. Here also was fulfilled the prophecy: "My people dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place." The only true safety of nations and individuals is to be obedient to the voice of God, and to ever stand on the side of truth and righteousness. Pharaoh now humbled himself and said, "I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." He entreated the servants of God to intercede with Him that the terrific thunder and lightning might cease.

Moses knew that the contest was not ended, for he understood the workings of the human heart that is set in proud defiance against God. Pharaoh's confessions and promises were not made because there was any change in his mind or heart; but terror and anguish compelled him, for the time being, to yield the controversy with God. Moses, however, promised to grant his request, as though his confession was genuine and his repentance sincere, for he would not give him any occasion for future exhibitions of stubbornness. And notwithstanding the terrific warring of the elements, he fearlessly went forth, thus giving evidence to Pharaoh and his host of the divine protection while engaged in doing the work given him of the Lord.

On going out of the city he "spread abroad his hands unto the Lord, and

the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth." But as soon as the awful exhibitions of divine power had passed, the heart of the king returned to its stubbornness and rebellion.

The Lord was manifesting his power to confirm the faith of his people Israel in him as the only true and living God. He would give them unmistakable evidences of the difference he placed between the Egyptians and his people. He would cause all nations to know that although they had been bound down by hard labor, and had been despised, yet he had chosen them as his peculiar people, and that he would work for their deliverance in a wonderful manner.

By long association with the Egyptians, and continually beholding the imposing worship of idols, the Hebrews' idea of the true and living God had become degraded. Any reference made by them to Him was treated with contempt by the Egyptians, who pointed to their bondage and mocked at the idea that their God was worthy of respect. What had he done for his people! They saw the idolatrous Egyptians enjoying an abundant prosperity, while they were continually taunted with the remark, "Your God has forsaken you."--But by his mighty works, the Lord would now teach his people in regard to his character and divine authority, and show them the utter worthlessness of false gods.

The Lord, in his providence, had placed a man upon the throne whose pride and stubbornness was so great that he would defiantly refuse to obey his voice, and in so doing would reveal his haughty, tyrannical spirit, and fully establish the power, authority, and justice of God. Thus all the idolatrous nations might hear and know that the God of Israel is the Lord of the whole earth.

Then "the Lord said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants; that I might show these signs

before him: and that thou mayst tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord."

Moses went according to the divine command and warned the monarch that if he still remained obstinate, a plague of locusts would be sent, which would cover the face of the earth, and eat up every green thing that had been spared; they would fill all the houses, even the palace itself; such a scourge as "neither thy fathers nor thy, fathers' fathers have seen." The king was permitted to choose whether to humble himself before God, or refuse and suffer the effects of the plague.

The counselors of Pharaoh were appalled at this new danger. They had sustained great loss in the death of their cattle. Many of their people had been killed by the hail. Their forests were broken down and their crops destroyed. Everything was in a ruinous condition, and they were fast losing all they had gained by the labor of the Hebrews. At last they spoke out to the king, "How long shall this man be a snare unto us! Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

Then Moses and Aaron were again summoned, and the monarch said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go?"

The answer was, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord."

The king was filled with rage. "Let the Lord be so with you," he cried, "as I will let you go and your little ones. Look to it, for evil is before you." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

In this answer, the king shows his contempt for the divine command. Let God require you, if he will, to take your little ones. Does your God think that I will let you go, with your wives and children, upon so dangerous an expedition? I will not do this; only you that are men shall go to serve the Lord. This hard-hearted, oppressive king, who had sought to destroy the Israelites by hard labor, would now pretend that he had a deep interest in their welfare, and a tender care for their little ones, when he only designed to keep them as a pledge of their return.

Pharaoh's scorn and unbelief had no power to stay the judgments of God. Moses was commanded to stretch out his hand over the land, and an east wind blew, and brought locusts, "very grievous were they; before them were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such." They filled the sky till the land was darkened, and devoured every green thing, on the ground and among the trees.

The king sent for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said to them, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now, therefore, forgive I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only."

They did so, and a strong west wind arose, which carried away the locusts toward the Red Sea, so that not one was left behind. But notwithstanding the king's humility while death threatened him, as soon as the plague was removed he hardened his heart and again refused to let Israel go.

The people of Egypt were in despair. The scourges which had already fallen upon them seemed almost beyond endurance, and they were filled with fears for the future. The people had worshiped Pharaoh as being a representative of their god and carrying out his purposes. But, notwithstanding, many were convinced that he was opposing his will to a

superior power who held all nations under His control. Suddenly a darkness settled over the land, so thick and black that it seemed a darkness which could be felt. Not only were the people deprived of light, but the atmosphere was very oppressive, so that breathing was difficult. "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days." But all the children of Israel had light, and a pure atmosphere, in their dwellings.

The Egyptians were in the greatest perplexity. The Hebrew slaves were continually favored of God, and were becoming confident that they would be delivered. The task-masters dared not exercise their cruelty as heretofore, fearing lest the vast Hebrew host would rise up and be revenged for the abuse they had already suffered.

This terrible darkness lasted three days, and during this time the busy activities of life could not be carried on. This was God's plan. He would give them time for reflection and repentance before bringing upon them the last and most dreadful scourge, the death of the first-born. He would remove everything which would divert their attention, and give them time for meditation, thus giving new evidence of his compassion and unwillingness to destroy.

At the end of the three days of darkness, Pharaoh sent for Moses and said, "Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed. Let your little ones also go with you." The answer was, "Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither."

The king was stern and determined. "Get thee from me," he cried, "take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die." The answer was, "Thou hast spoken well; I will see thy face again

no more."

As Moses had witnessed the wonderful works of God, his faith had been strengthened, and his confidence established. God had been qualifying him, by manifestations of divine power, to stand at the head of the armies of Israel, and, as a shepherd of his people, to lead them from Egypt. He was elevated above fear by his firm trust in God. This courage in the presence of the king, annoyed his haughty pride, and he uttered the threat of killing the servant of God. In his blindness, he did not realize that he was contending not only against Moses and Aaron, but against the mighty Jehovah, the maker of the heavens and the earth. If Pharaoh had not been blinded by his rebellion he would have known that He who could perform such mighty miracles as had been wrought, would preserve the lives of his chosen servants, even though he should have to slay the king of Egypt. Moses had obtained the favor of the people. He was regarded as a wonderful personage, and the king would not dare to harm him.

Moses had still another message for the rebellious king, and before leaving his presence he fearlessly declared the word of the Lord: "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out."

As Moses faithfully portrayed the nature and effects of the last dreadful plague, the king became exceedingly angry. He was enraged because he

could not intimidate Moses, and make him tremble before the royal authority. But the servant of God leaned for support upon a mightier arm than that of any earthly monarch.

March 25, 1880

The Passover

The Lord gave Moses special directions for the children of Israel, in regard to what they must do to preserve themselves and their families from the fearful plague that he was about to send upon the Egyptians. Moses was also to give his people instructions in regard to their leaving Egypt. On that night, so terrible to the Egyptians, and so glorious to the people of God, the solemn ordinance of the passover was instituted. By the divine command, each family, alone or in connection with others, was to slay a lamb or a goat "without blemish," and with a bunch of hyssop sprinkle its blood on "the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post" of their houses, as a token, that the destroying angel, coming at midnight, might not enter that dwelling. They were to eat the flesh roasted, with bitter herbs, at night, as Moses said, "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover." This name was given in memory of the angel's passing by their dwellings; and such a feast was to be observed as a memorial by the people of Israel in all future generations.

Leaven works secretly, and is a fit emblem of hypocrisy and deceit. And on this occasion the children of Israel were to abstain from leavened bread that their minds might be impressed with the fact that God requires truth and sincerity in his worship. The bitter herbs represented their long and bitter servitude in Egypt, also the bondage of sin. It was not enough to simply slay the lamb, and sprinkle its blood upon the door posts, but it was to be eaten, thus representing the close union which must exist between Christ and his followers.

A work was required of the children of Israel, to prove them, and to show their faith in the great deliverance which God had been bringing about

for them. In order to escape the terrible judgment about to fall upon Egypt, the token of blood must be seen upon their houses. And they were required to separate themselves and their children from the Egyptians, and gather them into their own houses; for if any of the Israelites were found in the dwellings of the Egyptians, they would fall by the hand of the destroying angel. They were also directed to keep the feast of the passover for an ordinance, that when their children should inquire what such service meant, they should relate to them their wonderful preservation in Egypt: That when the destroying angel went forth in the night to slay the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast, he passed over their houses, and not one of the Hebrews that had the token of blood upon their door-posts was slain.

The people bowed their heads and worshiped, grateful for this remarkable memorial given to preserve to their children the remembrance of God's care for his people. There were quite a number of the Egyptians who were led to acknowledge, by the manifestations of the signs and wonders shown in Egypt, that the gods whom they had worshiped were without knowledge, and had no power to save or to destroy, and that the God of the Hebrews was the only true God. They begged to be permitted to come to the houses of the Israelites with their families upon that fearful night when the angel of God should slay the first-born of the Egyptians. The Hebrews welcomed these believing Egyptians to their homes, and the latter pledged themselves henceforth to choose the God of Israel as their God, and to leave Egypt and go with the Israelites to worship the Lord.

The passover pointed backward to the deliverance of the children of Israel, and was also typical, pointing forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, slain for the redemption of fallen man. The blood sprinkled upon the door-posts prefigured the atoning blood of Christ, and also the continual dependence of sinful man upon the merits of that blood for safety from the power of Satan, and for final redemption. Christ ate the passover supper with his disciples just before his crucifixion, and the same night, instituted the

ordinance of the Lord's supper, to be observed in commemoration of his death. Up to this time the passover had been observed to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. But in its place he now left an ordinance to commemorate the events of his crucifixion. After partaking of the passover with his disciples, Christ arose from the table, and said unto them, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He then performed the humiliating office of washing the feet of his disciples. Christ gave his followers the ordinance of washing feet for them to practice, which would teach them lessons of humility. He connected this ordinance with the supper. He designed that this should be a season of self-examination, that his people might have an opportunity to become acquainted with the true feelings of their own hearts toward God and one another. If pride existed in their hearts, how soon would it be discovered to the honestly-erring ones, as they should engage in this humble duty. If selfishness or hatred existed, it would be more readily discovered as they engaged in this humble work. This ordinance was designed to result in mutual confessions, and to increase feelings of forbearance, forgiveness of each other's errors, and true love, preparatory to engaging in the solemn ordinance of commemorating the sufferings and death of Christ. He loved his disciples well enough to die for them. He exhorted them to love one another, as he had loved them.

The example of washing the feet of his disciples was given for the benefit of all who should believe in him. He required them to follow his example. This humble ordinance was designed not only to test their humility and faithfulness, but to keep fresh in their remembrance that the redemption of his people was purchased upon condition of humility and continual obedience on their part. "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I

have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Jesus then took his place again at the table, whereon were placed bread and unfermented wine, which arrangements had been made according to Christ's directions. He appeared very sorrowful. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Here our Saviour instituted the Lord's supper, to be often celebrated, to keep fresh in the memory of his followers the solemn scenes of his betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have his followers realize their continual dependence upon his blood for salvation. The broken bread was a symbol of Christ's broken body, given for the salvation of the world. The wine was a symbol of his blood, shed for the cleansing of the sins of all those who should come unto him for pardon, and receive him as their Saviour.

The salvation of men depends upon a continual application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. Therefore, the Lord's supper was to be observed more frequently than the annual passover. This solemn ordinance commemorates a far greater event than the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. That deliverance was typical of the great atonement which Christ made by the sacrifice of his own life for the final redemption of his people.

April 1, 1880

Israel Leaves Egypt

The children of Israel had followed the directions given them of God; and while the angel of death was passing from house to house among the Egyptians, they were all ready for their journey, and waiting for the rebellious king, and his great men to bid them go. "At midnight, there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." All the first-born in the land, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle," had been smitten by the destroyer. When the Egyptians had seen the great preparations made by the people of God for that dreadful night, they had mocked at their hopes, and ridiculed the token of blood upon their door-posts. But now there was wailing throughout all Egypt. Pharaoh remembered his proud boast, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." His haughty pride was now humbled. He called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." He hoped that a blessing from God would protect him from the further effects of that dreadful plague. The officers of the king, and the people, united in imploring the Israelites to be gone, for, they said. "We be all dead men."

"And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required; and they spoiled the Egyptians."

The Lord revealed this to Abraham about four hundred years before it was fulfilled: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Although the Israelites left Egypt in haste, yet they were arranged in order, being divided into companies, with a leader for each. A "mixed multitude" accompanied them, and "flocks and herds, even very much cattle." The latter were the property of the Israelites, who had never sold their possessions to the king. Jacob and his sons had brought their flocks and herds with them to Egypt, where they had greatly increased. The children of Israel also had become exceedingly numerous, and it was a vast company that at the dawn of day were on their way from the land of bondage.

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

The Lord knew that his people would meet with opposition, should they attempt to pass through the land of the Philistines. The latter would regard the Israelites as fugitives escaping from their rightful masters, and would

make war upon them. In bringing them by the way of the Red Sea, the Lord revealed himself a compassionate God, as well as a God of judgment. He informed Moses that Pharaoh would pursue them, and he directed him just where to encamp before the sea. He told Moses that he would be honored before Pharaoh and all his host.

After the Hebrews had departed from Egypt, the counselors of Pharaoh informed him that his bondmen had fled, and would never return to serve him again. The Egyptians regretted that they had been so foolish as to think the death of their first-born was the result of the power of God. In bitterness they asked of one another, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" It was a great loss to be deprived of the service of these laborers, and notwithstanding all that the Egyptians had suffered from the judgments of God, they were so hardened by their continual rebellion that they decided to pursue the Israelites and bring them back by force.

Pharaoh prepared a well-equipped army, composed of the priests of their idol gods, and of the rulers, and of all the great men of his kingdom. They thought if their priests accompanied them, they would be more sure of success. The most mighty of Egypt were selected, that they might intimidate the Israelites with the grand display of their power and greatness. They thought that when the news should reach other nations, that they were compelled to yield to the power of the God of Israel, whom they had despised, they would be looked upon with derision. But if they should go with great pomp, and bring Israel back by force, they would redeem their glory, and would also have the service of their bondmen again.

On the third day of their journey, the Hebrews encamped by the Red Sea, whose waters presented a seemingly impassable barrier before them, while on the south a rugged mountain obstructed their further progress. Suddenly they beheld in the distance the flashing armor, waving banners, and moving chariots of a great army. As they drew nearer, the hosts of Egypt

were seen in full pursuit. Terror filled the hearts of Israel. Over all the encampment rose a tumultuous sound. Some cried unto the Lord, but far the greater part hastened to Moses with their complaints:

"Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Moses was greatly troubled because his people were so wanting in faith, especially as they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestations of the power of God in their favor. He felt grieved that they should charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their position, when he had simply followed the express commands of God. True, they were in a place from which there was no possibility of release unless God himself interposed to save them; but having been brought there in obedience to divine commands, Moses felt no fear of the consequences. His calm and assuring reply to the people was,

"Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

It was not an easy thing to hold the hosts of Israel in waiting before the Lord. They lacked discipline and self-control. Impressed by the horrors of their situation, they became violent and unreasonable. They expected speedily to fall into the hands of their oppressors, and their wailings and recriminations were loud and deep.

The wonderful pillar of cloud which had accompanied them in their wanderings and served to protect them from the fervid rays of the sun, had

moved grandly before them all day, subject neither to sunshine nor storm, and at night it had become a pillar of fire to light them on their way. They had followed it as the signal of God to go forward; but now they questioned among themselves if it might not be the shadow of some terrible calamity that was about to befall them, for had it not led them on the wrong side of the mountain, into an impassable way? Thus the angel of God appeared to their deluded minds as the harbinger of disaster.

But now, as the Egyptian host approaches them, expecting to make them an easy prey, the cloudy column rises majestically into the heavens, passes over the Israelites, and descends between them and the armies of Egypt. A wall of darkness interposes between the pursued and their pursuers. The Egyptians can no longer discern the camp of the Hebrews, and are forced to halt. But as the darkness of night deepens, the wall of cloud becomes a great light to the Hebrews, illuminating the whole camp with the radiance of day.

Then hope came to the hearts of Israel that they might yet be delivered. And Moses lifted up his voice unto the Lord. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

Then Moses, obedient to the divine command, stretched out his rod, the waters parted and Israel went into the midst of the sea, upon dry ground, while the waters stood like congealed walls on either side. The light from God's pillar of fire shone upon the foam-capped billows, and lit the road that was cut like a mighty furrow through the waters of the Red Sea, and was lost in the obscurity of the farther shore.

All night long sounded the tramping of the hosts of Israel, but the cloud hid them from the sight of their enemies. The Egyptians, weary with their

hasty march, had seen the Hebrews only a short distance before them, and as there seemed to be no possibility of escape, they decided to take a night's rest, and make an easy capture in the morning. The night was intensely dark, the clouds seemed to encompass them like some tangible substance. Deep sleep fell upon the camp, even the sentinels slumbered at their posts.

At last a ringing blast arouses the army! The cloud is passing on! The Hebrews are moving! Voices and the sound of marching come from toward the sea. It is still so dark they cannot discern the escaping people, but the command is given to make ready for the pursuit. The clattering of arms, and the roll of chariots is heard, the marshalling of the captains, and the neighing of the steeds. At length the line of march is formed and they press on through the obscurity, in the direction of the escaping multitude.

In the darkness and confusion, they rush on in their pursuit, not knowing that they have entered upon the bed of the sea, and are hemmed in on either hand by beetling walls of water. They long for the mist and darkness to pass away, and reveal to them the Hebrews and their own whereabouts. The wheels of the chariots sink deep into the soft sand, the horses become entangled and unruly, and angels of God go through the host and remove their chariot wheels. Confusion prevails, yet they press on feeling sure of victory.

At last the mysterious cloud changes to a pillar of fire before their astonished eyes. The thunders peal, and the lightnings flash, waves roll about them, and fear takes possession of their hearts. Amid the terror and confusion the lurid light reveals to the amazed Egyptians the terrible waters massed up on the right hand and on the left. They see the broad path that the Lord has made for his people across the shining sands of the sea, and behold triumphant Israel safe on the farther shore.

Confusion and dismay seizes them. Amid the wrath of the elements, in

which they hear the voice of an angry God, they endeavor to retrace their steps and fly to the shore they have quitted. But Moses stretches out his rod, and the piled up waters, hissing, roaring, and eager for their prey, rush together, and swallow the entire Egyptian host in their black depths.

As the Hebrews witnessed the marvelous work of God in the destruction of the Egyptians, they united in an inspired song of lofty eloquence and grateful praise. Miriam, the sister of Moses, a prophetess, led the women in music.

God in his providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses, with the Red Sea before them, that he might work out their deliverance and forever rid them of their enemies. He might have saved them in any other way, but he chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in him.

There are times when the Christian life seems beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly above all discouragements, "Go forward!" We should obey this command, let the result be what it may, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet.

The Hebrews were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, if they had refused to move nearer to the Red Sea, God would never have opened the path for them. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they had faith in the word of God, as spoken by the man Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel performed his part and divided the waters to make a path for their feet.

The clouds that gather about our way will never disappear before a

halting, doubting spirit. Unbelief says, We can never surmount these obstructions, let us wait until they are removed, and we can see our way clearly. But faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things. Obedience towards God is sure to bring the victory. Through faith only can we reach Heaven.

There is a great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led his people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep his law and obey his voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet, what was to them a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of night.

So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the repository of his law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the word of God. In keeping his commandments there is great reward, and no earthly inducements should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honor, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's wrath.

The voice of the Lord bidding his faithful ones "Go forward," frequently tries their faith to the uttermost. But if they should defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty was removed from their understanding, and there remained no risk of failure or defeat, they would never move on at all. Those who think it impossible for them to yield to the will of God and have faith in his promises until all is made clear and plain before them, will never yield at all. Faith is not certainty of knowledge, it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. To obey the commandments of God is

the only way to obtain his favor. "Go forward," should be the Christian's watchword.

Pharaoh, who would not acknowledge God and bow to his authority, had delighted to show his power as ruler over those whom he could control. Moses had declared to the haughty monarch, that God, whom he pretended not to know, would compel him to yield to his claims, and acknowledge his authority, as supreme ruler.

In the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the Lord plainly showed his distinguished mercy to his people, before all the Egyptians. He saw fit to execute his judgments upon Pharaoh, that he might know by sad experience, since he would not otherwise be convinced, that the power of God was superior to all other. That his name might be declared throughout all the earth, he would give proof to all nations of his divine power and justice. It was the design of God that these manifestations should strengthen the faith of his people, and that their posterity should steadfastly worship Him alone who had wrought such merciful wonders in their behalf.

It had been very hard for the Egyptian monarch and a proud and idolatrous people to bow to the requirements of the God of Heaven. While under the most grievous affliction the haughty king would yield a little, but when the scourge was removed he would take back all he had granted. Thus, plague after plague was brought upon Egypt, and he yielded only while he was compelled by the dreadful visitations of God's wrath. The king even persisted in his rebellion after Egypt had been ruined. Moses and Aaron related to him the nature and effect of each plague, before it came, that it might not be said to have happened by chance. He saw these plagues come, exactly as he was told they would come; yet he would not yield. At first he would only grant the Israelites permission to sacrifice to God in the land of Egypt. After Egypt had suffered by God's wrath, he consented that the men alone should go; and when the land had been nearly destroyed by the plague

of locusts, he granted that the women and children might go also, but still refused to allow them to take their cattle. It was then that Moses warned the king that the Lord would slay the first-born.

Every plague had come a little closer, and had been more severe than the preceding; and the last was to be more dreadful than any before it. But Pharaoh humbled not himself. And although, when the first-born of Egypt lay dead in every house, the rebellious monarch relinquished his grasp upon his bondmen, yet, after his people had buried their dead, and felt assured that the judgments had ceased, he dared once more to array himself against Jehovah. His last act of rebellion, in pursuing the hosts of Israel to the Red Sea, filled up the measure of his iniquity. This place was appointed for the closing display of the power of God before the infatuated Egyptians. Then were fulfilled the words which the Lord spake to Moses, "And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord." The judgment of God was manifested in the utter destruction of the Egyptian host.

April 1, 1880

The Two Ways

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." These roads are distinct, separate, and in opposite directions. One leads to eternal life, the other to death, eternal death. There is a distinction between these roads, also between the companies traveling in them. One road is broad and smooth, the other is narrow and rugged. So the parties that travel in them are opposite in character, life, dress, and conversation.

Those traveling in the narrow way are talking of the joy and happiness at the end of the journey.

Their countenances are often sad, yet beam with holy, sacred joy. A man of sorrow and acquainted with grief opened that road for them, and traveled it himself. His followers see his footsteps, and are comforted. He went through safely; so can they if they follow him. In the broad road all are occupied with their dress and the pleasures in the way. They freely indulge in hilarity and glee, and think not of their journey's end, of the certain destruction that awaits them there. Every day they approach nearer their destination; yet they madly rush on faster and faster.

Why is it so hard to lead a self-denying, humble life? Because professed Christians are not dead to the world. It is easier living for Christ after dying to the world. They desire to be as much like the world as possible, and yet be considered Christians. Such seek to climb up some other way. They do not strive to enter through the narrow way and strait gate. Earth attracts them. Its

treasures seem of worth to them. They find enough to engross the mind, and have no time to prepare for Heaven. Satan is ever ready to plunge them deeper and deeper into difficulty; and as one perplexity and trouble is removed from the mind, he begets within them an unholy desire for more of the things of earth. Thus time passes, and when it is too late they find they have nothing substantial. They have grasped at shadows, and lost eternal life.

If the Christian would have a true and saving influence, let him show his faith by righteous works, and make the distinction great between himself and the world. The words, the dress, the actions, all should tell for God. Then a holy influence will be shed upon all. God hates pride. "And all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly will be stubble; and the day that cometh will burn them up." Religion will work like leaven upon hearts that embrace it, and purge away pride, selfishness, covetousness, and love of the world.

In these days childlike simplicity is rarely seen. The approbation of man is more thought of than fear to displease God. Some spend time that is worse than thrown away in studying how to decorate their person, forgetting that the same body may in a few days be food for worms. Mothers frequently set the example of pride to their children, sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit. The harvest will be plenteous and sure. It is much easier to teach a child a lesson of pride than of humility. If in after years they would counteract the influence of such a lesson, they find it impossible to do so. Pride early fostered in the heart remains there; and nothing but the Spirit of God can eradicate it.

Both young and old neglect the study of the Bible, and do not make it their rule of life. That important book by which they are to be judged is scarcely studied at all. Idle stories have been attentively read, while the Bible has been passed by, neglected. A day is coming when all will wish to be thoroughly furnished by the plain truths of the word of God.

It would be an act of mercy to children if parents would burn the idle story books and novels as they come into the house. The reading of them bewilders and poisons the mind. Unless parents awake to the eternal interests of their children, they will surely be lost. They should be exemplary, and rebuke pride in their children, as they value their eternal interests.

The Master's sacred head was decorated with a crown of thorns. "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Many who profess to be his followers decorate themselves with needless ornaments and costly array.

The ax must be laid at the root of the tree. Pride must not be suffered to exist in the heart. It is this that separates God from his people. When Bible truths affect the heart, they cause a desire to be separate from the world, like the Master. Those who acquaint themselves with the meek and lowly Jesus will walk worthy of him. Mrs. E. G. White

April 8, 1880

Journeyings of the Israelites

After leaving the Red Sea, the children of Israel, guided by the cloudy pillar, journeyed through the wilderness. Although the scenery around them was most dreary, composed of solemn looking mountains destitute of vegetation, barren plains, and the sea stretching far away behind them, its banks strewn with the bodies of their enemies, they were cheerful in the consciousness of their freedom, and for a time every thought of discontent was hushed.

But for three days they journeyed without finding any water to quench their thirst, having that only which they had been commanded to take in their vessels. Moses and Aaron were acquainted with this route, and knew that after traveling several days in the way in which they were then going they would find only bitter water. With what intense anxiety, therefore, mingled with forebodings, did they watch the leading of the pillar of cloud. And how the heart of Moses ached as the people gave the glad shout, Water! water! and it was echoed all along the line. Men, women, and children in joyous haste rush to the water, when lo, what a moan of anguish breaks forth from that vast company,--the water is bitter.

In their grief and disappointment, they reproach Moses for having led them in such a way, and do not consider that the Divine Presence in that mysterious cloud had been leading Moses and Aaron as well as themselves. Filled with sorrow as he saw the suffering of the people, Moses did that which the people should have done: he prayed earnestly to God, and he did not cry in vain. The Lord showed him a tree to which had been imparted healing properties, so that on its being cast into the fountain, the water became pleasant to the taste.

God here made a covenant with his people, through their leader:--If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee."

From Marah the people journeyed to Elim where they found "twelve wells of water and three-score and ten palm trees." In this delightful spot they remained several days before entering the wilderness of sin. When they had been a month away from Egypt, they made their first encampment in this wilderness. Their store of provisions had now begun to fail. There was scanty herbage in the wilderness and their flocks also were fast diminishing. Famine seemed to be staring them in the face, and as they followed the cloudy pillar over the desert wastes, doubts filled their hearts, and again they murmured, even the rulers and elders of the people joined in complaining against the leaders of God's appointment: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." The children of Israel seemed to possess an evil heart of unbelief. They were unwilling to endure hardships in the wilderness. When they met with difficulties, they would regard them as insurmountable obstacles. Their confidence would fail, and they would see nothing before them but death.

They had not really suffered the pangs of hunger. They had food for the present necessities, but they feared for the future. They could not see how the hosts of Israel were to subsist, in their long travels through the wilderness; and in their unbelief they saw their children famishing. The Lord was willing that their supply of food should be cut short, and that they should meet with difficulties, that their hearts might turn to Him who had hitherto delivered them. He was ready to be to them a present help. If, in their want, they would

call upon him, he would manifest to them tokens of his love and continual care. But they were unwilling to trust the Lord any further than they could witness before their eyes the continual evidences of his power. If they had possessed true faith and a firm confidence in God, inconveniences and obstacles, or even real suffering, would have been cheerfully borne, after the Lord had wrought in such a wonderful manner for their deliverance from bondage.

The Lord had promised that if they would obey his commandments no disease should rest upon them, and it was criminal unbelief in them to anticipate that themselves and children might die of hunger. They had suffered greatly in Egypt by being overtaxed with labor. Their children had been put to death, and in answer to their prayers of anguish, God had mercifully delivered them. He had promised to be their God, to take them to himself as a people, and to lead them to a large and good land. But they were ready to faint at any suffering they should have to endure in the way to that land. They had suffered much while in bondage to the Egyptians, but now they could not endure hardships in the service of God. They were ready to yield to gloomy doubts, and to sink in discouragement when they were tried.

The sinful course of the Israelites is recorded as a warning to the people of God now upon the earth. Many look back to them, and marvel at their unbelief and continual murmurings, after the Lord had given them such repeated evidence of his love and care. They think that they would not have proved so ungrateful. But some who thus think, murmur and repine at things of far less consequence. They do not know themselves. God frequently proves them, and tries their faith in small things; and they endure the trial no better than did ancient Israel.

Many have then present wants supplied, yet they will not trust God for the future. They manifest unbelief, and sink into despondency and gloom. Some are in continual trouble lest they shall come to want, and their children

suffer. When difficulties arise, or when they are brought into strait places--when their faith and their love to God are tested--they shrink from the trial, and murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Their love does not prove pure and perfect, to bear all things. The faith of the people of the God of Heaven should be strong, active, and enduring--the substance of things hoped for. The language of such will be, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name; for he hath dealt bountifully with me. Self-denial is considered by some to be real suffering. Depraved appetites are indulged. And a restraint upon the unhealthy appetite would lead even many professed Christians now to start back, as though actual starvation would be the consequence of a plain diet. And, like the children of Israel, they would accept slavery, diseased bodies, and even death, rather than to be deprived of some hurtful indulgence. Bread and water is all that is promised to the remnant in the time of trouble.

God was not unmindful of the wants of his people, and in his wisdom he provided the needed supply. He said to their leaders; "I will rain bread from Heaven for you." The Lord designed to prove them, and by indulgence through miraculous provision for their wants to test them to see whether they would keep his commandments or no. The Lord promised to supply them through Moses with abundance of food. By his power he would give them flesh to eat in the evening and in the morning bread in abundance. Moses told them that their murmurings were not against him, but against the Lord. He that was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud heard all their murmurings and bitter complaints. While Aaron was speaking to the congregation there was a remarkable change in that pillar of cloud.

The Lord designed to give the Israelites evidences of his presence that they might be held in restraint and subordination as they knew the presence of the Lord, not merely the man Moses, was guiding them. Evidences of this kind were the books of knowledge opened to their senses that they should learn in regard to God, and his fear be before them. The greatest changes

were to be wrought in the characters of these demoralized people. God was working by his power to lift them up through a knowledge of himself. Thus a visible manifestation of the glory of God was given them; a splendor which they had never witnessed, which symbolized the Divine presence. While the people were greatly terrified at this revelation of God, and feared his judgments, an audible voice came from the glory commanding Moses and Aaron to draw near to the cloudy pillar in which his glory was manifested. And the Lord talked with Moses and Aaron, and the Israelites heard his voice, saying that he had heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, and repeated his promise of flesh in the morning and bread in the evening. There God gave them evidence that he would supply their necessities, protect and preserve them, if they would be obedient to his commandments. In the evening the quails covered the ground about the camp. And in the morning the ground was covered with a strange substance, in small, white grains of the size of coriander seed, hard, and pleasant to the taste. The children of Israel knew not what it was, so they called it manna, which means, What is it? Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, gather of it every man, according to his eating, an omer for every man according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents."

The people gathered the manna, and found that there was a sufficiency for the entire company. They "ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and made cakes of it; and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil." We are also told that "the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."

According to the direction of Moses they were to gather an omer (about five pints) for every person; and they were not to leave of it until the morning. Some attempted to keep a supply until the next day, but what they laid by bred worms and became offensive. The supply for each day was to be gathered each morning; for as the heat of the sun increased, the substance melted and disappeared.

April 15, 1880

Journeyings of the Israelites

While wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel were preserved by a continual miracle of divine mercy in the falling of the manna. In the morning they were to go out and gather food for the day,--an omer for every person. They were commanded not to let any of this remain until the morning; nevertheless, some of them did attempt to keep a supply until the next day; but it bred worms and became offensive.

On the sixth day, it was found that a double quantity had been deposited, and the people gathered two omers for every person. When the rulers saw what they were doing, they hastened to acquaint Moses of this apparent violation of his directions; but his answer was, "This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you, to be kept until the morning." They did so, and found that it remained unchanged. And Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord. Today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none."

The Lord is no less particular now in regard to his Sabbath, than when he gave the foregoing special directions to the children of Israel. He required them to bake that which they would bake, and seethe (that is, boil) that which they would seethe, on the sixth day, preparatory to the rest of the Sabbath. Those who neglect to make suitable preparation on the sixth day for the Sabbath, violate the fourth commandment, and are transgressors of God's law. In his instructions to the Israelites, God forbade baking and boiling upon the Sabbath. That prohibition should be regarded by all Sabbath-keepers, as a

solemn injunction from Jehovah to them. The Lord would guard his people from indulging in gluttony upon the Sabbath, which he has set apart for sacred meditation and worship.

The Sabbath of the Lord is a day of rest from labor, and the diet should then be more simple, and a less quantity should be taken, than upon the six working days. Many have erred in failing to practice self-denial upon the Sabbath. They partake of full meals, as on the six laboring days, and as a consequence, their minds are beclouded, they are stupid and drowsy, and often suffer with headache. In this condition they can have no truly devotional feelings, and the blessing resting upon the Sabbath, does not prove a blessing to them. The sick and suffering require care and attention upon the Sabbath as well as upon other days of the week; and it may be necessary for their comfort to prepare warm food and drinks. In such instances, it is no violation of the fourth commandment to make them as comfortable as possible. The great Lawgiver is a God of compassion as well as of justice.

God manifested his great care and love for his people in sending them bread from heaven. "Man did eat angels' food;" that is, food provided for them by the angels. The three-fold miracle of the manna--a double quantity on the sixth day, and none upon the seventh, and its keeping fresh through the Sabbath, while upon other days it would become unfit for use--was designed to impress the Israelites with the sacredness of the Sabbath. After they were abundantly supplied with food, they were ashamed of their unbelief and murmurings, and promised to trust the Lord for the future; but they soon forgot their promise, and failed at the first trial of their faith.

After leaving the wilderness of Sin, the children of Israel encamped in Rephidim, where there was no water. Again they distrusted the providence of God, and such was their blindness and presumption that they now came boldly up to Moses with the demand, "Give us water, that we may drink!"

His patience failed not. "Why chide ye with me?" he said, "Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?" "Wherefore is this," they cried, "that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

Thus they began again to reason from the promptings of their own natural heart. The pillar of cloud seemed to them a fearful mystery, and as to that man Moses, who was he, and what object had he in attempting to lead them out of Egypt? They even accused him of designing to kill them and their children with privations and hardships, and then enriching himself with their possessions. But Moses prayed earnestly, and the Lord directed him to take the elders of Israel, and the rod wherewith he smote the river, and to go on before the people. And "Behold," says the Lord, "I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." He did so, and the water gushed out in such abundance as to satisfy their thirst.

The cloud of glory rested directly before the rock. Had that cloud been removed, the people would have been destroyed by the brightness of the glory. Christ would have been revealed in his glorious form standing by the rock. But as it was, the glory of the Lord was seen by all the congregation who stood at a distance.

Here we see the matchless mercy of Jesus Christ displayed. Instead of commanding Moses to lift up his rod and call down some terrible plague upon the wicked leaders in this murmuring, as he had done upon the Egyptian leaders, he was simply told to take some of the leading men of Israel to be eye-witnesses of a miracle which Christ himself would perform for their deliverance.

It was Moses who "clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths," who "brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers." It was he who smote the rock,

but it was Christ who stood beside him and caused the life-giving water to flow.

In their thirst, the people had tempted God, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" If God has brought us here, why does he not give us water as well as bread? That if showed criminal unbelief, and Moses feared that the judgments of God would rest upon them for their sin. And he called the name of the place Massah, temptation, and Meribah, chiding, as a memorial of their wicked murmurings.

God directed the children of Israel to encamp in that place, where there was no water, to prove them, to see if they would look to him in their distress, or murmur as they had previously done. They should have known that he would not permit those to perish with thirst, whom he had promised to take unto himself as his people. But instead of humbly entreating the Lord to provide for their necessity, they murmured against Moses, and demanded of him, water. God had been continually manifesting his power before them in a wonderful manner, to make them understand that all the benefits which they received came from him; that he could give them, or remove them, according to his own will. At times they had a full sense of this, and humbled themselves greatly before the Lord; but when brought into straight places they charged all their troubles upon Moses, as though they had left Egypt to please him.

Had not the Lord been slow to anger, and mercifully considerate of the ignorance and weakness of the children of Israel, he would have destroyed them in his wrath. He exercises the same pitying tenderness toward modern Israel. But we are less excusable than was ancient Israel. We have had every opportunity to elevate and ennoble our characters, which they did not have. We also have their history, recorded that we may shun their example of unbelief and impatient murmuring and rebellion.

Had they reformed and become obedient to God's commandments, he would have established them in the land of Canaan, a holy and happy people, without a feeble one in all their ranks. But their lack of faith called down upon them the just displeasure of God; and so it will upon us in these last days if we do not trust God any further than we can see. We should seek God in prayer, constant, earnest, heartfelt, prayer. He will reward all who diligently seek him, for he has told us that the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much.

The children of Israel tarried some time in this pleasant spot where there was plenty of water. The Amalekites, a tribe inhabiting that part of the country through which they were passing, became greatly disturbed by this. They felt that their territory had been invaded by this immense number of people, and they now came out to make war against them. Moses therefore directed Joshua to choose out soldiers and take them on the morrow to give battle with the enemy, while he himself would stand upon an eminence near by, with the rod of God in his hand. Accordingly, the next day Moses and Aaron and Hur took their position on the top of an adjoining hill, while Joshua and his company attacked the foe.

As the battle progressed, it was found that while Moses held up his hands toward heaven, entreating help from God, Israel prevailed; but when, through weariness, they were lowered, the enemy was victorious. Aaron and Hur stayed up the arms of Moses, and so, through the rest of that day, success was with the Israelites, and at its close the enemy was put to flight.

This act of Moses, in reaching up his hands toward heaven, was to teach Israel that while they made God their trust, and exalted his throne, he would fight for them, and subdue their enemies. But when they should let go their hold upon his strength, and should trust to their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their enemies would prevail against them. Then "Joshua discomfited Amalek and

his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi; for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." If the children of Israel had not murmured against the Lord, he would not have suffered their enemies to make war with them.

Before Moses reached Egypt on his mission to deliver the Israelites, he had, as we have seen, sent his wife Zipporah and her sons back to her father's house. When Jethro heard of the deliverance of the Hebrews, he visited Moses in the wilderness, and brought to him his wife and children. On learning of their approach, the great leader went out to welcome them, and after the first greetings and salutations had been exchanged, he conducted them to his tent. Here he related all the wonderful dealings of God with Israel. Jethro rejoiced, and blessed the Lord in words that show the devoutness of his heart, and having offered sacrifices to God, he made a feast to the elders of Israel.

Jethro's discerning eye soon saw that the burdens upon Moses were very great, as the people brought all their matters of difficulty to him, and he instructed them in regard to the statutes and law of God. He therefore counseled Moses to select proper persons and put them as rulers over thousands, also others over hundreds, and again others over tens. The men chosen for these important positions were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." The most difficult cases were to be brought before Moses, who was to be to the people, said Jethro, "to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

This advice was followed, and not only was Moses relieved of too heavy

a burden, but more perfect order was established among the people. "And Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way into his own land."

The leader of Israel was not above receiving instruction from his father-in-law. The Lord has greatly exalted Moses, and had wrought wonders by his hand; yet he did not conclude that because God had chosen him to instruct others, he needed not to be instructed. He gladly listened to the suggestions of Jethro, and adopted his plan as a wise arrangement.

April 22, 1880

Israel Arrives at Sinai

The children of Israel, obedient to the onward movement of the pillar of cloud, left Rephidim, having tarried there some time, and journeyed on toward Sinai. Their line of march had been across open plains, over steep ascents, and through narrow defiles. Again and again, when they had crossed a sandy waste, and their further progress seemed impossible because of the huge piles of massive rocks which lay directly in their way, a narrow passage would appear, and when this was passed, another barren, uninteresting plain would open to their view.

It was through one of these deep, gravelly passes that they were now called to pass. What a scene was this! Millions of people walled in by abrupt cliffs of granite rocks which rise hundreds of feet on either side, following a moving cloud by day, and guarded at night by a pillar of fire, as if the eye of God were fastened directly upon them. Christ in this wilderness school is here giving his people their first lessons in faith and trust in God.

Finally they come to a long range of mountains, upon which the cloudy pillar rests. The people encamp beneath its shadow, and while locked in slumber, the bread from Heaven gently falls upon the encampment. In the early morning, as the sun begins to brighten behind the dark ridge of eastern mountains, its soft, golden tints penetrate the dark gorges, seeming to those weary, almost discouraged travelers, like golden beams of mercy from the throne of Heaven.

Anxious eyes often turn in wonder upon the pillar of cloud hanging over the mount. The immense, rugged piles of granite rocks, with their irregular shapes and peaks, seem thrown together in the wildest confusion. The whole

country seems strangely solemn to the weary travelers. They frequently contrast the verdant valleys of Egypt with these dark, and cheerless ravines, and the bustling activity of their former home, with the mountain solitude.

Here the Lord had gathered his people to himself, that he might talk with them. There was nothing here that they chose to worship, nothing to divert their minds, and nothing upon which they would fasten their affections. Everything was calculated to make man feel his nothingness in the presence of him who has "weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance."

Soon after their arrival at Sinai, Moses received a divine summons to ascend the mountain. Alone he climbed the steep and jagged rocks, placing his feet in steps made without hands; and far up on those solitary heights, God informed him that Israel was now to be taken into close and peculiar connection with himself, and that they were to become an organized church in the wilderness, and a nation whom he would govern. These are the words which he spake:

"Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

Moses came down, and having assembled the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the message of God. When it was made known to them, they answered: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Here they entered into a solemn covenant with God to accept him as their ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of his divine authority.

Again Moses ascended, and the Lord said unto him, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever." When the Hebrews met with difficulties in the way, they were disposed to murmur against Moses and Aaron, and accuse them of leading the host of Israel from Egypt to destroy them. God would now honor Moses before them, that they might be led to confide in his instructions.

The Lord was about to come near to his people; they were to hear his law spoken, not by angels, but by himself; and Moses was now commanded to prepare them for that solemn event: "Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." The people were required to refrain from worldly care and labor, and to possess devotional thoughts. God required them also to wash their clothes. He is no less particular now than he was then. He is a God of order, and requires his people to observe habits of strict cleanliness. Those who worship God with uncleanly garments and persons, do not come before him in an acceptable manner. He is not pleased with their lack of reverence for him, and he will not accept the service of filthy worshipers, for they insult their Maker. The Creator of the heavens and the earth considered cleanliness of so much importance that he said, "And let them wash their clothes." Some who profess to be followers of Christ, call order and neatness, pride. They seem to consider it a virtue to leave their houses and premises in a disorderly, unimproved condition, thinking that they will thus give evidence of their disregard for temporal things, and their high estimate of spiritual things. But this same neglect and slothfulness which characterizes their business life, will be imparted to their religious life. Their religious experience will be defective. Says the apostle: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." God requires his people to be neat and orderly. All his directions to the children of Israel were of a character to establish habits of order and cleanliness in their dress, and in their surroundings. This was essential in order for them to preserve health,

and to exert a proper influence upon other nations as a people adopted by the living God.

The Lord continued his instructions to Moses: "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it. Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death. There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount." This command was designed to impress the minds of this rebellious people with a profound veneration for God, the author and authority of their laws.

Three days the people were before the mount. During this time, they had ample opportunity to review their past course of murmuring and impatience, and to repent. God had given them his gracious promise that they should become a peculiar treasure unto him, on condition of obedience; but if they were disobedient he would reject them, and choose another people.

Many regard the Jewish economy as an age of darkness. They have received the erroneous idea that repentance and faith had no part in the Hebrew religion, which they claim consisted only of forms and ceremonies. But the children of Israel were saved by Christ as virtually as is the sinner of today. By faith they saw Christ in those types and shadows which pointed forward to his first advent and death, when type should meet anti-type. They rejoiced in a Saviour to come, typified by sacrificial offerings, while we rejoice in a Saviour who has come. That which was expectation to ancient Israel, is certainty to modern Israel. The world's Redeemer was in close connection with his people then, being enshrouded in that cloudy pillar. Let us not say, then, that they had not Christ in the Jewish age. The inspired apostle writes: "By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," "esteeming the reproaches of Christ of greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

The command given to Moses to sanctify the people, brought great responsibility upon him. He was to faithfully point out their past errors, that they might, by humiliation, fasting, and prayer, purify their hearts from the defilement of sin, as well as cleanse themselves from all outward impurities. When the children of Israel were doing all they could to remove from them all defilement of the flesh and spirit, they were doing the same work that God requires us to do if we would be brought into close communion with him. However severe and close the battle to overcome wrong habits, and sinful indulgences, it must be fought and the victory gained. After the power of the will is brought into activity, then there must be a firm reliance upon Christ. When Israel thirsted in the wilderness, and yielded to sinful murmurings, Christ was to them what he is to us, a compassionate mediator, and he pardoned their transgressions. After man has done what he can to cleanse the soul-temple, then Christ's blood alone will avail for us, as Christ's typified blood availed for ancient Israel.

April 22, 1880

St. Helena, Cal

April 10 and 11 I spent with the church at St. Helena. There was a good representation of our brethren and sisters at the Sabbath meeting. I had freedom in speaking from the words of our Saviour found in John 15:7, 8. Following the discourse we had a very profitable social meeting, nearly all present taking part, after which the ordinances of the Lord's house were celebrated. Bro. Wood was present and conducted this service.

Sunday there were no meetings in the other churches, and the house was crowded. The best of attention was given to words spoken from 1 John 3:1-3. In the evening we again addressed an interested company. Monday we took the cars for Napa, where we spoke to the brethren and sisters there assembled in the evening. Some of the members of this church have moved away, and some have died, so that there are but few left. Although so few in numbers, one hundred and thirty-four dollars were paid in as their quarterly tithe. When every church member does his part cheerfully in tithes and offerings the general treasury will be supplied. Napa needs judicious ministerial labor. Indeed, from every direction comes the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." I would recommend that a definite time be set apart for prayer that God will raise up laborers to send into the harvest field. We see places for twenty men to labor on this coast. We must cry to God, brethren and sisters, in faith for him to put his hand to the work, and send by whom he will. As we view this large field, and see the many openings for laborers and the few there are to fill them, we feel humbled before God. His rebuke is upon us because of our unconsecration. We must devote more time to heartfelt prayer that God will work in behalf of his cause upon this coast. Shall we individually put away our pride and love of self, and so humble our hearts before God that he can turn his face this way, and let the light of his

countenance shine upon us. He can and will clothe us with salvation if we will comply with the condition laid down in his word. "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

May 6, 1880

Giving of the Law

On the morning of the third day all the children of Israel obeyed the command of God through Moses and drew near the mount with fear and solemnity. Awful and grand was the place of God's sanctuary, holy and elevated the pulpit from which he was about to deliver his memorable sermon. The principles of the law of God did not originate at Sinai; but by a long, degrading servitude in Egypt they had become confused in the minds of all Israel. The Lord had now brought them out into this place, grand with solitude, that he might more clearly impress upon their minds the nature of his requirements by speaking his law with an audible voice.

They were here to receive the most wonderful revelation ever made by God to man. The cloud which rested upon the mount, enveloping the Father and the Son and the retinue of holy angels, become more black and dense. Soon from its thick darkness came vivid flashes of lightning, followed by deep, hoarse peals of thunder which echoed and re-echoed among the mountains, causing the most careless to tremble. Then followed a period of solemn painful silence. The flashes of light sent forth from the cloud revealing the solemn scenery with wonderful brilliancy, left the cloud denser and more fearfully dark in contrast with the bright shining of his power. The mountain shook to its very foundation beneath the tread of the Divine Majesty.

Moses was then called up, and charged once more to go down and see that the bounds were in order, and the sanctity of the mountain observed, after which he and Aaron were to go upward toward the summit. Then the Lord in awful grandeur, speaks his law from Sinai, that the people may believe. He accompanies the giving of his law with sublime exhibitions of

his authority, that they may know that he is the only true and living God. Moses was not permitted to enter within the cloud of glory, but only to draw nigh, and enter the thick darkness which surrounded it, thus standing between the people and the Lord.

After God had given them such evidences of his power, he tells them who he is: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The same God who exalted his power among the Egyptians, now speaks his law:

"Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

"Honor thy [thy] father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon

the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

The first and second commandments spoken by Jehovah are precepts against idolatry. This sin if practiced, would lead men to great lengths in rebellion, and would result in the offering of human sacrifices. God would guard against the least approach to such abominations. The first four commandments were given to show men their duty to God; the last six, to show the duty of man to his fellow-man.

The fourth commandment is the connecting link between the great God and man. All who should observe the Sabbath would signify by such observance that they were worshipers of the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Thus the Sabbath was to be a sign between God and his people as long as he should have a people upon the earth to serve him.

When the congregation of Israel beheld the terrific manifestations of God's presence at Sinai, they shrank away from the mountain in fear and awe. They felt indeed that God was there. When Moses and Aaron descended, they were greeted by the multitude with the cry, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." The

leader answered, "Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." The people, however, remained at a distance, gazing in terror upon the stupendous scene, while Moses again "drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."

Again the Lord seeks to guard his people against idolatry by commanding Moses to say unto them, "Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." They were in danger of imitating the example of the Egyptians, and making to themselves images to represent God. The Lord then continued to lay down certain rules which should govern them and the blessings which would be theirs if they obeyed. These are his words: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries; for mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off." The angel who went before Israel was the Lord Jesus Christ. "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

God would have his people understand that he alone should be the object of their worship; and when they should overcome the idolatrous nations around them, they should not preserve any of the images of their worship, but utterly destroy them. Many of these heathen deities were very costly, and of beautiful workmanship, which might tempt those who had witnessed idol worship, so common in Egypt, to regard these senseless objects with some degree of reverence. The Lord would have his people know that it was

because of the idolatry of these nations, which had led them to every degree of wickedness, that he would use the Israelites as his instruments to punish them, and destroy their gods.

"I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, and Canaanite, and Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee."

After Moses had received the judgments and also the promises from the Lord, and had written them for the people, he "came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Moses then wrote their solemn pledge in a book, and offered sacrifices unto God for the people. "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Thus the people ratified their solemn pledge to the Lord to do all that he had said, and to be obedient.

May 6, 1880

The Southern California Camp-Meeting

This meeting commenced April 22, about three miles from Lemoore. We came upon the ground Friday, April 23. Up to this time we had had almost constant rain. But although we had traveled to and from our appointments in various places while the rain was pouring, every Sabbath and first-day had been pleasant. We had not a little anxiety lest the rain would continue during our camp meeting; but not a drop has fallen since we came on the ground.

We were happily surprised to find a very neat and pleasant encampment. Forty-three tents are pitched in a square around the large pavilion tent. The restaurant is the best conducted and arranged of anything of the kind we have ever seen at our camp-meetings. The two long tables in the dining tent, are liberally supplied with a variety to meet the wants of all. We found well furnished tents, comfortable and inviting, for those who came to labor, and who needed rest so much. The meetings have increased in interest from the first. The outside interest has been unusually good. Much prejudice has existed in this vicinity against our unpopular doctrines, but this meeting will give the people a better opportunity to learn what we do believe.

On Sabbath, we spoke more than an hour on the love of God, after which, between one and two hundred signified their desire to seek the Lord, by coming forward. Many testimonies of confession were borne, and a fervent season of prayer followed. It was a solemn occasion. The sweet assurance of the Spirit of God was ours as we sought by earnest intercession, and living faith, to place ourselves in connection with the Hearer of prayer. Light from the throne of God was reflected upon us. Those who were seeking the Lord, repaired from this meeting to tents selected for the

purpose, where the work was continued more thoroughly. These meetings were beneficial. Testimonies were borne, and interesting experiences related.

One brother said he used to drink, use tobacco, and gamble. He would often feel convicted that it was wrong to indulge in these things, but there seemed to be a bewitching power about them to hold him, and under the influence of temptation every good resolution would be broken. When he heard the doctrines proclaimed by S. D. Adventists, he became convinced of their truthfulness, and hearing it stated that it was in the power of all to overcome their strong appetites and sinful indulgences if they asked the Lord to help them, he commenced to pray for strength to resist temptation, and the Lord heard and answered his prayers. These practices once so attractive to him, he stated were now repulsive. He had a great desire to become more thoroughly converted. He felt that he was holding the truth only with the tip ends of his fingers, and unless he continued to pray, his hands would slip off, and then his strength would be gone, and he would be as bad as ever.

In our next social meeting, nearly all who bore testimony expressed their thankfulness to God for the blessings which they had received the day before. Some stated that for the first time in their life they could say that they knew that their sins were forgiven. This was indeed a precious Sabbath to those assembled to worship God on this encampment.

Sunday morning, teams commenced to pour their loads of living freight upon the ground. The encampment seemed barricaded with phaetons, spring buggies and wagons, header wagons and long hay wagons, filled with chairs. Some came from twenty miles around with their families. Eld. Haskell spoke in the forenoon with great clearness. I spoke in the afternoon on the subject of Christian Temperance. Pledges were then circulated, to which one hundred and thirty names were signed. Our own people had quite generally signed before this.

Monday and Tuesday many responded to the invitation to seek the Lord, and on both occasions marked progress was made in coming nearer to making an entire surrender to God. One who had long been wandering in the mazes of infidelity, for the first time took his stand openly with the people of God, and placed his feet firmly upon the Rock of Ages. He stated that he expected people would say, "Why do you unite with that people; they are poor." But his answer was, "I am poor, and therefore will unite with them to seek for heavenly riches. They will say, These are ignorant people. Well, I am ignorant, and wish to unite with them that we may together connect with the great Teacher, and obtain that wisdom which comes from the source of all wisdom. They will say, these are humble, low people. Well, I wish to come with them to the foot of the cross, and humble my heart and will to the mind and will of Christ."

Thursday I spoke upon the unity which should exist among brethren. I felt convinced that why the Spirit of God did not come into our meetings in a more marked manner was because of the dissensions which are allowed to exist among brethren. With some there existed envious and jealous feelings, evil surmisings, tale bearing, and fault-finding. These were referred to by the apostle as a root of bitterness whereby many are defiled. Many go all through the camp-meetings professedly worshiping God and keeping his commandments, while these very evils are cherished in their hearts. Such receive no lasting good, because they do not purify their hearts and cleanse the soul-temple. Some murmur against their brethren, and then, as it is but a step farther, they murmur against God because they do not feel happier, when the hindrance is in themselves alone. They are proud and unyielding; self is their cherished idol, and they would not dethrone it that Jesus might be enshrined in their hearts, therefore their lives were a jumble of inconsistencies.

We made a special call for all of this class to separate themselves from the congregation and especially seek the Lord. Many came forward and

several confessions were made, and yet the work did not go as deep with some as we felt it should. Our earnest supplications once more ascended to God in their behalf. Again the Lord drew near to us, and his Holy Spirit rested upon us. When we arose there was a marked change in the countenances of some. The darkness and gloom had been rolled away, and light, peace, and joy had flooded their souls. Their faces were lighted up, and all seemed eager to express their thankfulness for what God had done for them. The brother who had been a gambler, drinker, and tobacco-user bore a clear testimony. Jesus had blessed him as never before. He felt that he was a converted man. All was peace and joy. Several bore a similar testimony.

The meetings were to close Wednesday, but on Tuesday the brethren entreated us to remain over another Sabbath and Sunday. Some plead with tears that we should not leave them, for the work was only just begun, and much would be gained if the meetings could continue. We decided to comply with the request, and in obedience to our convictions of duty to continue our work. We felt deeply anxious for this dear people. Some have had but a short experience; they need to know more of the way of life. Many have confessed to fretfulness, quick temper, impatience, and fault-finding. Oh! how our hearts are drawn out for this class, knowing that many will not realize how offensive these sins are in the sight of God until it is too late for them to form new characters and be cleansed by the blood of Christ. We feel like entreating all who are indulging in these sins to put them away and build up a character upon the true foundation, Jesus Christ. A new and symmetrical character may be formed by laying up one grace and good deed upon another, thus climbing Peter's ladder of eight rounds in sanctification. A character thus built will be harmonious in all its paths. Faith will sustain works, for faith works by love and purifies the soul.

In some respects this meeting is unlike other camp-meetings. It has always pained my heart to see our brethren in a hurry to pull down their tents and return home after being in camp only two or three days. Before they

have really entered into the spirit of the meeting, they strike their tents and return to their worldly cares and perplexities. The last two or three days of the meeting are needed by every one, and the first days are needed to get into a position where the last days will benefit them. The varied instruction given is not from man. It is Christ speaking through his representatives, and not an occasion of this kind should be regarded with indifference. If absent from one meeting you may fail to receive a message sent to you from God, and as the result you may fall under temptation, because the instructions and warnings placed within your reach you did not receive.

The people here are hungry for knowledge, and they say, "We know not when we shall have so much help again, perhaps never, and we want to keep it as long as we can." A few have been home forty miles and this morning returned bringing with them some who had not been on the ground before. It is a satisfaction to labor for a people who are so anxious to be helped, and who will appreciate the labors bestowed upon them. The last two days, Thursday and Friday, have been the best of the series of meetings. The five o'clock social meeting this morning was the best we have had. Brother was on his knees confessing to brother; there were broken hearts, tears, forgiveness, and rejoicing. We expect to see more of the salvation of God ere this meeting closes.

As there is no response to the earnest and hearty invitation of our California Conference for laborers to come to their help on this coast and for the North Pacific mission, we feel it to be our duty to labor where they are in such suffering need of help. We stated that we would attend the camp-meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, and other large gatherings as our strength would permit. But the disappointment of our people in their expectation of help on this coast fastens me here and in Oregon the coming summer. My labors have been well received wherever I have been. I would not ask for a greater appreciation of my labors than I have received from our people here, and there has not been wanting expressions of appreciation from those not of

our faith. I dare not tear myself away from this field unless God should clear my way and clearly indicate my duty in that direction.

May 13, 1880

The Idolatry of Israel

At the command of God, Moses again ascended the mountain, and took with him Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, with seventy of the most influential elders in Israel. These were placed where they might behold the majesty of the divine presence, while the people should worship at the foot of the mount. "And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also, they saw God, and did eat and drink."

They did not behold the person of God, but only the inexpressible glory which surrounded him. Previous to this, had they looked upon such a scene, they could not have lived, for they were unprepared for it. But the exhibitions of God's power had filled them with fear, which wrought in them repentance for their past transgressions. They loved and revered God, and had been purifying themselves, and contemplating his glory, purity, and mercy, until they could approach nearer Him who had been the subject of all their meditations. God had enshrouded his glory with a thick cloud, so that the people could not behold it. The office of the elders whom Moses took with him, was to aid him in leading the host of Israel to the promised land. This work was of such magnitude that God condescended to put his spirit upon them. He honored them with a nearer view of the glory which surrounded him, that they might have a clear sense of his greatness and majesty and power, and thus be prepared with wisdom to act their part in the great work assigned them.

Moses and "his minister Joshua" were next summoned to meet with God. The decalogue was to be delivered, inscribed on two tables of stone,

and as the time of absence was to be a long one, the leader had appointed Aaron and Hur, assisted by the elders, to act in his stead, giving them the injunction, "Tarry ye here, until I come again unto you." "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

Even Moses could not go up at once into the mount; for he could not immediately approach so nigh unto God and endure the exhibitions of his glory. Six days was he preparing to meet with God. His common thoughts and feelings must be put away. During six days he was devoting his thoughts to God, and sanctifying himself by meditation and prayer, before he could be prepared to converse with his Maker.

The Lord then gave Moses directions for the building of a sanctuary, in which the divine presence would be specially manifested; he also gave further instructions in regard to the Sabbath. Finally there was delivered to Moses, by the hand of Divine Majesty, the testimony, or ten commandments, engraven on two tables of stone.

But while Moses was thus receiving instruction from God, the people were corrupting themselves at the foot of the mount. The mixed multitude that came from Egypt with the Israelites were the principal movers in this dreadful departure from God. They were called a mixed multitude, because the Hebrews had intermarried with the Egyptians.

The people had seen Moses ascend the mount and enter the cloud, while the summit of the mountain was all in flames. They watched for his return;

and as he did not come as soon as he expected, they became impatient, and persisted that he had been slain by the burning flame.

A large company assembled around the tent of Aaron, and told him that Moses would never return--that the cloud which had hitherto led them now rested upon the mount, and would no longer direct their route through the wilderness. They desired something which they could look upon to resemble God. The gods of Egypt were in their minds, and Satan was improving this opportunity, in the absence of their appointed leader, to tempt them to imitate the Egyptians in their idolatry. They suggested that if Moses should never return to them, they could go back into Egypt, and find favor with the Egyptians, by bearing this image before them, acknowledging it as their god.

Aaron remonstrated against their plans, until he thought they were determined to carry out their purpose, and he then ceased reasoning with them. So violent were their clamors that he feared for his own safety. And instead of standing up nobly for the honor of God, and trusting his life in the hands of Him who had wrought wonders for his people, Aaron lost his courage, his trust in the Lord, and cowardly yielded to the wishes of an impatient multitude; and this, too, in direct opposition to the recent commands of God.

He told them to collect the golden earrings among the people, and bring the gold to him. He supposed this would deter them from their purpose. But not so; they willingly gave up their ornaments, and from these he made a calf in imitation of the gods of Egypt, and built an altar whereon to sacrifice to this idol. And he submitted to hear the people proclaim, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." What an insult to Jehovah! Aaron himself "made proclamation and said, Tomorrow, is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." They had recently listened to the proclamation of

the law of God from Sinai, amid the most sublime demonstrations of divine power; and now, when their faith was tested by the absence of Moses for a few weeks, they engaged in idolatry, which had been so recently specified and expressly forbidden by Jehovah. God's anger was kindled against them.

Moses was warned to hasten back to the camp, for the people had turned again to the heathen worship. God said to him, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation."

God saw that the children of Israel, especially the mixed multitude, were continually disposed to rebel, and by their works, provoke him to destroy them. He knew that they would murmur against their leader, when in difficulty, and grieve him by their continual rebellion. He therefore proposed to Moses to consume them, and make of him a great nation. Here the Lord proved his servant.

He knew that it was a laborious and soul-trying work to lead that rebellious people through to the promised land. He would test the perseverance, faithfulness, and love of Moses, for such an erring and ungrateful people. But the man of God would not consent that Israel should be destroyed. He showed by his intercessions that he valued the prosperity of God's chosen people more highly than a great name, or to be called the father of a greater nation than was Israel.

"And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" And he begged that the people for whom God had so signally manifested his power, might be spared.

The thought that the heathen nations, and especially the Egyptians, would triumph over Israel, and reproach God, was overwhelming to Moses. He could not let Israel go, notwithstanding all their rebellion, and their repeated murmurings against himself. The news of their wonderful deliverance had been spread among all nations, and all people were anxiously watching to see what God would do for them. And Moses remembered well the words of the Egyptians, that he was leading them into the wilderness that they might perish, and he receive their possessions. And now if God should destroy his people, and exalt him to be a greater nation than Israel, would not the heathen triumph and claim that the God of the Hebrews was not able to lead them to the land he had promised them? As Moses interceded for Israel, his timidity was lost in his deep interest and love for that people for whom he had, in the hands of God, been the means of doing so much. He presented before God his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He prayed with firm faith and determined purpose. The Lord listened to his pleadings, and regarded his unselfish prayer, and promised that he would spare Israel.

Nobly did Moses stand the test, and show that his interest in Israel was not to obtain a great name, nor to exalt himself. The burden of God's people was upon him. God had proved him, and was pleased with his faithfulness, his simplicity of heart, and integrity before him, and he committed to him, as to a faithful shepherd, the great charge of leading his people through to the promised land.

May 13, 1880

Calls for Labor

At a meeting held in Oakland to consider the wants of the cause, the brethren assembled presented the urgent demands for labor in this State.

Eld. Haskell spoke of the necessity of ministerial labor upon the Pacific coast, also of the need of missionary labor not confined to the ministry. He dwelt particularly upon the importance of those ministers who do go out, going with faith and confidence in God, doing their work with thoroughness. Reference was made to the many calls from the different fields, and of the few ministers ready to answer these calls, and of the discouraging state of health of most of these.

I spoke at some length upon the duty of our ministers to control the voice, and not pervert their powers by speaking too loud. Every minister should do his utmost to become an acceptable speaker. If one forms the habit of pitching his voice to an unnatural key, he does great injury to the vocal organs, as well as violence to the ears of the people. The minister should conform his life and manner of teaching as nearly as possible to the life and manner of Christ. During his whole ministry Christ was never heard screaming his lessons of instruction. He modulated his voice, speaking plainly and distinctly, with an earnestness and pathos that ever deeply impressed his hearers.

Remarks were made by several of the brethren with reference to the many openings for labor. Bro. Rice spoke of Chico, a place where an effort had been made and forty had signed the covenant, but that further labor was essential to confirm and establish a church. He also spoke of other places where a few had come out and were observing the Sabbath, that if further

labor could be had, others would probably take their stand for the truth. A tent would be needed as our people have no meeting houses in these places. Bro. Chapman spoke in favor of laborers going to Santa Barbara county. He has relatives who have sent urgent requests for some one to come and preach the truth there. Several other places were mentioned as good openings.

Bro. Butcher then spoke particularly of Suisun, Vacaville, and Dixon. The miracle of his tongue being loosed, had created great excitement in these places. He states that when he was ordained elder of the church he objected because of impediment in his speech, saying that he could neither read nor speak on account of stammering so badly. Eld. Healey told him that Moses made the same excuse, but the Lord told him, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what to say." Bro. B. decided that if the Lord had chosen him for the place he would help him to fill it. He felt the power of truth and longed to talk it to his neighbors. He prayed most earnestly that God would remove the stammering and help him to talk the truth. He received the assurance that this would be done, and upon the strength of his faith he invited his neighbors, not of our belief, to come out to the meeting. They came, and he was able to talk with great freedom and convincing power. Those who have known Bro. Butcher for years are filled with astonishment at the great miracle wrought. He has had many invitations to talk the truth, and has done so with joyfulness. He believes quite a number are convinced that we have the truth, and if some laborer could come with the tent a good work might be accomplished. Another in pleading for Vacaville, says the case of Bro. B. has stirred the whole community, and individuals who had not attended church for years have come out to hear him explain the Scriptures, and now they want to hear more on these subjects.

Eld. Healey says, there are so many openings they can hardly determine where to go; openings at Shasta, San Diego, Vacaville, Dixon, good fields everywhere; but where are the men to respond to the calls?

Bro. Israel spoke of the calls that had come from Kern county, stating that the tent could be pitched at the county seat, and he thought, meet with success; also that San Francisco should have tent labor, that the church was in need of help, many of their members having moved away, and a heavy debt upon their meeting house. He expressed his anxiety to do all that he could to advance the cause; spoke of his gratitude for what the Lord had done for his family, through a testimony from sister White, is releasing his wife from the cruel bondage of despair, which had come upon her in consequence of poor health, and had held her for months. In accepting the testimony she was restored to her family in her right mind, and is now cheerful and hopeful, praising God for the great deliverance wrought.

Eld. Waggoner remarked that he did not come to this coast to labor as a preacher, yet he felt the same interest for these fields of labor as though he were engaged exclusively in preaching. He expressed a special anxiety for San Francisco, stating that light had been given that this was a missionary field. Many that have embraced the truth here have moved to other places, some have died, and at present the church is very small. He urges that the tent be pitched at different points in the city, and meetings continued through the favorable part of the season. He also urges that the different fields be carefully and prayerfully considered. We must not study to keep the efforts of our ministers in a narrow compass. Elders White and Bates started in Massachusetts, and Maine, and they went out in different directions in different States, planting the standard of truth, from which the light should shine forth to others. These men who led out in the work had the fullest confidence in God's power to help them in their work, and he did help at the very time they most needed help.

This precious truth gathers up one here, and another there, and from every truly converted soul the work will enlarge and spread.

May 20, 1880

Aaron's Sin in Yielding to the People

As Moses and Joshua went down from the mountain, the former bearing the "tables of the testimony," they heard the sound of shouting in the camp. Joshua's first thought was of an attack from their enemies: "There is a noise of war in the camp." Moses answered, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

As they drew near the camp they beheld the children of Israel shouting and dancing in an excited manner around their idol. It was all one scene of heathenism, an imitation of the idolatrous feasts and idol worshipers of Egypt; but how unlike the solemn and reverent worship of God! Moses was overwhelmed. He had just come from the presence of God's glory, and although he had been warned that the people had corrupted themselves, had made an idol and sacrificed to it, yet he was in a measure unprepared for that dreadful exhibition of the degradation of Israel. In utter discouragement and wrath because of their great sin, he threw down the tables of stone by divine direction purposely to break them in the sight of the people, and thus signify that they had broken the covenant so recently made with God.

He then burned the idol in the fire and ground it to powder, and after strewing it upon the water, he made the children of Israel drink of it. This act was to show them the utter worthlessness of the god which they had been worshiping. Men could burn it in the fire, grind it to powder and drink it, without receiving any injury therefrom. He asked them how they could expect such a god to save them, or to do them any good or any evil. Then he rehearsed to them the exhibitions which they had witnessed of the unlimited power, glory, and majesty of the living God:--that struck terror to their souls.

"And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire), that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. And ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now, therefore, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me. And the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee. They have well said all that they have spoken. Oh, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!"

The Majesty of Heaven here shows that he takes no pleasure in punishing the transgressor; but when his righteous laws are trampled upon he must maintain the honor of his throne. He delights to bestow his blessings upon all who will value them. "Oh, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" This covers all who should live on the earth till the close of time, all who come under the meditation of Jesus Christ. The prosperity of all depends upon their obedience to God's requirements. The heart that is steadfastly fixed upon the Lord will not think slightly of his law himself, nor give it less regard and reverence because of the universal disrespect which it receives. In proportion as it is disregarded and despised by the masses will it become precious to the God-fearing and obedient. Said David, "They have made void thy law, therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, than

fine gold."

Moses then presented before them their disgraceful conduct in worshiping an idol, the work of man, instead of offering sincere devotion to the living God. He pointed them to the broken tables of stone, which represented to them that thus had they broken the covenant which they had so recently made with God. The Lord did not reprove his faithful servant for breaking the tables of stone, but was very angry with Aaron because of his sin; and he would have destroyed him, had it not been for the special intercessions of Moses in his behalf.

The great leader next summoned his guilty brother to appear before him, and sternly inquired, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" Aaron endeavored to excuse his course by relating the clamors of the people--that if he had not complied with their wishes they would have put him to death. "And Aaron said, let not the anger of my lord wax hot. Thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." He would have Moses think that a miracle had been performed--that the gold was cast into the fire, and by some miraculous power was changed to a calf.

But his excuses and prevarication were of no avail. Moses severely rebuked his brother, and informed him that his guilt was heightened by the fact that he had been blessed above the people, and had been admitted into close converse with God. That he, placed in a responsible position to lead and control Israel, should commit so great a sin, even to save his life, was a matter of astonishment with faithful Moses. He "saw that the people were naked; for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their

enemies." He had stripped them of their ornaments and had put them to a shameful use. The people were not merely deprived of their ornaments, but they were divested of their defense against Satan; for they had lost their piety and consecration to God, and had forfeited his protection. He had, in his displeasure, removed his sustaining hand, and they were left to the contempt and power of their enemies.

Aaron's failure to be true to his trust brought the rebuke of God upon him. Had he been steadfast, God would have shielded him from harm. We have compliant Aarons in our day, those who hold positions of authority in the church and who coincide with an unconsecrated people and thus lead them to sin. They expose themselves and the people to the wrath of God. However much Aaron excused himself, God regarded him as the principal agent in this terrible transgression. Here is an example traced by the pen of inspiration, in the pages of sacred history, as a lesson to all ministers and those who are in responsible positions, that they should in no case imitate the example of unfaithful Aaron. We have in these last days, as much occasion to tremble with fear at the will of God, as the Israelites had when they stood at the foot of the mountain.

The ministers who teach the people that God's law is no longer of force, are leading them to security in their life of disobedience and transgression. This Law of God is so exceeding broad that we cannot measure it. It is holy, just, and good and we can in no way evade its claims. It will be the rule of man's conduct as long as time shall last, and the rule of the future judgment of God. The Lord cannot consistent with his perfection of character, the sacredness and honor of his throne and government, and with reference to the happiness of the beings he has created, reverse or release one precept of his law, or repeal one jot or tittle of it, for it is perfect, holy, just, and good, in harmony with his character.

While men profess to rejoice in the intercession and grace of Jesus

Christ they should not forget that harmony with Christ cannot be gained while there is a spirit of war in their hearts against his Father's commandments. Love genuine love to Jesus Christ will lead directly to hearty obedience of all the law of God, and there will be the deepest repentance whenever they break, or teach men by their example to break one of the least of God's commandments. Ministers who smooth the consciences of the people by participating with them in transgression through any cause, are rejoicing in iniquity. And when Christ comes, to judgment, the stoutest hearts, the most confident boasters of religious attainments while breaking the law of God, will faint and fail, every excuse will then be silenced, every heart corrupt in its disobedience will be revealed just as it is. There will be recriminations with the companions in pouring contempt upon the law of God; but the heaviest denunciations will come upon the unfaithful minister who professed to be sent of God to show them the way of salvation. Tempter and tempted will suffer condemnation according to their responsibility and the wrong that they have done in leading souls to transgression. Of all the crimes that God will visit none are in his sight so grievous as those who tempt and encourage others in sin. God would have his ministers ever in all places show themselves decidedly on the Lord's side, loyal and true to his commandments in a rebellious world, thus rebuking the disobedient however difficult or contrary to the natural feelings. "Those that honor me," saith God, "I will honor." God looks to those who bear his commission to be true and faithful, and to exalt the dignity of his claims.

We would have no Aarons in our ranks, but men who respond to the Divine commission, men who become not weak, pliant time-servers, but men who connect themselves with the infinite God, become strong in his strength, and enter upon their mission not to exalt themselves, not to shun disagreeable duties, but to do God's work with unwavering fidelity. With a true purpose a weak man becomes strong; in God's strength a timid man becomes brave; the irresolute become men of quick, firm, decided action. The thought that he is of sufficient consequence to be selected and honored

with bearing a commission from the King of kings is sufficient to make him resolute, and to cause him to be faithful and true to his trust. God looks to him for that work with which he is intrusted to invest him with a moral dignity that savors of heaven.

The most important lesson of Aaron's weak compliance with the wishes of the people are for all to profit by. Moses treated the case of Aaron as though he was the great offender. He inquired what had the people done to him that he should be revenged upon them by leading them into so great a crime. Aaron's conduct was not justified in the least.

May 27, 1880

God's Abhorrence and Treatment of Sin

Moses now requested all who had been free from this great sin of idolatry, to come and stand by him, at his right hand, while those who had joined the rebellious in worshiping the idol, but who had repented of their sin, were to stand at his left hand. The people arranged themselves as had been directed. "And the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." This tribe had taken no part in the idolatrous worship. But a large company, mostly of the mixed multitude, who instigated the making of the calf, were stubborn in their rebellion, and would not stand with Moses, either at his right hand or at his left.

Moses then commanded those at his right hand to take their swords, and go forth and slay the rebellious, who wished to go back into Egypt. None were to execute the judgment of God on the transgressors only those who had taken no part in the idolatry. They were to spare neither brother, companion, nor neighbor. Those who engaged in this work of slaying, however painful, were now to realize that they were executing upon their brethren a solemn punishment from God; and for executing this painful work, contrary to their own feelings, God would bestow upon them his blessing. By performing this act, they showed their true feelings relative to the high crime of idolatry, and consecrated themselves more fully to the sacred worship of the only true God. "And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." Terror filled the hearts of the whole congregation. They feared that they would all be destroyed. As Moses saw their distress, he promised, according to their earnest request, to plead with God to pardon their transgression.

Those who plead that great charity must be exercised toward the

transgressors of God's commandments, may see in this instance of God's retributive justice how he regards that charity that would cloak sin, or shield those in iniquity. The ringleaders in this wickedness, without respect to friendship or kindred, were to be punished with death. Only those were slain who stood forth in bold defiance to vindicate their conduct, while those who repented of their sins, and humbled themselves, were spared. Some would call the prompt and decided measures taken, a hard and severe spirit. But Moses here received from the mouth of God, the interpretation of, or what he calls, sanctification. In the prompt decisive act of showing their abhorrence of such disobedience and transgression, they sanctified themselves. This integrity, this undeviating faithfulness, brought a blessing upon the tribe who performed the act of terrible justice.

Aaron failing to stand up boldly for the right, his yielding to the strength of numbers, placed him with the majority. Aaron represents the cases of a large number composing our churches at the present day. They pass over sins existing in the church which grieve the spirit of God. They are lax where order and principle are involved, because it is not pleasant to reprove and correct wrongs. They are themselves carried along with the current, and become responsible for a fearful neglect of faithfulness.

Moses represents a class who will call sin by its right name; a class that will give no place to sin and wrong, but will purge it from among them. Our abhorrence of sin cannot be too strong, if we are controlled by no personal, selfish feelings, if we labor disinterestedly for the salvation of souls, pleading in behalf of the erring, and those blinded by their own transgressions.

On the morrow, Moses addressed them: "Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." He went, and in his confession before God, he said, "Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now,

if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." The answer was "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore, now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee. Behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." The Lord further showed his displeasure at their act by afflicting them with a plague.

Moses manifested his great love for Israel in his entreaty to the Lord to forgive their sin, or blot his name out of the book which he had written. His intercessions here illustrate Christ's love and mediation for the sinful race. But the Lord refused to let Moses suffer for the sins of his backsliding people. He declared to him that those who had sinned against him he would blot out of his book which he had written; for the righteous should not suffer for the guilt of the sinner. The book here referred to is the book of records in Heaven, in which every name is inscribed, and the acts of all, their sins, and obedience, are faithfully written. When individuals commit sins which are too grievous for the Lord to pardon, their names are erased from the book, and they are devoted to destruction. Although Moses realized the dreadful fate of those whose names should be dropped from the records of Heaven, yet he plainly declared before God that if the names of his erring Israel should be no more remembered by him for good, he wished his name to be blotted out with theirs; for he could never endure to see the fullness of Jehovah's wrath come upon the people for whom he had wrought such wonders.

The Lord directed Moses to move his tent afar off from the encampment of Israel, thus giving expression to the people that he had separated himself from them. He would reveal himself to Moses, but not to such a people. Here he puts a difference between the faithful and the unfaithful; and this rebuke was keenly felt by the sinful Israelites.

In sadness they had buried their dead, the subjects of the wrath of an insulted God, and their sin had also separated Moses their leader from them. Moses pitched the tent where God indicated, but he called it the tabernacle of the congregation. Anxiously the people watched the movements of Moses as he repaired to the tabernacle. They feared that God had separated Moses from them that he might destroy them in his wrath. When Moses repaired to the tabernacle, every man stood in the door of his tent until he entered. The people had laid off all their ornaments, for the Lord had said to Moses: "Say unto the children of Israel, ye are a stiff necked people; I will come up unto the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee that I may know what to do unto thee." They stripped themselves of their ornaments, and humbled their hearts in penitence before God. Moses had not informed the people with what success he had interceded with God in their behalf; but in response to his earnest importunities, God had promised to send an angel before them, but he had refused to go himself up in the midst of them, lest in their wayward course his wrath should consume them in the way.

As Moses entered into the tabernacle, the symbol of his glory in the cloudy pillar stood at the door of the tabernacle. Had Moses made an attempt to lessen the magnitude of the sins of rebellious Israel, he would not have been tolerated in the divine presence for a moment, for he would have shared the guilt of Israel. He plead before God that he should spare his people, notwithstanding their great sin, and in thus doing show himself a great and merciful God. Thus Moses cast himself and all Israel upon the large mercy of him whom Israel had dishonored. Moses then faithfully presented before the people the aggravating character of their sin. He knew that mere sacrifices and offerings would not remove the guilt unless their hearts repented sincerely of their transgression.

Some in this age of the world seem to think it a virtue to call sin righteousness. But Moses called sin by its right name, a transgression of

God's holy law. Moses required all who were truly penitent and humble in view of their transgression, to manifest it by separating from the congregation, and in the sight of all Israel repair to the tabernacle, and he would plead with God to forgive their transgression, and receive them back again to his favor. Conviction and thorough repentance was required of ancient Israel in order to meet the standard of God. No less does God require of his people in our day. There must be genuine heart work in repentance and humiliation, in order to come under this covenant care, and protecting love of God. Unmistakable evidence is given that God is a jealous God, and that he will require of modern Israel as he did of ancient Israel, that they obey his law. For all who live upon the earth is this sacred history traced by the pen of inspiration.

June 3, 1880

God's Dealings with Transgressors of His Law

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, unto thy seed will I give it. And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; unto a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people. I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; therefore, now, put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb."

And Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, and all who desired to seek the Lord were commanded to separate themselves from the congregation by resorting thither.

The tabernacle here mentioned was a temporary tent arranged for the worship of God. The sanctuary, the pattern of which God gave to Moses, had not yet been built.

All who sincerely repented of their sins, made supplication unto God in confessing their sins with great humility. Then Moses went into the tabernacle. The people watched with the deepest interest to see if God would accept his mediation in their behalf; if he condescended to meet with Moses, then they might hope that they would not be utterly consumed. When the

cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, then all the people wept for joy, and rose up and worshiped, every man in his tent door. They bowed themselves upon their faces to the earth in humility. As the pillar of cloud, the token of God's presence, continued to rest at the door of the tabernacle, they knew that Moses was pleading in their behalf before God. "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

"And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people." Moses was very urgent that the Lord would show him just what course to pursue in the great work before him. He deeply felt his need of divine wisdom in the guidance of Israel, that they might once more be acknowledged of God as his people.

The Lord answered the anxious inquiry of his servant with the assurance, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses entreated, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." He was not willing to cease pleading with God until he should obtain the assurance that the cloudy pillar, the token of his presence, would still rest upon the tabernacle, and continue to direct their journeyings.

Moses could not endure to have his interest separated from his brethren. His earnest intercession was that the favor of God in his special presence might again be granted sinful but repenting Israel, and that the tabernacle which had been removed from the encampment of Israel because of their

idolatry might be again set up in their midst and the Lord manifest his glory to the children of Israel. There Moses showed his disinterested love for the tribes of Israel, and his genuine zeal for the honor of God. He presses his petition to God, he wants a decisive assurance then and there that the Lord would take back his people to his love, and that the breach that sinful Israel had made might be pardoned. Here Moses shows himself to be indeed a type of Christ. The Lord was in no way displeased with the importunity of Moses. He had a love for the sheep of his care. And the Lord promised that he would fully grant his request.

All truly converted souls will exercise repentance toward God, because they have broken his law. How carefully and tremblingly sinful Israel sought the pardon of God, and to be taken into divine favor. It was not merely form with this people, but earnest pleadings. Were there in our day visible manifestations of God's wrath, and sudden retribution following crime as when the punishment fell so heavily upon Israel there would be less bold presumption and defiance of God's law. Many continue in transgression, flattering their conscience that grace is so free and abundant that they will never be called to an account. But the great God is just as jealous of his law as in the days of Moses; though he bears long with perverse hearts he will surely bring to account all transgressors of his sacred law. God gave the wicked nations a time of probation. He would give them evidences of the power of the true and living God, that they might see and understand the superiority of the God of Heaven to their senseless idols. According to the light given was the condemnation. If they chose their own way before God's ways, and their own wickedness before the righteousness of God, when the decision was fully made then God's time had come to punish them.

In our day ministers and people make void, and pour contempt upon that law which is as sacred as the throne of God. Satan exults that he succeeds to so great a degree with the professedly religious world in making of no account the law of God; that law which is the foundation of God's

government in Heaven and in earth. Satan knows that if he could bring about a disregard of this holy law with ministers and teachers, that Christianity will become dwarfed and sickly, true piety paralyzed. Were the churches of today sifted by fiery trials they could not bear the proving test of God. His holy law, of ten precepts, the mirror which discloses the defects in the characters of all who consult it, would reveal that a great proportion of that which is thought to be genuine religion is very defective, having only a form of godliness, and no divine power to savor of life.

The Lord granted the earnest entreaty of his servant. And in answer to the prayer of Moses, that he might behold the divine glory, he was permitted to witness such a manifestation of God's presence as had never before been granted to man.

Moses was now directed to prepare two tables of stone, and take them with him to the summit of Sinai, where the ten commandments would be written as they had been on the broken tables. No man was to go up with him, nor was any man to be seen throughout the mount.

He obeyed the command, and "the Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there." The Deity proclaimed himself, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, of those that love him and keep his commandments, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

God did not mean in his threatenings that children would be compelled to suffer for their parents' sins, but that the example of the parents would be imitated by their children. If the children of wicked parents should serve God and do righteousness, he would reward their right doing. But the effects of a

sinful life by the parents are often inherited by the children. They follow in the footsteps of their parents. Sinful example has its influence from father to son, to the third and fourth generations. If parents indulge in depraved appetites, they will, in almost every case, see the same reproduced in their children. The children will develop characters similar to those of their parents. If parents are continually rebellious, and inclined to make void the law of God by precept and example, their children will generally pursue the same course. The example of God-fearing parents, who respect and honor by their own course of action God's rule of right, will be imitated by their children and their children's children; and thus the influence is seen from generation to generation. The commandments of God are only grievous to those who do not observe them.

As the Lord impressed upon the heart of Moses a clear sense of the divine goodness, mercy, and compassion, he was filled with deep joy, and reverence for God. "And he made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped" He entreated the Lord to pardon the iniquity of his people, and take them for his inheritance. Then God graciously promised that he would make a covenant before all Israel to do great things for his people; and that he would evidence to all nations his special care and love for them.

June 10, 1880

The Law and the Sabbath

The Lord charged Moses to make no covenant with the people of the land whither they should go, lest they should be ensnared thereby. But they should destroy the altars of the heathen, break their images, and cut down the groves dedicated to their idols. He then commanded, "Thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." God claims supreme worship as his due.

God promised Abraham's posterity the land of Canaan; but centuries must pass before they could enter upon their possession, "In the fourth generation, they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The Amorites inhabiting the land of Canaan, were gradually bringing upon themselves the righteous judgments of God by their iniquity. When it was fully settled that they would not be brought under the control of God's government, and when they gave themselves up to work iniquity, bringing themselves to the most conspicuous idolatry, yet God spared them, for the full measure of guilt marking them for his vengeance, had not been reached. The iniquity of the Amorites must reach its fullness before God would send forth his mandate to destroy utterly. In the fourth generation God dispossessed them to make room for his people. Here we see the long suffering of God; he allows nations a certain probation, but there is a point where their accumulated guilt will meet its punishment. Those who would make void God's law, advance from one degree of wickedness to another. Children would inherit from their parents the wicked, rebellious spirit against God and his law, and would go to greater extent in wickedness than their fathers before them until the wrath of God breaks forth upon them. The punishment was none the less certain because long delayed. God would have us take these lessons to heart. He would have us see the principle of divine

justice in his dealings, and have us understand that a record is kept of the impieties and law breaking of any people and nation with the unerring accuracy of an infinite God. Although the measure of iniquity is filling up, God still bears, he gives additional opportunities and advantages, calling to repentance and proffering pardon. Yet if they continue to refuse light, and heed not the warnings of God, his divine justice will not always bear; for these are a blot, a stain upon his universe; their iniquity will corrupt all connected with them and become wide-spread.

Special directions were given in regard to the observance of Sabbath: "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest. In earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest." The Lord knew that Satan was continually at work to lead the Israelites to transgress the divine law, and he condescended to be very definite in his directions to his erring people, that they might not transgress his commandments for want of knowledge. In the busiest season of the year, when their fruits and grains were to be secured, they would be tempted to labor on sacred time. He would have them understand that their blessings would be increased or diminished according to their integrity of soul, or their unfaithfulness in his service.

God is no less particular now in regard to his Sabbath than when he made this requirement of the children of Israel. His eye is upon all his people, and over all the work of their hands. He will not pass by unnoticed those who crowd upon the Sabbath, and employ for their own use the time which belongs to him. Some may think they gain time by this course; but instead of being advantaged by robbing God of that which he has reserved to himself, they will lose. Many do not realize that the judgments which overtake them are from God. Though he may bear long with the transgressor the punishment will surely come at last.

Forty days and nights Moses remained in the mount, and during all this time, as at the first, he was miraculously sustained. And again the Lord

"wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine presence; and the brightness did not cease when he descended from the mountain. Unknown to himself, his face shone with such a dazzling, unearthly light that Aaron, as well as all the people, shrank from him. On learning the cause of their terror, he covered his face with a vail, and he continued to do so when coming from such heavenly communings.

Those who trample upon God's authority, and show contempt for the law given in such grandeur at Sinai, virtually despise the lawgiver, the great Jehovah. The children of Israel who had transgressed the first and second commandments, were charged not to be seen anywhere near the mount, where God was to descend in glory to write the law a second time upon tables of stone, lest they should be consumed with the burning glory of his presence. And if they could not even look upon the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, because he had been communing with his Maker, how much less can sinners look upon the Son of God when he shall appear in the clouds of heaven in the glory of his Father, surrounded by all the angelic host, to execute judgment upon all who have disregarded the commandments of God, and have trodden under foot the blood of Christ!

The law of God existed before man was created. The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God's government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them his law. It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah.

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. The principles embodied in the decalogue existed before the fall, and were suited to the condition of holy beings. After the fall, these principles were not changed, nothing was taken from the law of God, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state.

A system of sacrifices was then established, to keep before the fallen race that which the serpent made Eve disbelieve, that the penalty of disobedience is death. The transgression of God's law made it necessary for Christ to die as a sacrifice; for only thus could he redeem man from the penalty of the broken law, and yet maintain the honor of the divine government. The sacrificial system was designed to teach man humility, in view of his fallen condition, and to lead him to repentance toward God and faith in the promised Redeemer for pardon of past transgressions. Had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and hence no need of additional precepts to suit man's fallen condition.

Adam taught his descendants the law of God, which was handed down to the faithful through successive generations. The continual transgression of its precepts called for a flood of waters upon the earth. The law was cherished by Noah and his family, who for right-doing were miraculously saved in the ark. Thus the Lord preserved to himself a people, from Adam down, in whose hearts was his law. He says of Abraham, he "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, "I am the Almighty God. Walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make a covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

He then gave to Abraham and his seed the rite of circumcision as a token that God had separated them from all nations as his peculiar treasure. By this sign they solemnly agreed to fulfill the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham, to be separate from all other nations, and to be perfect. If the descendants of Abraham had faithfully kept this covenant they would have

escaped a great temptation to indulge in the sinful practices of other nations, and would not have been seduced into idolatry. By mingling with idolaters they lost to a great extent their peculiar, holy character. To punish them, the Lord brought a famine upon their land, which compelled them to go down into Egypt to preserve their lives. But because of his covenant with Abraham, God did not forsake them while they were in Egypt. He suffered them to be oppressed by the Egyptians, that they might turn to him in their distress, choose his righteous and merciful government, and obey his requirements.

The Lord heard the cries of his people in the land of their captivity and delivered them, that they might be free to serve him. After they had left Egypt, and the waters of the Red Sea had been divided before them, he proved them to see if they would trust in him who had taken them, a nation from another nation, by signs, temptations, and wonders. But they failed to endure the trial. They murmured against God because of difficulties in the way, and wished to return again to Egypt. To leave them without excuse, the Majesty of Heaven condescended to come down upon Sinai, enshrouded in glory, and surrounded by his angels, and in a most sublime and awful manner make known his law of ten commandments. He would not permit even his angels to teach those sacred precepts, but spoke them himself, in the hearing of all Israel. He did not, even then, trust them to the memory of a people who were prone to forget his requirements, but wrote them with his own finger upon tables of stone. He would remove from them all possibility of mingling with his holy precepts any tradition, or of confusing his requirements with the practices of men.

June 17, 1880

The Law of Moses

The Lord did not leave his people with the precepts of the decalogue alone. Moses was commanded to write, as God should bid him, judgments and laws giving minute directions in regard to their duty, thereby guarding the commandments engraved on the tables of stone. Thus did the Lord seek to lead erring man to a strict obedience to that holy law which he is so prone to transgress.

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved in the ark by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a token or pledge, they would never have gone into idolatry, nor been suffered to go down into Egypt; and there would have been no necessity for God to proclaim his law from Sinai, engraving it upon tables of stone, or guard it by definite directions in the judgments and statutes given to Moses.

Moses wrote these judgments and statutes from the mouth of God while he was with him in the mount. The definite directions in regard to the duty of his people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the ten commandments simplified and given in a definite manner, that they need not err.

The Lord said of the children of Israel, "Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." Because of continual disobedience, the Lord annexed penalties to the

transgression of his law, which were not good for the transgressor, or whereby he should not live in his rebellion.

By transgressing the law which God had given in such majesty, and amid glory which was unapproachable, the people showed open contempt of the great Lawgiver, and death was the penalty.

"Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my Sabbaths they greatly polluted. Then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them."

The statutes and judgments given of God were good for the obedient. "They shall live in them." But they were not good for the transgressor; for in the civil law given to Moses, punishment was to be inflicted on the transgressor, that others should be restrained by fear.

Moses charged the children of Israel to obey God. He said unto them, "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you."

The Lord gave Moses definite instructions in regard to the ceremonial offerings which were to cease at the death of Christ. This system, first established with Adam after his fall, and taught by him to his descendants, was corrupted before the flood, and also by those who separated themselves from the faithful followers of God, and engaged in the building of the tower of Babel. They had no faith in the Redeemer to come, and they sacrificed to gods of their own choosing, instead of the God of Heaven. Their superstition led them to great extravagances. They taught the people that the more

valuable their offerings, the greater would be the pleasure of their gods, and consequently the greater the prosperity and riches of their nation. Hence, human beings were often sacrificed to these senseless idols. Many of the laws which governed these nations were cruel in the extreme. They were made by men whose hearts were not softened by divine grace, and while the most debasing crimes were passed over lightly, a small offense would be visited by the most cruel punishment.

Moses had this in view when he said to Israel, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

God was a wise and compassionate lawgiver, judging all cases righteously, and without partiality. While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage, they were surrounded with idolatry. The Egyptians were regarded as the most learned nation then in existence, and their worship was conducted with great pomp and ceremony. Other nations held the most cruel and absurd traditions as a part of their religion, and revolting customs found a place in their idolatrous service. Prominent among these was the practice of causing their children to pass through the fire,--to leap over the altar upon which a fire was burning before their idol. If a person could do this without injury, the people received it as evidence that the god accepted their offerings, and favored especially the one who had passed through the fiery ordeal. He was loaded with benefits, and was ever afterward greatly esteemed by all the people. He was never punished however aggravated might be his crimes. Should another person be burned in passing through the

fire, his fate was sealed; the people believed that their gods were angry and could be appeased only by the life of the unhappy victim, and he was accordingly offered as a sacrifice. Even some of the children of Israel had so far degraded themselves as to practice these abominations. The Lord manifested his displeasure by causing the fire to consume their children in the act of passing through it.

Because the people of God had confused ideas of the sacrificial offerings, and mingled heathen customs with their ceremonial worship, the Lord condescended to give them definite directions, that they might understand the true import of those sacrifices which were to last only till the Lamb of God should be slain, who was the great Antitype of all their sacrificial offerings.

Moses understood the plan of salvation through Christ, by these sacrificial offerings, and by the manifestation of his glory which he had been permitted to behold. The perfection of God's goodness, his image, his excellency and glory had been revealed to him. He saw the suffering, self-denial and self-sacrifice of Him who was one with the Father, to save fallen man. It had been revealed to Moses that the glory enshrouded in the pillar of cloud was the Son of the infinite God, whom the sacrificial offerings typified. In answer to his most earnest pleadings, "Show me thy way," the future had been opened before him when the type would meet antitype in the death of Christ. He saw mercy and justice blended in harmony and love expressed without a parallel. Israel was just as fully and amply saved through Christ as we are today. Moses had the assurance that the Mediator of Israel had the guardianship of his people, and that he was just the protection which their necessities required. If disaster came upon them, if their enemies prevailed against them in battle, it was the rebuke of God upon them because they had sinned and in sinning had broken the law of God.

June 24, 1880

The Sanctuary

The tabernacle constructed by the Hebrews in the wilderness was made according to the divine command. Men called of God for this purpose were endowed by him with more than natural abilities to perform the most ingenious work. Yet neither Moses nor these workmen were left to plan the form and workmanship of the building. God himself devised and gave to Moses the plan of that sacred structure, with particular directions as to its size and form, the materials to be used, and every article of furniture which it was to contain. He presented before Moses a miniature model of the heavenly sanctuary, and commanded him to make all things according to the pattern showed him in the mount. And Moses wrote all the directions in a book, and read them to the most influential of the people.

Then the Lord required the people to bring a free-will offering, to make him a sanctuary, that he might dwell among them. "And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord.

"And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair, and red skins of rams, and badger's skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering; and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for

any work of the service, brought it.

"And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goat's hair.

"And the rulers brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense."

Great and expensive preparations were necessary. Precious and costly materials must be collected, but the Lord accepted only the free-will offerings. Devotion to the work of God, and sacrifice from the heart, were first required in preparing a dwelling-place for the Most High. And while the building of the sanctuary was going on, the Israelites, old and young, men, women, and children, brought their offerings, until those in charge of the work decided that the people had brought enough, and even more than could be used. And Moses proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing."

The repeated murmurings of the Israelites, and the visitations of divine wrath because of their transgressions, are recorded in sacred history for the benefit of God's people who should afterward live upon the earth; but more especially to prove a warning to those who should live near the close of time. Also their acts of devotion, their energy, and liberality in bringing their free-will offerings to Moses, are recorded as an example for all who truly love the worship of God. If God's people prize the blessing of his sacred presence, they will manifest zeal and liberality in preparing a house where he may meet with them. And their interest in this work will be as much greater than that shown in preparing dwellings for themselves as heavenly blessings are

esteemed of more value than earthly comforts.

Many will expend means freely to erect comfortable and even elegant houses for themselves; but when they would prepare a place in which to receive the presence of the high and holy One their offerings are bestowed grudgingly, and they are continually studying in what manner the sacred building can be made to cost the least, and yet answer the purpose as a house of worship. Some manifest more interest in building barns for their cattle, than they do in preparing a place for the worship of God. Such persons value sacred privileges just in the proportion which their works show. And their prosperity and spiritual strength will be according to their works. God will not cause his blessing to rest upon those who have so little appreciation of the value of divine things. Unwilling and stinted offerings are not accepted of God. Those who manifest an earnestness to bring to the Lord acceptable offerings, of the very best they have, as did the children of Israel in bringing their gifts to Moses, will be blessed in proportion to their estimate of the value of sacred things.

It is of some consequence that a building prepared expressly for divine service should be arranged with care,--made comfortable, neat, and convenient; for it is to be dedicated to God; he is to be entreated to abide in that house, and make it sacred by his holy presence. An amount sufficient to accomplish the work should be freely given, and the workmen be able to say, Bring no more offerings. A house built for God should never be left in debt, for he would thereby be dishonored. He is acquainted with every heart, and will reward all who freely return to him, when he requires, that which he has given them. If any withhold that which belongs to God, he will afflict them in their families, and cause decrease in their possessions, just according to their disposition to rob him.

The tabernacle was so constructed that it could be taken apart and borne with the Israelites in all their journeyings. Yet it was a structure of

extraordinary magnificence. The walls consisted of upright boards heavily plated with purest gold. The sacred building was composed of two apartments, separated by a rich and beautiful curtain, or vail. A similar vail closed the entrance of the first apartment. These vails, with the curtain which formed the ceiling of the tabernacle, were of a variety of colors, most beautifully arranged; while inwrought with threads of gold and silver were cherubim, to represent the angelic host, who are connected with the work of the heavenly sanctuary, and who are ministering angels to the saints upon the earth.

In the inner apartment was the ark, which was the most sacred object connected with that system of worship. It was a chest of precious wood, overlaid within and without with pure gold, and having a crown of gold about the top. In the ark were placed the tables of stone upon which God had engraved with his own finger the ten commandments. It was made expressly for this purpose, and hence was called the ark of the covenant, and the ark of the testament, since the ten commandments were God's covenant, and the basis of the covenant made between God and Israel.

The cover of this sacred chest was called the mercy-seat. This was a costly and magnificent piece of workmanship. It was beaten out of one solid piece of gold, and two cherubim were made, one standing on each end, beaten out of the same piece of gold. Their faces were turned toward each other, and were looking reverently downward toward the mercy-seat, which represents all the heavenly angels looking with interest and reverence to the law of God deposited in the ark in the heavenly sanctuary. One wing of each angel was stretched forth on high, while the other covered their forms. The ark of the earthly sanctuary was the pattern of the true ark in Heaven. There, beside the heavenly ark, stand living angels, each with one wing overshadowing the mercy-seat, and stretching forth on high, while the other wings are folded over their forms in token of reverence and humility.

The vail of the sanctuary did not reach to the top of the building. The glory of God, which was manifested above the mercy-seat, was partially visible from the first apartment. Directly before the ark, but separated by the curtain, was the golden altar of incense. The fire upon this altar was kindled by the Lord himself, and was sacredly cherished by feeding it with holy incense, which filled the sanctuary with its fragrant cloud, day and night. Its fragrance extended far around the tabernacle. When the priest offered the incense before the Lord, he looked toward the mercy-seat. Although he could not see it, he knew it was there; and as the incense arose like a cloud, the glory of the Lord descended upon the mercy-seat, and filled the most holy place, and often so filled both apartments that the priest was unable to officiate. As the priest in the holy place, directed his prayer by faith to the mercy-seat, which he could not see, so the people of God direct their prayers to Christ before the mercy-seat in the heavenly sanctuary. They cannot behold their Mediator with the natural eye, but with the eye of faith they see Christ before the mercy-seat, and direct their prayers to him, and with assurance claim the benefits of his mediation.

These sacred apartments had no windows to admit light. The candlestick, beaten out of one solid piece of gold, was kept burning day and night, and gave light to both apartments. The gold-plated walls, reflecting the light from the seven lamps of the golden candlestick, the richly embroidered curtains of blue and purple and scarlet, with their shining cherubim, the table of show-bread and the altar of incense, glittering like burnished gold, presented a scene of magnificence and glory which no words can describe.

No mortal eye but that of the high priest could look upon the sacred grandeur of the inner apartment, the especial dwelling-place of God's visible glory. Only once a year could the high priest enter there, after the most careful and solemn preparation. With trembling he went in before God, and the people in solemn silence waited his return, their hearts uplifted to God in earnest prayer for the divine blessing.

Before the mercy-seat, God conversed with the high priest. If he remained an unusual time in the most holy, the people were terrified, fearing that because of their sins, or some sin of the priest, the glory of the Lord had slain him. But when the sound of the tinkling of the bells upon his garments was heard, they were greatly relieved. He then came forth and blessed the people.

After the building of the tabernacle was completed, Moses examined all the work, comparing it with the pattern, shown him in the mount and the directions he had received of God, and all the multitude of Israel pressed in crowds around the tabernacle, set upon an eminence, to view it with critical eye. They regarded it perfect. They saw the golden furniture carried in, the altar and laver put in position, and while they were contemplating the full effect with reverent satisfaction, suddenly their attention was attracted to the pillar of cloud which had conducted their travels through the wilderness. The cloud arose and floated over the tabernacle, then descended and embraced it. There was a revealing of divine majesty, and the dazzling splendor was overwhelming; even Moses was not able to enter the burning glory which enshrouded the tabernacle until the cloud had in a measure hid the exceeding brightness, for every human eye had been shaded.

Thus the Lord signified that he accepted the tabernacle built for his presence; and ever after this manifestation, when the children of Israel encamped, directly over the tabernacle rested the pillar of cloud by day, and the bright glory in the pillar of fire by night. When the cloud ascended they knew this was the signal for them to resume their march onward. When it continued to rest over the tabernacle they were to rest from their journeying. When the Lord signified his acceptance of their work in the manifestation of his glory, the hearts of the people were inspired with awe, and with gratitude. There was no noisy demonstrations of joy but with softened hearts, and flowing tears they murmured low, yet earnest words of thankfulness that God

had approved the work of their hands, and had condescended to dwell more directly with them than ever before.

The Lord directed the Israelites in all their travels through the wilderness. When it was for his glory and the good of the people, that they should pitch their tents in a certain place, and there abide, God signified his will to them by permitting the pillar of cloud to rest directly over the tabernacle. And there it remained until God would have them journey again. Then the cloud was lifted up high above the tabernacle, and they journeyed again. In all their journeyings they observed perfect order. Every tribe bore a standard, with the sign of their father's house upon it, and every tribe was commanded to pitch by their own standard. And when they traveled, the different tribes marched in order, every tribe under their own standard. When they rested from their journeyings, the tabernacle was erected, and the different tribes pitched their tents in order, in just such a position as God had commanded, around the tabernacle, at a distance from it.

When the people journeyed, the ark of the covenant was borne before them. "And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

July 1, 1880

Offering of Strange Fire

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."

The sons of Aaron did not take the sacred fire from the altar, which the Lord himself had kindled, and which he had commanded the priests to use when they offered incense before him. They took common fire, and put it in their censers, and put incense thereon. This was a transgression of God's express command, and his judgment speedily followed. Aaron's sons, who officiated in holy things, would not have thus transgressed if they had not indulged freely in the use of wine, and been partially intoxicated. They gratified the appetite, which debased their faculties, and disqualified them for their sacred office. Their intellects were beclouded, so that they did not have a realizing sense of the difference between the sacredness of the fire which God let fall from Heaven, and which was kept burning continually upon the altar, and the common fire, which he had said they should not use. If they had had the full and clear use of their reasoning powers, they would have recoiled with horror at the presumptuous transgression of God's positive commands. They had been especially favored of God in being of the number of elders who witnessed the glory of God in the mount. They understood that the most careful self-examination and sanctification were required on their part before presenting themselves in the sanctuary, where God's presence was manifested.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes, lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses." The father of the men slain, and their brothers, were forbidden to manifest any signs of grief for the ones who had been justly punished of God. When Moses reminded Aaron of the words of the Lord, that he would be sanctified in them that came nigh to him, Aaron was silent. He knew that God was just; and he murmured not. His heart was grieved at the dreadful death of his sons while in their disobedience; yet, according to God's command, he made no expression of his sorrow, lest he should share the same fate of his sons, and the congregation also be infected with the spirit of unreconciliation, and God's wrath come upon them.

When the Israelites committed sin, and God punished them for their transgression, and the people mourned for the fate of the one punished, instead of sorrowing because God had been dishonored, the sympathizers were accounted equally guilty with the transgressor.

The Lord teaches us, in the directions given to Aaron, reconciliation to his just punishments, even if his wrath comes very nigh. He would have his people acknowledge the justness of his corrections, that others may fear. In these last days, many are liable to be self-deceived, and they are unable to see their own wrongs. If God, through his servants, reproves and rebukes the erring, there are those who stand ready to sympathize with those who deserve reproof. They will seek to lighten the burden which God compelled his servants to lay upon them. These sympathizers think they are performing a virtuous act by sympathizing with the one at fault, whose course may have greatly injured the cause of God. Such are deceived. They are only arraying

themselves against God's servants, who have done his will, and against God himself, and are equally guilty with the transgressor. There are many erring souls who might have been saved if they had not been deceived by receiving false sympathy.

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean. And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken by the hand of Moses."

There was given the same positive command as was given to our first parents, in regard to the tree of knowledge. God would impress upon all the necessity of strictly temperate habits in order to preserve in their full force all their powers, prepared for constant action. Satan has worked perseveringly to the one end, to compass the ruin of the world. Since his success on the point of appetite in Eden, in causing the fall of our first parents, he has plied this temptation to the human family with wonderful success. Intemperance weakens the physical powers, and debases the morals, so that eternal things are placed on a level with common. Satan exults as he looks upon his work. If he can lead astray the heads of families through appetite he is mostly sure of a harvest in their children, and children's children to the third and fourth generation. He studies from cause to effect. Children generally have transmitted to them as a legacy, the appetite and passions of their parents, intensified. And often these children grow up without any redeeming influences around them, but with unfavorable surroundings and examples. And they are weaker in physical and moral power than were their parents before them. Intemperance benumbs the sensibilities to that degree that physical, mental, and moral feebleness is the result, and right and wrong is not discerned.

This is the purpose of Satan, to belittle the requirements of God, and make of none effect his holy law. The man of sin has placed a common working day in the very bosom of the decalogue and in doing this has thought to change the law of God and has thus exalted himself above God. Were the moral powers of man clear and vigorous they would not choose the common in the place of the sacred because it is more convenient to be in harmony with the world. The general disobedience of man does not change or detract one particle from the positive command to keep holy the seventh day, for God placed his sanctity upon that day. A principle of right and obedience to God are always and everywhere the only safe rule. The language of every God-fearing soul should be, Perish whatever may, gold, silver, houses, lands, reputation, but let me retain my integrity and the approval of God. The habit of doing wrong in breaking one of God's commandments will not lessen the guilt. There are habits contracted by bad example, or by bad influence before we have judgment to discern the right; or the force of reason may be so narcotized by indulgence of appetite in the use of tobacco, opium and liquor that wrong is not discerned. These slaves to appetite are completely under the dominion of their master, and unless evil habits are conquered, they will conquer and destroy.

Selfish gratification through the force of habit has reigned almost supreme in the hearts of the human family since the fall of Adam. Satan has slain his thousands and tens of thousands by causing them to think that God does not mean what he says. They venture to disobey, as did our first parents, and at last find the result is death. The Lord would garrison the hearts of the men of Israel in responsible positions, that they should preserve their reasoning powers, clear to discern between right and wrong in their dealings with the people, and this direct and solemn command was to reach from generation to generation to the close of time. Men who are instructing the people, and are in positions of trust should ever be men of strictly temperate habits; unless they are they will not be men of principle; for indulgence of the appetite perverts the senses. Those who have had

advantages in education, trained by wise and God-fearing parents to strictly temperate habits, will generally be found trustworthy. They learn to bear the yoke in their youth.

The sons of Aaron although especially honored of God by being placed in important positions, were unfaithful. The yielding disposition of Aaron to indulgence of his children had given them characters that were inclined to self-gratification. They failed where they should have been strong. These men did not understand their own weakness and made a fatal mistake in the indulgence of appetite. The highest incentive was presented before them to develop firmness and principle, and strictly temperate habits, that they might have a continual sense of the sacredness of the work which was given them. God was testing their character to bring into exercise the highest powers of the mind. But the habits of self-indulgence had a firmer hold on them than they had any idea of. It seemed a trifle to them to put the intoxicating draught to their lips; they had done it again and again until force of habit controlled them; and then elevation to responsible position did not have sufficient influence upon them to make them break a sinful custom. Had these sons been educated to courageous resolution, to self-control, they would have resisted the growing power of vicious habits. There is not a virtue nor a vice, not an act of body, nor of mind, to which we may not be chained down by the force of habit. Many promising young men have ruined themselves by one false step at the commencement of life in the formation of habits of intemperance. Here the neglect of parents is seen in the formation of the characters of their children. Notwithstanding the father had failed to do his duty, God would bring these sons in close connection with himself that he might instruct them as to his will and his way; but the reverence they had failed to give the father, led them to disregard the positive requirements of God.

July 8, 1880

Necessity of Temperance

The case of Aaron's sons has been placed upon record for the benefit of God's people, and should teach those especially who are preparing for the second coming of Christ, that the indulgence of a depraved appetite destroys the fine feelings of the soul, and so affects the reasoning powers which God has given to man, that spiritual and holy things lose their sacredness. Disobedience looks pleasing, instead of exceeding sinful. Satan rejoices to see men, formed in the image of their Maker, yield themselves as slaves to a depraved appetite; for he can then successfully control the powers of the mind, and lead those who are intemperate to act in a manner to debase themselves and dishonor God, by losing the high sense of his sacred requirements. It was the indulgence of the appetite which caused the sons of Aaron to use common, instead of sacred, fire for their offerings.

The punishment visited upon the sons of Aaron for their sin in departing from God's commandment, should be a warning to those who transgress the fourth commandment of Jehovah, which is very plain: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work," etc. Nearly all the professed followers of Christ profane the day which God has sanctified and required them to keep holy as a memorial of the Creator's rest. They labor upon God's holy time, and rest on the first day of the week, thus honoring a common working day, a day upon which God did not rest, and upon which he has placed no sacred honor.

A departure from the fourth commandment will not now be immediately visited with temporal death; yet God does not regard the violation of his commandments any more lightly than he did the transgression of Aaron's

sons. Death is the final punishment of all who reject light, and continue in transgression. When God says, Keep holy the seventh day, he does not mean the sixth, nor the first, but the very day he has specified. When men substitute a common day for the sacred, and say that it will do just as well, they insult the Maker of the heavens and the earth, who instituted the Sabbath to commemorate his rest after the six days of creation. It is a dangerous thing to deviate from the commands of God. He who is infinite in wisdom has given explicit directions in regard to his own worship, and all who desire to serve him should follow the exact course he has prescribed. God will teach all his creatures that he means just what he says.

Parents and children should be warned by the history of Nadab and Abihu. Appetite, indulged, perverted the reasoning powers, and led to the breaking of an express command, which brought the judgment of God upon them. Notwithstanding children may not have had the right instruction, and their characters not have been properly molded, God proposes to connect them with himself as he did Nadab and Abihu, if they will heed his commands. If they will with faith and courage bring their will in submission to the will of God, he will teach them, and their lives may be like the pure white lily, full of fragrance on the stagnant waters. They must resolve in the strength of Jesus to control inclination and passion, and every day win victories over Satan's temptations. This is the way God has marked out for men to serve his high purposes.

Men who make laws to control the people should above all others be obedient to the higher laws which are the foundation of all rule in nations and in families. How important that men who have a controlling power should themselves feel they are under a higher control. They will never feel thus while their minds are weakened by indulgence in narcotics, and strong drink. Those to whom it is intrusted to make and execute laws should have all their powers in vigorous action. They may, by practicing temperance in all things, preserve the clear discrimination between the sacred and common,

and have wisdom to deal with that justice and integrity which God enjoined upon ancient Israel. Man may cultivate his powers, and with invincible determination rise to the high standard God has set for him in his word. Then with wisdom he may judge uprightly and with a sense that the eye of God is upon him, he will not swerve from the right, but will be kind, sympathizing, despising bribes, and governed by the highest motives in all his service.

Many who are elevated to the highest positions of trust in serving the public are the opposite of this. They are self-serving, and generally indulge in the use of narcotics, and wine and strong drink. Lawyers, jurors, senators, judges, and representative men have forgotten that they cannot dream themselves into a character. They are deteriorating their powers through sinful indulgences. They stoop from their high position to defile themselves with intemperance, licentiousness, and every form of evil. Their powers prostituted by vice opens their path for every evil. An elevated position of trust does not make the man after God's own heart, but too frequently it leads him to despise persevering labor, and to forget that sin alone will make man really mean and low. He who toils in earnest labor, striving to make the most of his God-given powers, in homage and love to his Creator is doing his work as faithfully in his sphere as are the cherubim and seraphim in their most sacred work, and loftiest ministrations.

Intemperate men should not by vote of the people be placed in positions of trust. Their influence corrupts others, and grave responsibilities are involved. With brain and nerve narcotized by tobacco and stimulus they make a law of their nature, and when the immediate influence is gone there is a collapse. Frequently human life is hanging in the balance; on the decision of men in these positions of trust, depends life and liberty, or bondage and despair. How necessary that all who take part in these transactions should be men proved, men of self-culture, men of honesty and truth, of stanch integrity, who will spurn a bribe, who will not allow their judgment or convictions of right to be swerved by partiality or prejudice.

Thus saith the Lord, "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in his cause. Keep thee from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay them not, for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous."

In order to carry out these stern principles of right, intemperance is positively forbidden of God. God requires that the faculties of man should be well balanced, the judgment clear and discriminating, that ideas may be received through the senses and compared with one another, investigating calmly, patiently, critically, evidences presented and arranging the matter with the action of sound judgment without a faculty being perverted. This was God's purpose, and he forbids on penalty of death that the gifts of intellect he has bestowed upon man shall be subverted by narcotics or stimulus of any kind, that the talents he has intrusted to man may be a tower of strength to the people, in the place of a power to ruin and destroy. All who would meet the mind of God and come off conquerors, must bid adieu to ease, luxury, flattery, and vice, and arm themselves for the mighty, soul-testing struggle against indulgence of appetite.

Men would not in our day venture to so recklessly depart from God's requirements were not their moral powers weakened by indulgence of perverted appetite. The example of our first parents, and the result of their disobedience, would deter them from a like experience. The history of this one family is traced by the pen of inspiration for the benefit of all who should live upon the earth, that they should not follow in the same steps.

The history of Nadab and Abihu is also given as a warning to man, showing that the effect of wine upon the intellect is to confuse. And it will ever have this influence upon the minds of those who use it. Therefore God explicitly forbids the use of wine and strong drink. No one can pervert his reasoning powers and alone suffer the consequences. God designs that man should be a help to his fellow-man; that with clear, unimpaired faculties he

should study the divine plan for the advancement of God's work, and the upbuilding of his cause in the earth. He is inviting men even in this age to connect with him, and through strictly temperate habits, with clear perception honor God. He has made provision that the life of not one should be profitless. He proposes to lift up and ennoble man to a companionship with himself.

Those who would have the peace that Christ can give must not shrink from self-conflict, and self-denial. Those noble virtues which shine forth in the Christian character amid the fiercest temptations, and that firm endurance which no trial or misfortune can wear out, are not found with those who use wine, tobacco, or strong drink. Men who have formed an appetite for these things may overcome if they but seek the help of Jesus. Their light need not go out in darkness. In Christ they may be strong, and in his all-powerful name they may conquer. They must never allow self-indulgence to come between them and their God. They must be prepared to risk everything, even life itself, rather than defile the soul temple.

They have, contrary to God's will, created unnatural appetites, and now they must seek to undo their former work. The will must be brought under the control of the will of God; this will give them power to lead others into close relation with Christ, and help them to build up a character as fixed in righteousness as the everlasting hills. If we would go in safe paths we must be controlled by divine rules, and must wash our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb from every defilement.

July 15, 1880

Sacrificial Offerings

In addition to the tables of testimony which were given to Moses in the mount, he there received the ritual or ceremonial law, and full instructions in regard to the building of the tabernacle. When this tabernacle was finally completed, the unsurpassed glory of the Lord so rested down upon it that Moses was unable at first to enter. But an audible voice from the divine glory above the mercy-seat spake to him, and bade him come nigh. And there the Lord gave him still further directions in regard to the forms of worship to be carried on in the sanctuary.

It is this law of ceremonies, which was to find its fulfillment in the death of Christ, when type should meet antitype, that is so frequently in our day confounded with the moral law of ten commandments, which was engraven by the finger of God upon stone, and which is as enduring as the throne of Jehovah.

Some speak of the Jewish age as a Christless period, without mercy or grace. To such are applicable the words of Christ to the Sadducees, "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." The period of the Jewish economy was one of wonderful manifestations of divine power. So glorious was the revealing of this presence that it could not be borne by mortal man. Moses, who was so highly favored of God, exclaimed, "I do exceedingly fear and quake." But God strengthened him to endure this excellent glory, and to bring from the mount a reflection of it upon his face so that the people could not look steadfastly upon it, but were obliged to withdraw from him. Jesus brought his gospel to Adam in the promise of a Redeemer which should bruise the serpent's head. His gospel was preached to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses.

The very system of sacrifices was devised by Christ, and given to Adam as typifying a Saviour to come, who would bear the sins of the world, and die for its redemption. Through Moses, Christ gave definite directions to the children of Israel in regard to the sacrificial offerings. This was to impress the minds of the worshipers that something of vastly more importance than the mere outward act was signified by these ordinances. How solemn the thought that Christ was here giving directions in regard to a religious service, which, although it may seem to some as a meaningless and exacting round of forms, was designed to represent his own ministry and death.

Only clean and precious animals, those which would best symbolize Christ, were accepted as offerings to God. The filthy swine, the devouring lion, and beasts of like character which subsist on animal food, were not to be brought. Every offering was to be without spot or blemish, the very best of the kind. From this, those who follow Christ now should learn that he will accept of no meager offering or service. The most perfect and valuable treasure of Heaven was given for man's salvation, and God will receive only the dearest and most precious gift from him in return. The Father in giving his Son poured out in one gift all the excellence of Heaven for man, and those who prize this gift will make their offerings of the things they most value, and withhold nothing which God has bestowed upon them wherewith to honor and glorify his name.

By the act of bringing the offering to the sanctuary, the individual confessed himself a sinner, deserving the wrath of God, and signified his repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood would remove the guilt of the transgressor. By placing his hands upon the head of the victim the sin of the individual was transferred to the victim, and in his suffering the sinner saw Christ typified, when he should give himself as a sacrifice for our sins. The Lord signified his acceptance of the offering by causing it to be consumed upon the altar.

The system of sacrifices and offerings was a most expensive one to ancient Israel. Continual offerings were to be made. But God required nothing less of them, and they did it willingly. Men in our day, who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, and yet who choose to gratify self and increase their possessions rather than render to God that which he requires of them in tithes, in offerings, and in gifts, and in giving themselves to his service, are inexcusable. The more we do in the cause of our Master, the more we have to do with, and the greater will be our willingness and pleasure in doing.

The Lord left it with his people anciently to decide for themselves what they would give to his service. It was expressly stated that the poor could give less valuable offerings, such as a dove, or pigeon; but the same care and exactness in preparation were needed as for the more expensive offerings. Here is a lesson to all, that the poor are as precious in the sight of God as the most wealthy, if they are only willing and obedient. The parents of our Saviour were poor. The only offering they could bring for the priceless gift of the Son of God, was a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. But the most humble offering is accepted if it is all that the poor can bring. It is for the encouragement of such that this instance in the history of Jesus is placed on record.

In many cases the poor give more freely, and make more of a sacrifice in their simple, dove offerings, than do the more wealthy who give of their abundance, and feel no personal inconvenience. These freewill, cheerful gifts, simple as they may be, are far more acceptable and fragrant in the sight of God than thousands of gold and silver coming from those grudgingly bestow the gift.

The Israelites were forbidden to eat the fat or the blood. "It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye

eat neither fat nor blood." This law not only related to beasts for sacrifice, but to all cattle which were used for food. This law was to impress upon them the important fact that if there had been no sin there would have been no shedding of blood. The blood flowing from the victim in idolatrous sacrifices was frequently eagerly drank by the people, and confused ideas was the result.

The blood of the Son of God was symbolized by the blood of the slain victim, and God would have clear and definite ideas preserved between the sacred and the common. Blood was sacred, inasmuch as through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God alone could there be atonement for sin. Blood was also used to cleanse the sanctuary from the sins of the people, thus typifying the blood of Christ which alone can cleanse from sin. The fat was to be used in sacrificial offerings with the beasts, but in no case was it a suitable article of food. If used, disease would be the sure result.

The offerings brought to the sanctuary were to be without spot or blemish. Had one stain of sin rested upon our Redeemer, his sacrifice would not have secured the salvation of man. Christ was under no obligation to become man's sacrifice. He was above law. But he took upon him the form of a servant, and went without the camp, bearing our reproach. He suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, thereby signifying that he died not only for Israel, but for all the world. Himself sinless, he was made sin for us, and upon him were laid all our iniquities. But when he came to the nation whom he came to save, they received him not, but crucified him. Here type met antitype. The ceremonies of the Jewish worship were then no longer needed; for the great Sacrifice to whom all other sacrifices pointed had now been offered. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down, and all nations, tongues, and people, were invited to partake of the salvation purchased at so great a cost.

While the death of Christ, as we have seen, brought the law of types and

shadows, or the ceremonial law, to an end, it did not in the least detract from the dignity of the moral law, or make it void. On the contrary, the very fact that Christ died to satisfy the claims of that law, shows the immutability of its character.

July 15, 1880

The Missionary

Laborers with Christ

The true followers of Christ will be laborers with him. They will feel their obligations to do for others, to use the talents committed to their trust to the glory of God. They will love their brethren, and be in harmony with them. They will love their fellow-men as Christ has given them example, and will make any sacrifice if they can by so doing persuade souls to leave their sins and be converted to the truth.

But many who profess the truth seem to have no realizing sense of their responsibility before God. They do not realize that they are required to strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in and will not be able. No one can occupy a neutral position--doing nothing to encourage others and doing nothing to hinder others. Says Christ, "They that gather not with me scatter abroad." There are none who have reasoning powers but that have some influence; and that influence is used to encourage souls, by an example of earnest, persevering efforts to advance the cause of Christ; or it serves to hinder them, by a careless indifference in these things. We are either doing the work of Christ to save souls, or the work of Satan to lead to perdition.

The young may exert a powerful influence for good, if they will put away pride and selfishness, and devote themselves to God. If they will educate themselves to make this work their first interest; if they will sacrifice pleasure and inclination, for the truth's sake, and learn to bear burdens for others, the blessing of Heaven will rest upon them. God will be to them wisdom and strength. He will glorify himself by working with and through

those who wholly follow him. "If any man will serve me, him will my Father honor." But there must be in the heart a willingness to yield all, even themselves upon the altar of God.

The character and disposition of the real Christian will be like the Master. The truth deeply rooted in the heart will spring up and bear fruit unto righteousness. Their words and works are the channels through which the pure principles of truth and holiness are conveyed to the world. Especial blessings and privileges are for those who love the truth, and walk according to the light they have received. If they neglect to do this, their light will become darkness; if they become self-sufficient, the Lord leaves them to their own wisdom. But mercy and truth are promised to the humble in heart, the obedient and faithful.

July 22, 1880

Special Requirements

In the book of Leviticus are found many of the special moral requirements which were given to Moses to give to the children of Israel. These were carefully written in a book, and were nothing less than the principles of the ten commandments, defining the duty of man to his fellow-man, and his obligation to God. If they were obedient, God promised to take them to him as his peculiar treasure, make them a most powerful nation, and establish them in the land of Canaan, a holy and happy people. In doing his commandments was their only happiness and safety.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you shall ye not do. Neither shall ye walk in their ordinances." The Lord would have his people true to his service, and separate and distinct from every nation who did not fear his name. He understood the danger of associating with idolaters, knowing that the seeing and hearing of their heathen customs and vain philosophy would have a corrupting influence upon their morals. There was danger of the sacrilegious services of the idol worship appearing attractive to them, and giving character to their religious services. Although the experience of parents might be a safeguard to themselves, there was constant danger in regard to the morals of their children. They would be continually tempted to imitate the practices of the people with whom they associated.

This injunction from God himself is of consequence to us who live in these last days when iniquity prevails, and Satan with every device is upon the track of the unwary. Merriment and pleasure-seeking is the order of the

day, and reckless presumption and the absence of virtue mark the course of society generally. The standard of the world is in no case to be the standard of those who love and fear God. He requires those who follow him to be separate from sin and sinners. The reason why those who profess his name are not more precious in his sight is because the pure gold of their character has been corrupted by association with the world, and they have not genuine faith or a genuine religion.

The instruction given to ancient Israel was to the same effect as that given by Christ to his disciples upon the mount. Both were intended to counteract selfishness and encourage benevolence. God ever remembers the poor, and gives directions to his people to remember them. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest." Again he says, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning."

Frequently the wages of the working men and women are thoughtlessly and cruelly withheld from them, and they are made to suffer for the little pittance they have earned by hard labor. This injustice is practiced on a large scale. Those who have had their labor frequently live in extravagance, that which they use intemperately being nearly sufficient to support one or two poor families. When such force the laborer to wait for his hard-earned pay, they come under the censure of God.

While we should show sympathy and love for the deserving poor, we are not to favor the unworthy poor because they are poor, neither are we "to honor the person of the mighty" simply because they are mighty. How much of this is done. If a man is possessed of wealth, great respect, applause, and honor are given him because of his position, while he may be corrupt at heart, and his life unworthy of imitation. Position or wealth does not make the man; but clean hands and a pure heart God will accept.

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." All liars are to have their part in the lake of fire, and yet there are more falsehoods told and acted than many suppose. All deception and overstatements are falsehoods. A truthful man, a man of integrity, will not designedly produce impressions by language or signs that are not strictly true. He will not allow any to receive from him that which he knows to be incorrect. A falsehood consists in an intention to deceive. A look of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, will tell a falsehood as effectually as words. Hints and insinuations which leave an exaggerated impression on minds are falsehoods. Says the apostle, "Lie not one to another." The case of Ananias and Sapphira shows that even in the gospel age retribution as severe as that of the Jewish age breaks forth upon the guilty.

"Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God; I am the Lord." The name of the Lord is profaned in many ways. It is spoken thoughtlessly, and is often dishonored in common conversation by appealing to God, as "the Lord knows," etc., thus making common that name which is sacred, and should always be spoken with reverence. Some even in their prayers take the name of God upon their lips in a thoughtless manner. His holy name is to be spoken with solemnity, and not to be heedlessly brought into our prayers every few sentences. "Lord God Almighty," "Holy and Reverend is his name!" His purity, majesty and excellence should be meditated upon, and the lips be sanctified that utter his name. Although we do not hear his voice from Sinai's mount proclaiming his holy law, we have just as much need to fear and tremble as had they who surrounded it at that time. The law of God is exceeding broad. We cannot measure it, neither can we evade its positive claims, for it will be the rule of future judgment.

The Sin of Ignorance

"If any one of the common people sin through ignorance," "he shall bring his offering," "and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him." The same provision was made for the ruler, and also for the priests. These, although appointed to their sacred work by God himself, were by no means considered infallible. They were in constant danger of committing sin, and although this might be done ignorantly, it was still sin in the sight of Heaven. While ignorance may lessen the guilt of the transgressor, it will not be a sufficient excuse for it in the day of Judgment. Says the apostle, "All who will do his will shall know of the doctrine." Those who are anxious to know the truth and will of God will not be left in darkness.

Souls are constantly being convicted of sin. The law of God is brought home to their conscience as it was to that of the apostle Paul. He was ignorant that he was a transgressor of the law, but he says that when the commandment came, sin revived and he died. He was slain by the law, and then through repentance for his past transgression, and faith in Christ, he was reconciled to God and received pardon.

The experience of Paul would be the experience of thousands in this day if they would be as true to their conscience as he was to his. He did not institute a war against the law of God because it was the instrument to convict and slay him; far from it. He says that the commandment which was ordained to life he found to be unto death,--death to the transgressor, but life to the obedient. This is a day when men love to erect their own standard of right, and trample under their feet the only true standard. But when the slumbering conscience is aroused, and light is permitted to shine into the darkened chambers of the mind, they will find that they have been ignorantly breaking the commands of God. Such have a work to do to repent of their past transgressions, and put on Christ by faith and baptism.

Some will plead that they lived up to the best light that they had, and did not know that they were sinners before God. Therefore they claim that they were guiltless, and have nothing to repent of. But the word of God was plain, and all who had a prayerful anxious desire to understand it might have known what was truth; and for this sin of ignorance God will demand an offering as truly as in the days of Moses,--even the offering of a broken and contrite heart. With the Bible in our hands we ought all to know and practice the truth. But some do not wish to change their faith or course of action, and argue that if they are only honest they will be saved. Such will be in great danger of committing the sin of presumption, of not living up to all the light they have. Critical self-examination, united with a diligent searching of the Scriptures and earnest prayer, is essential, not that some way may be found to evade the cross, but that they may be led into all truth however much self-denial it may cost, and however inconvenient it may be to obey.

Sins of ignorance call not for excuse but for repentance. None are to flatter themselves that because Jesus died and bore the guilt for man, they have nothing to do but accept of pardon without repenting of the sins they have so long been committing. There are limits to the forbearance of God, and punishment for the transgression of his law is no less certain because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily. Because we live in a time when retribution does not follow an evil deed at once, sin is less avoided and the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.

July 29, 1880

Israel Leaves Sinai

Nearly a year did the children of Israel continue to encamp at Sinai. Here their worship took more definite form, and they were more thoroughly organized preparatory to entering the land of Canaan, of which God would soon have given them possession had they not been rebellious. Arrangements were here made to have everything pertaining to their journey done with order and exactitude. To the tribe of Levi was assigned the sacred work of caring for and bearing the tabernacle and its belongings. This tribe was divided into three parts, according to the descendants of the three sons of Levi, and to each division was given a specified portion of the work.

The tabernacle was to occupy a central position in the encampment. Close by in front of it Moses and Aaron were to pitch their tents. On the south side were to be the Kohathites, whose special duty it was to care for the ark and the other furniture belonging to the tabernacle. And on the north side were the Merarites, whose particular part it was to take charge of the pillars, sockets, boards, etc.; while in the rear were placed the Gershonites, who were to take charge of the coverings and hangings of the tabernacle.

In all their journeyings they were required to observe perfect order. Every tribe bore a standard with the sign of their father's house upon it, and under that particular standard they were required to pitch their tents. Whenever the ark moved, the entire camp journeyed, the different tribes marching in order under their own standards. Just in front of the ark marched Moses and Aaron, and near to them came the sons of Aaron, each bearing a trumpet. Through these they were to signify to the people the directions which they received from Moses. Special instruction was given to the people, so that they understood the sounds of the trumpets, and directed their

movements accordingly.

A special signal was first given by the trumpeters to call the attention of the people. Then all were to be attentive and obey the certain sound of the trumpets. There was no confusion of sound in the voices of the trumpets, therefore there was no excuse for confusion in movements. The head officer over each company gave definite directions in regard to the movements they were required to make. None who gave attention were left in ignorance of what they ought to do. If any failed to comply with the requirements God gave to Moses, and Moses to the people, they were punished with death. They had no excuse to offer that they knew not the nature of these requirements, for they would only prove themselves willingly ignorant, and would receive just punishment for their transgression. If they did not know the will of God concerning them, it was their own fault. They had all the opportunity of knowing that others had, therefore their sin was regarded by the Lord the same as if they did hear and then transgressed.

And if any man from curiosity, or from lack of order forgot his position, and touched any part of the sanctuary, or furniture, or even came nigh any of the workmen, they were punished with death. God did not leave his holy tabernacle to be borne, and erected, and taken down, indiscriminately, by any tribe who might desire to do it. Persons were chosen to the office who could appreciate the sacredness of the work in which they were engaged. And these men appointed of God were directed to impress upon the people the especial sacredness of the ark and all that appertained thereunto, lest they should look upon these things without realizing their holiness, and by making sacred things common should be cut off from Israel. Everything pertaining to the most holy was to be regarded with reverence and holy awe.

The Lord would manifest to Israel in the explicit directions given them, that he is a God of order, that he would have everything connected with his work move forward with regularity and system. The Lord changeth not, and

he is just as pleased now as then to have his ministers cultivate a love for order and discipline, that their efforts may be characterized by neatness, thoroughness, and exactitude. By precept and example they should educate the people to work in harmony. If order and discipline are essential to the success of an army on the battle field, how much more essential are they to the success of those who have enlisted in the army of the Lord.

Perfect order characterizes all the movements of the angels of God. We are in the world as the children of Israel were in the wilderness, to be fitted for the heavenly Canaan, and the society of holy angels. We should carry out as far as possible in our families and in the church the order and harmony of Heaven. Angels of God often turn away in grief from those who excuse disorder and confusion as very trivial matters; they are not authorized to bless such. All who desire and expect the co-operation of the heavenly messengers must work in unison with them. Satan understands that success will only attend unity of action. He well knows that independence, self-exaltation, and pride caused him to lose paradise, and he is constantly tempting others to rebel against order and discipline that they may share his fate.

The delay of the Israelites at Sinai was a necessary part of their discipline. The millions of people had started out from Egypt with enthusiastic hopes and eager expectations of marching direct into the land of their promised inheritance. But instead of this they were compelled to wander up and down in the barren wilderness with no prospect of making a home. This was the result of their own course of disobedience, which placed them in a position where God could not establish them in the promised land. If they carried their murmurings and jealousy into the land with them, they would degenerate as a people, and become more offensive to God than those whom he would drive out before them; for just in proportion as they had received light, and God had manifested his marvelous power to them, would be their sin in distrust and rebellion.

The Levites were specially honored of God to bear responsibilities, because they had not been swerved from their allegiance to him, and had not united with the others of Israel in worshiping the golden calf. Although it was painful for them to bear the sword against their brethren and kinsmen, they had been faithful and true to execute all the commands of God in punishing with death those who persisted in justifying their apostasy and idolatry.

When the signal was given for the encampment to move from their home at Sinai, to many it was a welcome sound. While engaged in building the sanctuary, their busy activities had served to keep them contented; but that work being accomplished, inactivity was becoming wearisome. Even the toils of their journeying were more welcome to them than to have nothing to do. But while some desired the change, many were loth to leave the place. They had encamped so long in that vicinity that it had become their home. They had learned to love to look upon the sacred mount upon whose hoary peaks and barren ridges the grand and awful glory of God had so often been displayed. The scene seemed to be engraven upon the tablets of their hearts. With many the place was so closely associated with the presence of God and holy angels that it seemed too sacred to leave thoughtlessly or even gladly.

These granite walls had been lifted that God might here gather to himself a people apart and separate from every other nation, to repeat to them his holy law. And now they were about to take up their line of march, they knew not whither. All eyes were turned anxiously toward the pillar of cloud, to see in what direction it was moving. And when it started in an easterly direction, where were presented only the mountain masses huddled together black and barren, some became sad, others dissatisfied and gloomy. But at the proper signal from the trumpeters, the entire camp set forward, each tribe occupying the exact position specified by the Lord, and bearing the standard of their father's house.

August 12, 1880

The Burning at Taberah

After traveling three days from Sinai into the wilderness, complaints began to be made by those in the uttermost parts of the camp who had not fully united their interest with the body, but who were continually watching to find something to condemn in those willing to bear the responsibilities and burdens of the people. These complainers were not pleased with the course of their march, and were constantly murmuring about the way in which Moses was leading them, notwithstanding they knew that he was following only where the pillar of cloud lead the way. Some also felt that they ought to have a leading position, while others complained of marching so long in the wilderness.

God continued to feed them with the bread rained from heaven; but they were not satisfied. Their depraved appetite craved flesh-meat, which God in his wisdom had withheld, in a great measure, from them. "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes." They became weary of the food provided for them by angels. Yet they knew it was just the food God wished them to have, and that it was healthful for them and their children. Notwithstanding their hardships in the wilderness, there was not a feeble one in all their tribes.

Satan, the author of disease and misery, will approach God's people where he can have the greatest success. He has controlled the appetite in a great measure from the time of his successful experiment with Eve, in

leading her to eat the forbidden fruit. He came with his temptations first to the mixed multitude, the believing Egyptians, and stirred them up to seditious murmurings.

These murmurings would soon have leavened the entire camp, had not the wrath of God in fire from Heaven flashed like lightning from the cloudy pillar and consumed those who were the instigators of the trouble. Yet this, instead of humbling them, seemed only to increase their murmurings. When Moses heard the people weeping in the door of their tents, and complaining throughout their families, he was greatly distressed.

Here Moses, himself, came very near distrusting the Lord. Even in his perfect physical strength and vigorous intellect he was staggering under the weight of responsibility, made so much heavier by the wicked complaints of the people. The burden seemed almost insupportable. Did not Moses at this time regret that he had not consented to have Israel destroyed, and himself made a great nation? Such temptations troubled him. It grieved him sorely to have them direct their complaints against him, as if every supposed deprivation was chargeable to him. And this was the very people for whom he had prayed that his name might be blotted out of the book of life rather than that they should be destroyed. He had imperiled all for them, and here was their response. His heart sunk within him; but he turned to the only One who could help him in his trouble. His was a prayer which was almost a complaint. "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" "Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

This prayer does not do honor to Moses, who had seen so much of the

power of God. The burdens of care had overtaxed him. He could have borne them all had the people stood by him; but he knew that their perverseness would only be quelled by the display of God's wrath, and he preferred death rather than to see Israel disgraced and their enemies triumph. The Lord heard the prayer of his servant, and the answer came, strong and positive, directing him to gather before him seventy men, whom he knew to be elders in Israel, -men not only advanced in years, but possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience, and who were qualified to be judges or officers. "And bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."

The Lord allowed Moses to choose for himself the men whom he knew could be the best helpers. These men had shown faithfulness and order in their position as officers and elders, and now they were chosen to bear higher responsibilities. They were to be authority to check the violence of the people and quell any insurrection that might arise. But had Moses shown simple trust and confidence in God, corresponding to his great goodness and mercy, these men would not have been chosen. Serious trouble would eventually result from their enlarged authority. God would have guarded his servant continually, and strengthened him in every emergency, had he relied fully upon him. Moses was not excusable in so nearly imitating the people in murmuring against God. He magnified his burdens and services, when the Lord was really the worker, and he only the instrument. Poor, weak human nature, how little is it to be trusted!

Moses was commanded to prepare the people for what God was about to do for them: "Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh; for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither

ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you, because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?"

Once before, when they received the manna just before they reached Sinai, the Lord had answered their clamors for flesh-meat. They ate of it only one day, however, and then it was withheld because it was not the best article of food for them. Their murmurings now reflected upon the wisdom of God, as though he did not know just what they needed while travelling in the wilderness. The enemy perverted their imagination. The Egyptians who left Egypt with the Hebrews were accustomed to rich food and flesh-meats, and they were the first to complain. The food of the Israelites in Egypt was generally of the cheapest quality, but hard labor and a keen appetite made it palatable.

In response to the statement of the Lord that the people should have flesh to eat, Moses said, "The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them?" These words expressed a manifest distrust, for which the Lord reproved him saying, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." He who could divide the Red Sea, binding the waters like a wall on either side while Israel passed through on dry land, and could rain bread from Heaven, and bring water out of the flinty rock, could provide meat to supply the host of Israel.

"And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy

elders; and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease." These persons were endowed with the Spirit of the Lord in a similar manner as were the disciples on the day of pentecost. They foretold the work and mission of Christ, and by their wisdom and fluency of speech evidenced to all men that the power of God was upon them. The Lord saw fit to thus prepare them for their work, and honor them in the presence of the congregation, that confidence should be established in them as men chosen of God to unite their authority with that of Moses in his arduous work of restraining and governing the people during their sojourn in the wilderness.

There were two of the seventy chosen who went not out to the tabernacle. They were not rebellious, but they felt unworthy of serving in such a high and responsible position. But when the Spirit of the Lord rested upon the elders about the tabernacle, it fell also upon them, and they prophesied, speaking words of wisdom and eloquence. Then a young man ran to Moses and told him how two men were prophesying in the camp; and Joshua, being jealous for Moses, appealed to him to command them to be silent. But Moses, free from all jealousy, replied, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them."

"And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten homers; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague."

In this instance the Lord gave the people that which was not for their highest good, because they would have it. They would not submit to receive from the Lord only those things which would prove a benefit to them, but gave themselves up to seditious murmurings against Moses, and against the Lord. God gave them flesh-meats, as they desired, and they suffered the results of gratifying their lustful appetites. Burning fevers cut down very large numbers of the people. Those who had been the most guilty in their murmurings, were slain as soon as they tasted the meat for which they had lusted. Had they received with gratitude the food which God selected for them, of which they could eat freely without injury, they might have retained the divine favor, and they would have escaped the terrible results of their rebellious murmurings.

August 19, 1880

The Sin of Miriam and Aaron

When it was known in the camp of Israel that seventy elders had been chosen to assist Moses in the government of the people, Aaron and Miriam became jealous because they had not been consulted in the matter. They had not felt reconciled to the act of Moses in so readily receiving the counsel of Jethro, his father-in-law. They feared that his influence over Moses was greater than theirs. And now, seventy elders had been chosen without consulting with them; and as they had never themselves felt the responsibility and burdens which Moses had borne for the people, they did not see any real necessity for the help of the seventy elders. "And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it."

Aaron and Miriam thought that, as they had been chosen to aid Moses, they bore the burden of the work as well as he. And as the Lord had spoken by them, as well as by their brother, why should he complain of such heavy burdens as to need seventy of the judges and elders appointed to the work of aiding him. Moses realized his weakness. He felt the importance of the great work committed to him, as no other man had ever felt it. Aaron had shown his weakness by yielding to the clamors of the people, and making a molten calf, in the absence of their leader. But God had ever been Moses' counselor.

As Miriam became jealous of Moses, she was disposed to find fault with the events of his life which God had especially overruled. She complained of her brother because he had married an Ethiopian woman, instead of taking a wife from among the Hebrews. The wife of Moses was not black, but her complexion was somewhat darker than that of the Israelites. She was of a timid disposition, tender-hearted, and was greatly affected upon witnessing

suffering. This was the reason why Moses had consented that she should return to Midian instead of accompanying him to Egypt, that she might not witness the terrific plagues which the Lord was to bring upon the Egyptians. After she met her husband in the wilderness, she saw that his burdens and anxieties were wearing away his strength, and in her distress she acquainted her father with the matter. Jethro had marked that the care of all the people was upon Moses, and therefore he counseled him to look after the religious interests of the Hebrew host, while worthy men, free from covetousness, should be selected to attend to the secular concerns of the people.

As Miriam began to cherish a spirit of jealousy and faultfinding, she imagined that Aaron and herself had been neglected, and that Moses' wife was the cause--that she had so influenced the mind of her husband that he did not consult them in important matters as much as formerly.

The Lord heard the words of murmuring against his faithful servant, and he was displeased; for Moses was very meek, above all men that dwelt upon the earth. And God called suddenly to Miriam and Aaron and Moses, and bade them come out to the tabernacle of the congregation. And God spoke to Miriam and Aaron from out of the cloud. "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore, then, were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed." And Miriam became leprous, white as snow; and Aaron besought Moses that he would not lay the sin to their charge, wherein they had done grievously and sinned. He prayed that Miriam might not be as one dead, and Moses cried unto the Lord for her, and she was healed. She was, however, shut out of the camp seven days, and the people journeyed not till she was brought in again.

The cloud was removed from the tabernacle because the wrath of God rested upon Miriam, and it did not return until she was removed out of the camp. God had chosen Moses, and put his Spirit upon him; and by her murmurings against God's chosen servant, Miriam was guilty of irreverence, not only to Moses but toward God who had called him. Aaron might have prevented the evil if he had presented before Miriam the sinfulness of her course. But instead of this he listened to her words of complaint, and shared in her spirit of jealousy. The murmurings of Miriam and Aaron, and the signal manifestation of God's displeasure that followed, are left upon record as a rebuke to all who will yield to jealousy, and complain of these upon whom God lays the burden of his work.

Contention among God's people is offensive in his sight. In union and harmony alone is there strength. Pride, selfishness, envy, and jealousy originated with Satan, and lost for him his Eden home. He now urges his temptations upon the followers of Christ, and the most frivolous pretense excites a prejudice and jealousy which is as cruel as the grave. Jesus is enshrouded in light unapproachable, independent in his working, and righteous in his judgments, and yet he taketh cognizance of all the actions of the children of men. No secret act of wrong is passed by unnoticed, and no deed of righteousness is forgotten,--all are recorded in the Ledger of Heaven.

Would that every heart could be impressed with the exceeding sinfulness of cherishing suspicion and jealousy against those whom the Lord loves. He is ever ready to take the part of all those who are made to suffer unjustly. Over all his servants his hand is ever spread as a buckler. No man can wound his chosen without wounding the hand of the Lord. Although he may long bear with the perversity of man, and not punish his unjust course, yet he has said that he would remember their wrongs, and punish them; for his hand bears the sword of justice.

August 26, 1880

The Twelve Spies

Eleven days after leaving Mount Horeb, the Hebrew hosts encamped at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from the borders of the promised land. Here the Lord told Moses to send men to search the land of Canaan, directing that one of the rulers of each tribe should be selected for this purpose. Moses did as the Lord had said, and sent up twelve men to search the land. He bade them go and see the country, what it was, its situation, and natural advantages; and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; also to observe the nature of the soil and its productiveness and to bring of the fruit of the land.

After an absence of forty days they returned from their search, and all the congregation of Israel assembled to listen to their report. All agreed that it was a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and as evidence, they exhibited specimens of the rich fruit of the country. It was in the time of ripe grapes, and they had brought a cluster of grapes so large that it was carried between two men. They had also brought of the figs and pomegranates which grew there in abundance. But after describing the beauty and fertility of the land, all but two of the spies spoke of the difficulties and dangers that lay before the Israelites should they undertake the conquest of Canaan. They enumerated the powerful nations located in various parts of the country, and said that the cities were walled and very great, and the people who dwelt therein were strong, and it would be impossible to conquer them. They also stated that they had seen giants, the sons of Anak, there, and it was useless to think of possessing the land.

As the people listened to this discouraging report, they gave expression to their feelings of disappointment, in reproaches, and bitter mourning. They

did not wait, and reflect, and reason that God, who had brought them out thus far, would certainly give them the land. They left God out of the question, and acted as though, in the taking of the city of Jericho, the key to the land of Canaan, they must depend solely on the power of arms. God had declared that he would give them the country, and they should have fully trusted him to fulfill his word. But their unsubdued hearts were not in harmony with his plans. They did not call to mind how wonderfully he had wrought in their behalf, bringing them out of their Egyptian bondage, cutting a path for them through the waters of the sea, and destroying the pursuing host of Pharaoh.

In their unbelief they limited the work of God, and distrusted the hand that had hitherto safely guided them. In this instance they repeated their former error of murmuring against Moses and Aaron. "This, then, is the end of all our high hopes," they said. "This is the land we have traveled all the way from Egypt to possess." They accused their leaders of bringing trouble upon Israel, and again charged them with deceiving and leading their people astray.

Moses and Aaron lay prostrate before God, their faces in the dust. Caleb and Joshua, the two who, of all the twelve spies, trusted in the word of God, rent their clothes in distress, when they perceived that these unfavorable reports had discouraged the whole congregation. They endeavored to reason with them, but the people were filled with madness and disappointment, and refused to listen. Finally, Caleb urged his way to the front, and his clear, ringing voice was heard above all the clamor of the multitude. He opposed the cowardly views of his fellow-spies, which had weakened the faith and courage of all Israel. He commanded the attention of the people, and they hushed their complaints for a moment to listen to him. He spoke of the land he had visited. Said he, "Let us go up at once; for we are well able to overcome it." But as he spoke, the unfaithful spies interrupted him, crying out, "We be not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than

we!"

These men, starting upon a wrong course, set their hearts against God, against Moses and Aaron, and against Caleb and Joshua. Every step they advanced in this wrong direction made them firmer in their design to discourage all attempts to possess the land of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to carry their baneful influence. They represented the climate as being unhealthful, and all the people of giant stature. Said they, "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were in their sight."

This was not only an evil, but a lying report. It was contradictory; for if the land was unhealthy and "had eaten up the inhabitants," how was it that they attained to such massive proportions? When men yield their hearts to unbelief, there are no bounds to the advance they will make in evil. Few realize, when they start upon this dangerous course, the length that Satan will lead them.

The evil report had a terrible effect upon the people. They bitterly reproached Moses and Aaron. Some groaned and wailed, saying, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, Would God we had died in the wilderness!" Then their feelings rose against the Lord, they wept and mourned, saying, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Thus they manifested their disrespect for God and for the leaders he had appointed to conduct them. They did not ask the Lord what they should do, but said, "Let us make a captain." They took matters into their own hands, feeling themselves competent to manage their affairs without divine aid. They accused not only Moses, but God himself, of deception, in promising a

land which they were not able to possess. They actually went so far as to appoint one of their number as a captain, to lead them back to the land of their suffering and bondage, from which God had delivered them with the strong arm of omnipotence.

Moses and Aaron still remained prostrate before God in the presence of all the assembly, silently imploring divine mercy for rebellious Israel. Their distress was too deep for words. Again Caleb and Joshua press to the front, and the voice of Caleb once more rises in sorrowful earnestness above the complaints of the congregation:

"The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land that floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us. Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not."

The Canaanites had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord would no longer bear with them. His defense being removed from them, they would fall an easy prey to the Hebrews. They were not prepared for battle, for they felt so strong that they deceived themselves with the idea that no army was formidable enough to prevail against them. Caleb reminded the people that by the covenant of God the land was insured to Israel. But their hearts were filled with madness, and they would hear no more. If only the two men had brought the evil report, and all the ten had encouraged them to possess the land in the name of the Lord, they would still have taken the advice of the two in preference to the ten, because of their wicked unbelief.

But there were only two advocating the right, while ten were in open rebellion against their leaders and against God. The greatest excitement now raged among the people, their worst passions were aroused, and they refused to listen to reason. The ten unfaithful spies join them in their denunciations

of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry is raised to stone them. The insane mob seize missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rush forward with yells of madness, when, lo! the stones drop from their hands, a hush falls upon them, and they shake with terror. God has interposed to check their rash design. The glory of his presence, like a flame of light, illuminates the tabernacle. All the congregation behold the signal of the Lord. A mightier one than they, had revealed himself, and not one dared continue his resistance. Every murmurer was silenced. The spies who had brought the evil report, crouched terror-stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents. Moses now arose from his humiliating position and entered the tabernacle, to commune with God. There the Lord proposed to immediately destroy this rebellious people, and he desired to make of Moses a greater nation than Israel. But the meek leader of his people would not consent to this proposition. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, "Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."

Thus did this chosen servant of God again manifest his love for the people, and his zeal for the honor of his Master. Instead of being angry with his importunity, the Lord granted his petition, and said: "I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Here he refers to the time when the saints of God shall dwell upon the earth made new, and purified and cleansed from every defilement of sin.

September 2, 1880

The Twelve Spies

The proposition to send men to search the land was first made by the people. But as it pleased Moses, he presented the matter before the Lord and obtained his consent for them to go. The result was, disaster and destruction. Had they waited for the Lord to say "Go forward," and followed the divine Leader, they would have seen the majesty and glory of God as verily as they saw it forty years afterward. The Lord often permits men to have their own way, to teach them that the way he marks out is the only safe path for them to follow.

All Israel were suffering under the frown of God. He could not work for them while their hearts were filled with bitter murmurings, for they were in no fit state to appreciate anything that he would do for them. The manifestation of his power in their behalf against their enemies would only fill them with pride and self-importance. They would not sanctify the Lord in their hearts, and give him the glory. Therefore he mercifully turned their course backward. They were to be enclosed in the wilderness, and to see neither city nor town for forty years, until those who were continually murmuring should die.

When Moses made known to the people the divine decision, their recent madness and insane rage turned to the most bitter regrets and lamentations. They knew that this punishment was merited. The ten unfaithful spies had perished before their eyes, their doom signifying the destruction of all in their ranks above twenty years of age. Their unbelief and rebellion had cost them all.

At this time even, had they shown true and sincere repentance, God

might have given them another trial, as he did the ancient Ninevites; but instead of this they sank down in utter despondency. They knew that God was in earnest with them. They passed a sleepless night, but with the morning came a hope. They determined to redeem their cowardice. They would not look toward the wilderness, or the Red Sea, but they would equip themselves for war, and would seize the land and possess it by their might, peradventure their works might be accepted of God. They confessed saying, "We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." Here again their transgressions had turned their light into darkness. The Lord had never told them "to go up and fight." He did not design that they should gain the land of promise by warfare, but through submission and unqualified obedience to his commands.

Those who so recently were complaining at the purposes of God because they thought that they were to run some risks in warfare, were now fully determined to carry out their own will at all hazards. Thus it is with human nature. There is nothing rash or inconsistent that a person will not be tempted to do when his heart is raging in rebellion against the will of God, as though weak and feeble man could overthrow the purposes of Jehovah.

These strong-minded men were prepared for the conflict in their own estimation, but they were sadly deficient in the sight of God and his sorrowful servants. When God directed them to go up and take Jericho, he promised to go with them. The ark containing his law was to be a symbol of himself. Moses and Aaron, his appointed leaders, were to conduct the expedition under his watchful direction. With such supervision, no harm could have come to them. But now, contrary to the command of God, and the solemn prohibition of their leaders, without the ark of God and without Moses, they march out to meet the armies of the enemy, a tumultuous, disorganized company. While Aaron sounds the trumpet of alarm, Moses hastens after them, and says: "Wherefore now do you transgress the

commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you, that ye be not smitten before your enemies; for the Amalekites and Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword."

During the time consumed by the Israelites in their wicked insubordination, the inhabitants of the land had become alarmed, and had prepared for battle. Having heard so much in regard to the wonderful works of God for his people Israel, they made most thorough preparations to defend their cities.

As Israel presumed to disregard the voice of God and man, they had no leader, but rushed impetuously away from the warning voice of Moses. On they pushed in confusion. No prayer was offered now that God would give them the victory, for he had expressly forbidden them to go up. Their numbers were immense, and they determined to make a fierce attack upon the very men whom they had refused to meet, with Moses as leader, and God as their defense. Hatred against the Lord and his pronounced judgments burned in the hearts of these men of war.

But their might of numbers was of no advantage, for their foe was reached only through rocky passages. The Israelites were wearied with their furious march, while their enemies were fresh, and had chosen high ground from which they hurled rocks down upon the supposed invaders. In their desperation they made many efforts, but could accomplish nothing, and after many of them were slain, the remainder turned and fled. Moses thus describes their defeat: "And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah, and ye returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you." This last defiant act had sealed their fate. This shows us that there is danger of our presuming upon the mercy of God until mercy is turned to retributive justice. There is a

limit to the mercy and long-forbearance of God. If the professed people of God in this age refuse to heed his express commands and warnings, they will be in no more favored position than was ancient Israel, when God, their salvation and defense, departed from them.

September 9, 1880

The Great Rebellion

The terrible judgments of God visited upon the Israelites served to restrain for a time the spirit of murmuring and insubordination, but it was not destroyed, and ere long, as the hosts of Israel turned their faces toward the wilderness, this spirit again appeared. The former rebellions had been mere popular tumults, the result of the sudden impulses of the excited multitude. But now a regular conspiracy was formed, the fruit of a determined purpose to overthrow the authority of the leaders appointed by God himself.

Korah, the leading spirit in this movement, was of the tribe of Levi, and was a man of ability and influence in the congregation. He had for some time cherished a feeling of dissatisfaction, and had been secretly at work against Moses, though he had not ventured to any open act of rebellion. But He who reads the secrets of all hearts had marked the purpose of this ambitious and designing man, and had not left his people without warning and instruction in regard to their duty.

They had seen the wrath of God visited upon Miriam because of her jealousy and complaints against his chosen servant, Moses. The Lord had told them that Moses was greater than a prophet, for God had revealed himself to Moses in a more direct manner than to a prophet. "With him will I speak mouth to mouth." "Wherefore, then," he added, "were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" These instructions were not intended for Aaron and Miriam alone, but for all the congregation of Israel.

God himself had called Moses to the position of governor of that people, and had intrusted to Aaron and his sons the sacred and responsible office of the priesthood. Korah determined that this order should be changed, that he

might be raised to the dignity of the priesthood. To insure the accomplishment of his purpose, he induced Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, to join him in his rebellion. They reasoned that being descendants from the eldest son of Jacob, the chief authority, which Moses had usurped, belonged to them; and with Korah they determined to obtain the office of the priesthood.

As the Heaven-appointed, visible leader of the Israelites, Moses had been connected with that people through scenes of peril, and had borne with their discontent, their jealousies, and murmurings, without retaliation, or seeking to be released from his trying position. When the Hebrews were brought into scenes of difficulty or danger, instead of trusting in God, who had done wondrous things for them, they murmured against Moses. The Son of God was the leader of the Israelites, although invisible to the congregation. His presence went before them, and conducted all their travels, while Moses was their visible leader, receiving his directions from the angel, who was Christ himself.

When the armies of Israel prospered, they took all the glory to themselves. When they were tested and proved by hunger, or warfare, they charged all their hardships to Moses. The power of God which was manifested in a remarkable manner in their deliverance from Egypt, and seen from time to time all through their journeyings, should have inspired them with faith, and forever closed their mouths against one expression of ingratitude. But the least apprehension of want, the least fear of danger from any cause, overbalanced the benefits in their favor, and caused them to overlook the blessings received in their times of greatest danger. The judgments visited upon them for their sin in worshiping the golden calf, should have made so deep an impression upon their minds as never to be effaced. But, although the marks of God's displeasure were fresh before them in their broken ranks and missing numbers because of their repeated offenses against the Angel who was leading them, they did not take these lessons to

their hearts, and by faithful obedience redeem their past failure, and again they were overcome by the temptations of Satan. The best efforts of the meekest man upon the earth could not quell their insubordination. The unselfish interest of Moses was rewarded with jealousy, suspicion, and calumny. His humble shepherd's life was far more peaceful and happy than his present position as pastor of that vast congregation of turbulent spirits. Their unreasonable jealousies were more difficult to manage than the fierce wolves of the wilderness. Moses dared not choose his own course and do as best pleased himself. He had left his shepherd's crook at God's express command, and in its place had been given him a rod of power. He dared not lay down this scepter and resign his position, till God should dismiss him.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were men who, by God's appointment, had been intrusted with special honors. They had been of the number who went up with Moses into the mount, and beheld the glory of God. They saw the glorious light which covered the divine form of Jesus Christ. The bottom of this cloud was in appearance "like the paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in its clearness." These men were in the presence of the glory of the Lord, and did eat and drink without being destroyed by the purity and unsurpassed glory that was reflected upon them. But a change had come. A temptation, slight at first, had been harbored, and had strengthened as it was encouraged, until the imagination was controlled by the power of Satan. These men upon the most frivolous pretense ventured upon their work of disaffection. They first whispered their doubts to each other, and then to the leading men of Israel, professing to have great interest in the prosperity of the people. Their words were received so readily by many minds that they ventured still farther, and at last these deluded souls really thought that they had a zeal for the Lord in this matter. A little leaven of distrust, and of dissension, envy, and jealousy, was leavening the camp of Israel.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram first commenced their cruel work upon the men to whom God had intrusted sacred responsibilities. They were

successful in alienating two hundred and fifty princes, famous in the congregation, men of renown. With these strong and influential men in their cause, they felt sure of making a radical change in the order of things. They thought they could transform the government of Israel, and greatly improve the administration of Moses and Aaron.

God had honored the Levites to do service in the tabernacle, because they took no part in making and worshiping the golden calf, and because of their faithfulness in executing the divine judgment upon the idolaters. To the Levites was assigned the office of erecting the tabernacle, and encamping around it, while the hosts of Israel pitched their tents at a distance from the sacred building. And when they journeyed, the Levites took down the tabernacle, and bore it, and the ark, and all the other articles of furniture. Because God thus honored the Levites, they became ambitious for still higher office, that they might obtain greater influence with the congregation. "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

There is nothing which will please the people better than to be praised and flattered when they are in wrong and darkness, and deserve reproof. Korah gained the attention of the people, and next their sympathies, by representing Moses as an overbearing leader. He said that Moses was too harsh, too exacting, and dictatorial, and that he reproved the people as though they were sinners, when they were a holy people, and the Lord was among them. Korah rehearsed the incidents in their experience in their travels through the wilderness, where they had been brought into strait places, and where many of them had died because of murmuring and disobedience, and with their perverted senses they thought they saw very clearly that all their trouble might have been saved if Moses had pursued a different course. He was too unyielding, too exacting, and they decided that

all their disasters in the wilderness were chargeable to Moses. Korah, the leading spirit, professed great wisdom in discerning the true reason for their trials and affliction.

In this work of disaffection there was greater harmony and union between these discordant elements, in their views and feelings, than had ever been known to exist before. Korah's success in gaining the larger part of the congregation of Israel on his side, led him to feel confident that he was wise and correct in judgment, and that Moses was indeed usurping authority that threatened the prosperity and salvation of Israel. He claimed that God had opened the matter to him, and laid upon him the burden of changing the government of Israel before it was too late. He stated that the congregation was not at fault; they were righteous. This great cry about the murmuring of the congregation bringing upon them the wrath of God was all a mistake. The people only wanted to have their rights; they wanted individual independence. As a sense of the self-sacrificing patience of Moses would force itself upon their memories, and as his disinterested efforts in their behalf while they were in the bondage of slavery, would come before them, their consciences would be somewhat disturbed. Some were not wholly with Korah in his views of Moses, and sought to speak in his behalf. The men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, must assign some reason before the people for Moses' doing as he had done in showing so great an interest from the first for the congregation of Israel. Their selfish minds, which had been debased as Satan's instruments, suggest that they have at last discovered the object of Moses' apparent interest. He had designed to keep them wandering in the wilderness until they all, or nearly all, should perish, and he should come into possession of their property.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the two hundred and fifty princes who had joined them, first became jealous, then envious, and next rebellious. They had talked in regard to Moses' position as ruler of the people, until they imagined that it was a very enviable one, which any of them could fill as

well as Moses. And they gave themselves up to discontent until they really deceived themselves and one another, in thinking that Moses and Aaron had placed themselves in the position which they occupied. They said that Moses and Aaron exalted themselves above the congregation of the Lord, in taking upon them the priesthood and government, and that this office should not be conferred on their house alone; it was sufficient for them if they were on a level with their brethren; for they were no more holy than the people, who were equally favored with God's peculiar presence and protection.

As Moses listened to the words of Korah, he was filled with anguish. He had not suspected the depth or breadth of the plot these men had laid, and without answering them a word he fell upon his face and offered a humble, silent appeal to God for help. He arose, braced for duty, and strengthened for trial. The law was very explicit that only those who had in a most solemn manner been ordained to the office, could minister as priest before the Lord. Nadab and Abihu, having unfitted themselves for this sacred work by the use of wine, were immediately destroyed. "And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him, even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take your censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow; and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy; ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord; and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?" Aaron had assumed no office of himself; God had placed him in the sacred office.

Dathan and Abiram replied, "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

They accused Moses of being the cause of their failure to enter the promised land. They said that God had not dealt with them thus. He had not said that they should die in the wilderness. Moses, not the Lord, had said this, and it was all arranged by Moses never to bring them to the land of Canaan. They said that he had led them from a land flowing with milk and honey. In their blind rebellion they forgot their sufferings in the land of Egypt, and the desolating plagues brought upon that land. They now accuse Moses of bringing them from a good land, to kill them in the wilderness, that he might be enriched with their possessions. They inquired of Moses in an insolent manner if he thought they would all submit to be led about like blind men as he pleased, sometimes toward Canaan, then back again toward the Red Sea and Egypt. These words they spoke before the congregation, and they utterly refused any longer to acknowledge the authority of Moses and Aaron.

Moses was greatly moved at these unjust accusations. In the presence of all the people he appealed to God as witness to the purity of his motives, and the integrity of his conduct, and implored the Lord to be his judge. The people in general were disaffected, and were influenced by the misrepresentations of Korah. "And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow; and take every man his censer, and in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer. And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid

incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron."

Korah and his company, who aspired to the priesthood in their self-confidence, even ventured to take the censers and to stand in the door of the tabernacle with Moses. Korah had cherished his envy and rebellion until he was self-deceived, and he really thought the congregation were righteous, and that Moses was a tyrannical ruler. The people, flattered by their rebellious leaders, had been led to believe that all their troubles originated with Moses, who was continually reminding them of their sins. They thought that if Korah could lead them, and encourage them, and dwell upon their righteous acts instead of reminding them of their failures, they would have a very peaceful, prosperous journey, and he would without doubt lead them, not back and forward in the wilderness, but into the promised land.

Korah, in his presumptuous blindness, gathered all the congregation of Israel against Moses and Aaron "unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these

men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord."

As soon as Moses ceased speaking, the earth opened and swallowed them up, and their tents, and all that pertained unto them. They went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation.

As the children of Israel heard the cry of the perishing ones, they fled to a great distance from them. They knew that they were in a measure guilty, for they had received the accusations against Moses and Aaron, and they were afraid that they should also perish with them. The judgment of God was not yet finished. A fire came from the cloud of glory and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

These were princes; that is, men generally of good judgment, and of influence in the congregation, men of renown. They were highly esteemed, and their judgment had often been sought in difficult matters. But they were affected by a wrong influence, and became envious, jealous, and rebellious. They perished not with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, because they were not the first in rebellion. They were to see their end first, and have an opportunity of repenting of their crime. But they were not reconciled to the destruction of those wicked men, and the wrath of God came upon them, and destroyed them also.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of

the altar; for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed; and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel." And Eleazar did as the Lord commanded, and made a covering for the altar out of the brazen censers wherewith they that were burnt had offered incense, that it might be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger not of the seed Aaron, should offer incense before the Lord lest he be consumed as was Korah and his company.

September 16, 1880

The Great Rebellion; or, the Conflict Ended

The sad history of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who led ancient Israel into rebellion, is recorded as a warning to the people of God until the close of time. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

We learn from the sacred word that the people of God are still in danger from the devices of their archenemy. Satan stands ready to aim his shafts at the unguarded soul, and he will lead astray all who will give heed to his deceptions. Many who imagine that they have a sincere zeal for the honor of God, have permitted Satan to control their minds, and are accomplishing his purposes. Few understand the terrible power of prejudice, of envy and jealousy, when once they take possession of the soul.

The congregation of Israel had seen the earth open and the leaders in rebellion go down into its depths. Here the Lord gave his people an opportunity to see and to feel the sinfulness of their course. He gave the deceived ones overwhelming evidence that they were wrong, and that his servant Moses was right, and they should have been led to heartfelt repentance and confession. But reason and judgment had become perverted. All the congregation were, to a greater or less degree, affected with the prevailing jealousy, surmisings, and hatred, against Moses, which had brought the displeasure of the Lord in a fearfully marked manner upon them. Yet our gracious God shows himself a God of justice and mercy. He made a distinction between the instigators--the leaders in rebellion--and those who

had been led by them. He pitied the ignorance and folly of those who had been deceived.

God directed Moses to bid the congregation leave the tents of the men whom they had chosen in place of their Heaven-appointed leaders. Thus the very man whose destruction the people had premeditated was the instrument in the hands of God of saving their lives upon that occasion. In obedience to the divine command Moses warned the people: "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." The whole congregation were in alarming danger of being also destroyed by the wrath of God in their sins; for they were sharers in the crimes of the men to whom they had given their sympathy, and with whom they had associated.

While Moses was entreating Israel to flee from the coming destruction, the divine vengeance might even then have been stayed, if the men who instigated the rebellion had repented and sought forgiveness of God. But Korah and his sympathizers stood boldly in their tents, in defiance of God's wrath. And yet some of this rebellious company were of the number who had been so recently honored of God, having been permitted to approach with Moses almost directly into the presence of the Most High, and behold his unsurpassed majesty. They had also seen Moses when he came down from the mount, his face resplendent with the glory of God, so that the people dared not approach him. But all this is now forgotten. They persist in their rebellion, and the wrath of God sweeps them from the earth, while the people flee in terror from the scene.

The hosts of Israel had an opportunity to pass the following night in reflection upon the fearful visitation of Heaven which they had witnessed. But though greatly terrified, they were not led to humble themselves before God in true repentance for their sinful course. They had been deeply influenced by the spirit of rebellion, and had been flattered by Korah and his company until they really believed themselves to be a very good people, and

that they had been wronged and abused by Moses. If they should admit that Korah and his company were wrong and Moses righteous, then they would be compelled to receive as the word of God, the sentence that they must all die in the wilderness. They were not willing to submit to this, and they tried to believe that Moses had deceived them. They had fondly cherished the hope that a new order of things was about to be established, in which praise would be substituted for reproach, and peace for anxiety and conflict. The men who had perished had spoken pleasant words, and had manifested special interest and love for them, and the people had decided that Korah and his companions were good men, and that Moses had by some means been the cause of their destruction.

It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities he would use for their salvation. The Israelites had not only done this, but had purposed to put both Moses and Aaron to death. The multitude had fled from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, through fear of destruction; but their rebellion was not cured. They were not in grief and despair because of their guilt. They felt not the effect of an awakened, convicted conscience because they had abused their most precious privileges, and sinned against light and knowledge.

The goodness and mercy of God was displayed in sparing this ungrateful people when his wrath was kindled against the leaders in rebellion. The congregation, who had permitted themselves to be deceived, were granted space for repentance. The long-suffering and mercy of God toward erring and rebellious Israel is recorded as evidence of his willingness to forgive the most grievous offenders, when they shall have a sense of their sin and return unto the Lord with repentance and humiliation.

Jesus, the Angel who went before the Hebrews in the wilderness, would save them from destruction. Forgiveness is lingering for them. It is possible for them to find pardon. The vengeance of God has come very near, and

appealed to them to repent. A special, irresistible interference from Heaven has arrested their presumptuous rebellion. Now, if they respond to the interposition of God's providence, they may be saved.

The repentance and humiliation of the congregation of Israel must be proportionate to their transgression. The signal manifestation of divine power has removed all uncertainty. They may have a knowledge of the true position and holy calling of Moses and Aaron if they will accept it. But their neglect of the evidences which God had given was fatal to them. They did not realize the importance of immediate action on their part to seek pardon of God for their grievous sins. That night of probation was not passed in repentance and confession of their sins, but in devising some way to resist the evidences which showed them to be the greatest of sinners. They still cherished their jealous hatred of the men of God's appointment. They strengthened themselves in their mad course of resisting the authority of Moses and Aaron. Satan was at hand to pervert their judgment and lead them blindfold to destruction.

The day before, all Israel had fled in alarm at the cry of the doomed sinners who went down into the pit, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also." "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." And in their indignation they were prepared to lay violent hands upon their faithful and self-sacrificing leaders.

Here we find a striking exhibition of the blindness that will compass human minds that turn from light and evidence. Here we see the strength of settled rebellion. Surely, the Hebrews had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them. But they still stood forth boldly and defiantly, and accused Moses and Aaron of killing good and holy men. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

A manifestation of the divine glory appeared in the cloud above the tabernacle, and the angry throng were arrested in their mad, presumptuous course. A voice from the terrible glory speaks to Moses and Aaron in the same words which they were the day before commanded to address to the people. "Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment."

Moses did not feel the guilt of sin, and hence he did not hasten away and leave the congregation to perish, as the people had fled from the tents of Korah and his company the day before. Moses lingered; for he could not consent to give up that vast multitude to be destroyed, although he knew that they deserved the wrath of God for their persistent rebellion.

He prostrates himself before God, because the people feel no necessity for humiliation. He mediates for them, because they feel no need of interceding in their own behalf. Moses here typifies Christ. In this terrible crisis, Moses manifests the true shepherd's interest for the flock of his care. He pleads that the wrath of an offended God may not utterly destroy the people of his choice. By his intercession he holds back the arm of vengeance, that a full end may not be made of disobedient, rebellious Israel.

Moses then directed Aaron to take his censer and make an atonement for the people, for the wrath of God had gone forth, and the plague had begun. Aaron stood with his censer, waving it before the Lord, while the intercessions of Moses ascended with the smoke of the incense. Moses dared not cease his entreaties. He took hold of the strength of the angel, as did Jacob in his wrestling, and like Jacob he prevailed. Aaron was standing between the living and the dead, when the gracious answer came, I have heard thy prayer, I will not consume utterly. Again the very men whom the congregation despised and would have put to death, are the ones to plead in their behalf that the avenging sword of God might be sheathed, and sinful

Israel spared. Yet their Heaven-daring presumption had not passed unpunished. Fourteen thousand dead bodies lay upon the earth, a terrible evidence of the judgment of God against murmuring and rebellion. The apostle plainly states that the experience of the Israelites in their travels has been recorded for the benefit of those upon whom the ends of the world are come. Our dangers are not less than those of the Hebrews, but greater. The people of God at the present day will be tempted to indulge envy, jealousy and murmuring, as did ancient Israel. There will ever be a spirit to rise up against the reproof of sins and wrongs. But the voice of reproof should not be hushed because of this. Those whom God has set apart as ministers of righteousness have solemn responsibilities laid upon them to reprove the sins of the people. Paul commanded Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." There are ever those who will despise the one who dares to reprove sin. But when required, reproof must be given. Paul directs Titus to rebuke a certain class sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. And how shall the reproof be given? Let the apostle answer: "With all long-suffering and doctrine." The one at fault must be shown that his course is not in harmony with the word of God. But never should the wrongs of God's people be passed by indifferently. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God, will receive his blessing.

The history of the Israelites presents before us the great danger of deception. Many have not a sense of the sinfulness of their own natures, nor of the grace of forgiveness. They do not wish to be disturbed. They have occasionally selfish fears, occasionally good purposes, some anxious thoughts and convictions. But they have not a depth of experience, because they are not riveted to the Eternal Rock. This class never see the necessity of reproof. Sin does not appear exceedingly sinful, for the reason that they are not walking in the light, as Christ is in the light.

The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and

restrictions of the Lord. They were restless under restraint. They desired to have their own way, to follow the leadings of their own mind, and be controlled by their own judgment. Could they have been left free to do this, there would have been no complaints of Moses.

God would have his people learn the precious lessons of humility and of willing obedience to his requirements. They will then be united in their purposes and motives, and will thus be brought into harmony of action. For this, Christ prayed in that last petition for his followers, offered before his crucifixion: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

September 30, 1880

The Sin of Moses

After forty years' wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel encamped at Kadesh, in the desert of Zin; and Miriam died, and was buried there. The living stream which flowed from the smitten rock in Horeb, had followed them in all their journeyings; but just before the Hebrew host reached Kadesh, the Lord caused the waters to cease. It was his purpose again to test his people. He would prove whether they would humbly trust his providence, or imitate their fathers' unbelief and murmuring.

When the thirsting multitude could find no water, they became impatient, and rebellious. They forgot the power of God which had for so many years supplied them with water from the rock, and instead of trusting in their Almighty Leader, they murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!" that is, they wished they had been of the number who were destroyed by the plague in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

They angrily inquired, Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock. So thou shalt give the congregation and their

beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock;" but instead of speaking to the rock, as God commanded him, Moses smote it twice with the rod, after exclaiming impatiently, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Here Moses sinned. He did not ascribe to God the power and glory, and therefore did not magnify him before the people. The Lord, in his infinite mercy, caused the waters to flow, but this did not prove that Moses was right in thus mingling his own spirit with the work of God. Moses here gave unmistakable evidence before the erring, rebellious congregation, that he had lost his patience and self-control. To those who indulge in passion, and fretfulness, this may seem a light matter, but with God it was a grievous offense. It gave the people occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God, and to palliate their own sins.

This language was not that which God had put into his mouth, but was spoken from irritated feeling. "Hear now, ye rebels;" this was all true, but the truth, even, should not be spoken to gratify passion or impatience. When God bids Moses charge home upon murmuring Israel their rebellion, the words will be painful to himself, and hard for them to bear; yet God will sustain his servant in the declaration of the most severe and unpalatable truth. But when men take it upon themselves to speak words that scar and wound, God's Spirit is grieved, and great harm is done. The rash act of Moses in smiting the rock, and that rash speech, were an exhibition of human passion, not a holy indignation because God had been dishonored.

The necessity for the manifestation of divine power made the occasion one of great solemnity, and the servants of God should have improved it to make a favorable impression upon the people. But Moses and Aaron were stirred, and in impatience and anger with the people because of their murmurings, they said, "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" thus

putting themselves in God's place, as though the power and virtue lay in themselves, men possessing human weakness, and human passions. This was a virtual admission to murmuring Israel that they were correct in charging Moses with leading them from Egypt. The exhibition of self in this intemperate, fitful speech, changed the purpose of God in regard to Moses and Aaron, and excluded them from the promised land. God had forgiven the people greater transgressions than this error on the part of his chosen servants, but he could not regard a sin in the leaders of his people as in those who were led. God is not glorified when men chosen for high responsibilities, mingle their own ways, their own spirit and plans, with his holy work. Men have not wisdom to separate the sacred from the common. The exhibition of self will mar the character of the work, and will result in the ruin of souls.

In the judgment pronounced upon Moses, the Israelites had unmistakable proof that He who had wrought such a wonderful deliverance for them in bringing them from Egyptian bondage, was not Moses, but the mighty Angel who was going before them in all their travels, and of whom the Lord had said, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." The Lord had committed to Moses the burden of leading his people, while the mighty Angel, even the Son of God, went before them in all their journeyings, and directed their travels. Because they were so ready to forget that God was leading them by his Angel, and to ascribe to man that which God's power alone could perform, he had proved them, and tested them, to see whether they would obey him. At every trial they failed. Instead of believing in, and acknowledging, God, who had strewn their path with evidences of his power, and signal tokens of his care and love, they distrusted him, and ascribed their leaving Egypt to Moses, charging him as the cause of all their disasters.

The Lord would remove this impression forever from their minds, by forbidding Moses to enter the promised land. God had highly exalted Moses. He had revealed to him his great glory. He had taken him into a sacred nearness with himself upon the mount, and had communicated to him, and through him to the people, his will, his statutes, and his laws. The fact that he had been thus exalted and honored of God, made his error of greater magnitude. Moses repented of his sin, and humbled himself greatly before God. He related to all Israel his sorrow for his sin. He did not conceal the sad result, but told the people that for thus failing to ascribe glory to God, he could not lead them to the promised land. He bade the people mark the severe punishment visited upon him for his error, and then consider how God would regard their repeated murmurings in charging upon a mere man the visitations of divine wrath because of their transgressions.

Pure, holy faith cannot be exercised when wrath and passion bear sway in the heart, and control the mind. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel." Unbelief was revealed, also, in smiting the rock instead of speaking to it, as though the act of Moses, a blow from the hand of man, must do the work, when only a word was required. This distrust of God, this arrogation of power which belonged to him, was most offensive in his sight, and was visited with the evidence of his displeasure.

The lesson here given us is one of the greatest importance. Men who occupy positions of sacred trust should make a practical application to themselves. The more responsible their position in the cause and work of God, or the more important their trust, the greater the necessity for them to have an eye single to his glory. The more the divine greatness and power and glory is vouchsafed to man, the more should he exhibit of meekness, humility, and trust. Every faculty of the mind should be consecrated to God, and used to promote his glory. He who would be great in the kingdom of God, must cherish unselfish love, in the simplicity of a living faith. This is

the gold tried in the fire. The strength of God's great men is in their freedom from self-esteem, from pride, from all jealousy, ambition, and worldly care. The man of God, however exalted his position, will have the spirit of a dependent child, longing for a father's care, and willing to be led by a father's hand.

October 7, 1880

The Sin of Moses

The history of the wilderness life of Israel was chronicled for the benefit of the Israel of God to the close of time. God's dealings with the wanderers of the desert in all their marchings to and fro, in their exposure to hunger, thirst, and weariness, and in the striking manifestations of his power for their relief, are a divine parable, fraught with warning and instruction for his people in all ages. The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have his people in these last days review with humble hearts, and teachable spirits, the fiery trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.

The rock which, smitten by the command of God, sent forth its living waters, was a symbol of Christ, smitten and bruised that by his blood a fountain might be prepared for the salvation of perishing man. As the rock had been once smitten, so Christ was to be "once offered, to bear the sins of many." But when Moses rashly smote the rock at Kadesh, the beautiful symbol of Christ was marred. Our Saviour was not to be sacrificed a second time. As the great offering was made but once, it is only necessary for those who seek the blessings of his grace to ask in Jesus' name,--to pour forth the heart's desires in penitential prayer. Such prayer will bring before the Lord of hosts the wounds of Jesus, and then will flow forth afresh the life-giving blood, symbolized by the flowing of the living water for thirsting Israel.

Only by living faith in God, and humble obedience to his commands, can man hope to meet the divine approval. On the occasion of that mighty miracle at Kadesh, Moses, wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, lost sight of his Almighty Helper; he heeded not the

command, "Speak ye unto the rock, and it shall give forth its waters;" and without the divine strength he was left to mar his record with an exhibition of passion and human weakness. The man who should, and might have stood pure, firm, and unselfish to the close of his work, was overcome at last. God was dishonored before the congregation of Israel, when he might have been honored, and his name glorified.

The judgment immediately pronounced against Moses was most cutting and humiliating,--that he with rebellious Israel must die before crossing the Jordan. But shall man assert that the Lord dealt severely with his servant for that one offense? God had honored Moses as he had honored no other man then living. He had vindicated his cause again and again. He had heard his prayers, and had spoken with him face to face, as a man speaketh with a friend. Just in proportion to the light and knowledge which Moses had enjoyed, was his criminality increased.

Moses described to the people how he had pleaded with God for a remission of his sentence, and had been refused. "The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me. And the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee. Speak no more to me of this matter." "For your sakes." The eyes of all Israel were upon Moses. He had been exalted before them as the meekest man upon the earth, and his error cast a reflection upon God, who had chosen him as the leader of his people. The whole congregation had witnessed the transgression; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been made upon the people that impatience and unbelief under great provocation, might be excused in those in responsible positions. But when it was pronounced that Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan because they did not believe to sanctify the Lord before the congregation, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that he will surely punish the transgressor.

The life of Moses since he had been intrusted with the work of God, had

hitherto been blameless and holy. Satan could not succeed in his most subtle attacks to subvert his integrity, or lead him to self-exaltation. But the more faultless and incorruptible his life hitherto, the more aggravated was his failure now, the more offensive his sin in the sight of God, and the greater his punishment. This lesson should be deeply impressed upon the hearts of all. If God dealt thus strictly with his most honored and faithful servant for his unbelief and hasty speech, he will not excuse these sins in any man in a more humble position. Yet the lesson has a special significance for those to whom great light has been given, and who have been intrusted with high and sacred responsibilities. God requires from all a faithful performance of duty in accordance with the light given, and the privileges bestowed.

God has granted to his people at the present day, great light and knowledge. He will impart strength and wisdom to his servants as long as they humbly rely upon him. They may, by their consistent course, commend to others the religion of Christ. But those who take advantage of their position to indulge in self-exaltation, arrogance, or harshness, cast doubt upon the work of God, and furnish the skeptical an excuse for their wicked distrust and unbelief.

In the case of Moses, the Lord shows that he will defend all who are standing in his strength in defense of the right. Those who would smite his faithful ones, smite the hand of God spread over them as a buckler,--they wound that hand which bears the sword of justice. But when the one thus divinely guarded ceases to rely upon God for help, and begins to exercise authority which the Lord has not given him, that moment his defense is gone. The more criminal and unreasonable the opposition which God's servant has to meet, the more earnestly should he seek to hide self in Christ. As long as he does this, he will be safe.

Moses' past record of integrity and unswerving fidelity to God could not avert the retribution of his fault. Here is set before us in a most impressive

manner, God's hatred of sin, and the sure retribution that will fall upon the sinner. Previous faithfulness and righteousness will not excuse one wrong or sin in the sight of God. The least swerving from the course of right greatly displeases the Lord. He saw the end from the beginning. He saw that men in high places would commit grievous sins, hiding their iniquity under a cloak of godliness. God's throne is clear from reproach. The prompt judgment following the sin of Moses, shows to all that God will hold them to a strict account. Immediate retribution will not always follow the doubting, and unbelieving; in his great mercy. God bears long with the sinner, yet every transgressor will learn that the wages of sin is death.

God would have his work pure, and holy, and undefiled, unmarred by the frailties and errors of man. The spirit of censure, the practice of judging our brethren, and uttering words of condemnation, is displeasing to him. To all who pursue this course, the Lord says, Hold, judge and condemn your own motives and actions, but be careful how you judge your brethren, and misconstrue their motives. I am the Father of these my children; I will reprove their sins; I will correct their errors; I will visit their transgressions with stripes, and their iniquity with the rod. I know their going out and coming in; I am acquainted with their hearts, and will deal with them, not according to their waywardness, for then no flesh should live before me; but my great compassion shall be exercised toward them if they will set my fear before them, and believe me to glorify my holy name.

The most grievous sin of God's people is unbelief; and yet it is widespread; and almost universal. It is this sin that has led to backsliding and apostasy in every age. Those for whom God has wrought, limit the Holy One of Israel, and dishonor God daily by their distrust, their doubts, and positive unbelief. Moses died on mount Nebo, and Aaron on mount Hor, by the decree of God, not because they had committed a great crime, as men view the matter, but for a sin of common occurrence. The psalmist describes their error in these words: "They angered God also at the waters of strife, so that it

went ill with Moses for their sakes, because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Retribution will surely follow the transgressor. Men may have lived and labored for God, they may have manifested self-denial, and self-sacrifice, God may have marked their lives with special favors, he may have given great foresight, and wisdom; and yet, the one whose life was so marked with rectitude may, through lack of watchfulness, and prayer, be overcome. The very uncommonness of the wrong, the usual purity and nobility of the character, make the departure from rectitude more noticeable, and Satan's triumph more complete.

The sins of impatience and unbelief, are as offensive in the sight of God today, as in the days of ancient Israel. All who profess godliness are under the most sacred obligation to guard their own spirit, and to exercise self-control under the greatest provocation. The burdens placed upon Moses were very great; few men will ever be so severely tried as he; yet his sin is not passed over because of this. God has made ample provisions for his people, that if they come to him, and rely upon his strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. Men of high or low degree have no excuse for sin. The light given of Heaven, the power from Jesus Christ, can be obtained by all who ask for it in faith. Under every provocation there is a present help that will never fail. We are to learn to take God at his word, walking by simple faith, continually feeling our own weakness, and trusting in the Mighty One of Israel.

October 14, 1880

Death of Aaron

A short distance from the encampment of the Israelites at Kadesh were the borders of Edom, and through this country lay an easy and direct route to the promised land. Edom had been settled by Esau and his descendants, and the Israelites were directed not to molest this people, for the time to drive them out had not yet come. Moses, however, greatly desired to pass through the country; and he accordingly sent a friendly message to the king of Edom:

"Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us; how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers; and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost part of thy border. Let us, I pray thee, pass through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards; neither will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand or to the left, until we have passed thy borders."

To this courteous request, a threatening refusal was returned,

"Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword."

Another earnest appeal was sent to the king, with the promise,

"We will go by the highway; and if I or my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it; I will only, without doing anything else, go through on my feet."

"Thou shalt not go through," was the answer. Vast armed hordes of Edomites were already guarding the difficult passes, so that any peaceful advance in that direction was impossible, and the Hebrews were forbidden to use violence. They must make the long journey around the land of Edom.

Accordingly, the hosts of Israel again turned toward the south, and made their way over sterile wastes, that seemed even more dreary after a glimpse of the green spots among the hills and valleys of Edom. From the mountain range overlooking this gloomy desert, rises Mount Hor, whose summit was to be the place of Aaron's death and burial. When the Israelites came in front of this mountain, the divine command was addressed to Moses,

"Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there."

Together these two aged men and the younger one toiled up the mountain height. The heads of Moses and Aaron were white with the snows of six-score winters. Their long and eventful lives had been marked with the deepest trials, and the greatest honors that had ever fallen to the lot of man. They were men of great natural ability, and all their powers had been developed, exalted, and dignified, by communion with the Infinite One. Their lives had been spent in unselfish labor for God and humanity; their countenances showed great intellect, depth of thought, firmness, and nobility of character.

Many years had Moses and Aaron stood side by side in their cares and labors. Together they had breasted unnumbered dangers, and had shared together the signal blessing of God; but the time was at hand when they must be separated.

They moved on very slowly, for every moment in each other's society

was precious. There were many steep acclivities to surmount; and as they often paused to rest, they communed together of the past, and the future. Before them, as far as the eye could reach, was spread out the scene of their desert wanderings. In the plain below were encamped the vast armies of Israel, for whom these chosen men had spent the best portion of their lives; for whose welfare they had felt so deep an interest, and made so great sacrifices. Somewhere beyond the mountains of Edom was the path leading to the promised land,--that land whose blessings Moses and Aaron were never to enjoy. No rebellious feelings found a place in their hearts, no expressions of murmuring escaped their lips; yet a solemn sadness rested upon their countenances as they remembered that it was their own sin which had debarred them from the promised inheritance.

Aaron's work for Israel was done. Forty years before, at the age of eighty-three, God had called him to unite with Moses in his great and important mission. He had co-operated with Moses in leading the children of Israel from Egypt. He held up the great leader's hands when the Hebrew hosts gave battle to Amalek. He was permitted to ascend mount Sinai, to approach into the presence of God, and to behold the divine glory. The Lord had conferred upon the family of Aaron the office of the priesthood, and had honored him with the sacred consecration of high priest. He had sustained him in the holy office by the terrible manifestations of divine judgment in the destruction of Korah and his company. It was through Aaron's intercession that the plague was stayed. When his two sons were slain for disregarding God's express command, by putting common in the place of sacred fire upon the censers, he did not murmur, nor rebel. Yet the record of his noble life had been marred. Aaron committed a grievous sin in yielding to the clamors of the people and making a golden calf at Sinai; and again, when he united with Miriam in envy and jealousy against Moses. And he, with Moses, offended the Lord at Kadesh by disobeying the command to speak to the rock that it might give forth its water.

God designed that both these great leaders of his people should be representatives of Jesus Christ. Aaron bore the names of Israel upon his breast. He communicated to the people the will of God. He entered the most holy place on the day of atonement, "not without blood," as a mediator for all Israel. He came forth from that work to bless the congregation, as Christ will come forth to bless his waiting people when his work of atonement in their behalf shall be finished. It was the exalted character of that sacred office as representative of our great High Priest that made Aaron's sin of so great magnitude.

With deeply sorrowful feelings, Moses removed from Aaron the holy vestments, and placed them upon Eleazar, who thus became his successor by divine appointment. Aaron knew that God was just; and he uttered no complaint, but humbly submitted to the divine will. It is a solemn truth, which should be deeply impressed upon every heart, that a wrong act can never be undone. It may take more than the work of a life-time to recover what has been lost in a single moment of thoughtlessness, or temptation. Had these servants of God, when they stood before the rock at Kadesh, borne uncomplainingly the burden which he had placed upon them, had they not offended him by hasty temper, and the arrogation to themselves of glory which belonged to him, how different would have been their future!

With deep anxiety, the children of Israel awaited the return of their leaders. As they looked upon that large congregation, they saw that nearly all the adults who left Egypt had perished in the wilderness. The penalty pronounced against Moses and Aaron had been made known to the people, and now their absence excited in every heart a foreboding of coming evil. Some were aware of the object of that mysterious journey to the summit of Mount Hor; they knew that the death of Aaron was in consequence of the people's sin; and their solicitude for their leaders was heightened by bitter memories, and many self-accusings.

Heavy indeed seemed the sentence that those who had for forty years patiently shared the penalty of Israel's sin, who had borne with their murmurings, and by earnest intercessions had so often averted from their guilty heads the swift judgments of God,--that these chosen men, overcome at last with the ingratitude and complaining of the people, and letting go for a moment their hold of the divine strength, should be prohibited from sharing the joyous, triumphal entry of the promised land,--that they must, with the rebellious multitude, perish in the wilderness.

By this judgment, God would impress upon his people the lesson, that, whatever the temptation, there is no excuse for sin. Those whom he has called to do a great work for him, he will endow with all the strength required to execute their divine commission. Those only will fail who rely upon their own strength and wisdom, instead of trusting in the mighty God of Israel. A man may explore all the treasures of science and literature, he may reach the very summit of earthly power and greatness; but if he becomes self-sufficient; if he fails to connect with Heaven, and by faith appropriate to himself the promises of God; if he does not become strong in divine strength to battle for the right,--all his exaltation will avail him nothing. The knowledge that fallen man may gain by connection with God will impart a dignity which sits with heavenly grace, and which leads him to place a proper estimate upon his work, and upon all his faculties. He is a co-laborer with God, bearing a commission from the Most High, and working, with all patience, heartiness, and love, for the Master.

God designs that all his servants shall let rays of light shine forth from their holy lives, filling the world with the light of his glory, not their own. Men who live and work for God will possess patience, humility, and meekness, coupled with a reverent, sacred dignity, reflected from the character of Christ. They will manifest simplicity and tenderness, propriety of conduct, and purity of motive and action, which are not earth-born. The Spirit of the Holy One dwells in their hearts, and directs their conduct. And

the Divine Presence within, shining forth in the life and character, gives them influence with their fellow-men. This sacred presence must be an abiding power with all who work for God, or he will not accept their labors.

For one sin, Aaron was denied the privilege of officiating as God's high priest in Canaan in offering the first sacrifice in the goodly land, and thus consecrating the inheritance of Israel. Moses was to continue to bear his burden in leading the people to the very borders of Canaan. He was to come within sight of the promised land, but was not permitted to enter it. Here the children of Israel saw that God was no respecter of persons; that the sins of men in exalted stations will no more be permitted to pass unpunished, than if committed by men in lowly positions.

The watching, waiting people, at last see Moses and Eleazar slowly returning; but Aaron is not with them. Upon Eleazar are the sacerdotal garments, showing that he succeeds his father in the sacred office. With quivering lips, and sorrowful mien, Moses tells them that Aaron died in his arms upon Mount Hor, and they there buried him. The congregation break forth into expressions of genuine grief; for they all loved Aaron, although they had so often caused him sorrow. As a token of respect for his memory, thirty days were spent in services of mourning for their lost leader.

The burial of Aaron, conducted according to the express command of God, was in striking contrast to the customs of the present day. When a man in high position dies, his funeral services are attended with the greatest pomp and ceremony. When Aaron died, one of the most illustrious men that ever lived, there were only two of his nearest friends to witness his death, and to attend his burial. And that lonely grave upon Mount Hor was forever hidden from the sight of Israel. God is not glorified in the great display so often made over the dead, and the great outlay of means in returning their bodies to the dust.

Although the whole congregation sorrowed for Aaron, they could not feel his loss as keenly as did Moses. The death of Aaron forcibly reminded Moses that his own end was very near; he would soon lay off the armor, and lie down in death. But short as the time of his stay on earth must be, he deeply felt the loss of his constant companion,--the one who had shared his joys and sorrows, his hopes and fears, for so many long years. Moses must now continue the work alone; but he knew that God was his friend, and upon him he leaned more heavily.

October 21, 1880

The Journey From Mount Hor

The nations of Canaan had watched with jealous eye the movements of the vast hosts of Israel. They remembered with many forebodings the visit of the Hebrew spies forty years before, and were now continually on the alert to prevent any invasion of their territory. Being informed by spies of the encampment of the children of Israel near Mount Hor, Arad, one of the Canaanite kings, went out with a large army, to make war upon them. He gained a decided victory, and took a number of prisoners. The Israelites were deeply humbled at this defeat, and with prayer and fasting, they sought help from God. They made a solemn vow that if the Lord would deliver these enemies into their hands, they would utterly destroy them and their cities. The Divine Protector of Israel was pleased to hear and answer the prayer of his people, and the Canaanites were completely routed.

This victory should have filled the hearts of the Israelites with gratitude. It should have led them to fear and trust the Lord, and to shun the sins which had separated them from his favor. But, elated with success, they became boastful and self-confident, and soon fell into the old habit of murmuring. They were now dissatisfied because the armies of Israel had not been permitted to advance upon Canaan immediately after their cowardly rebellion at the report of the spies forty years before. They pronounced their long sojourn in the wilderness an unnecessary delay, reasoning that they might have conquered their enemies as easily heretofore as now. They flattered themselves that if God and Moses had not interfered, they might now have been in possession of the promised land. Thus they cherished bitter thoughts concerning the dealings of God with them, and finally they became discontented with everything.

As they continued their journey toward the south, following the guidance of the cloudy pillar, their route lay through a hot, sandy valley, destitute of shade or vegetation. The way seemed long and difficult; they were sometimes thirsty, and often weary. Their sojourn in the wilderness should have taught them that help could come alone from God; but when again brought into circumstances of difficulty and trial they failed to endure the test of their faith and patience. By continually dwelling on the dark features of their travels, they separated themselves farther and farther from God, until a defiant, rebellious spirit made them almost Satanic.

A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the hearts of God's people before they commit open sin. There is first a gradual decline of spirituality; God is not cherished in the thoughts; prayer is neglected; selfish thoughts and feelings have a controlling power; carnal desires slowly but surely gain the ascendancy; and a spirit of proud self-sufficiency takes possession of the soul.

Had the children of Israel, as they journeyed, called to mind the wonderful deliverance which God had wrought for them in breaking from their necks the yoke of Egyptian bondage, had they dwelt upon the many precious and miraculous revelations of divine power in their behalf, they might have strengthened the courage of the faint-hearted and unbelieving, and thus averted the terrible judgments which had fallen upon them. But light had become darkness to them, and darkness light. Egypt looked brighter and more desirable than liberty and the land to which God was leading them.

Thus it is with many professed Christians at the present day. They become weary of self-denial and humiliation. They desire an easier path, in which there is less self-restraint, in which there is no necessity for a constant, individual effort. Their hearts are ever pleading, "I pray thee, have me excused." They have no love for duty, no affinity for wholesome restraint and discipline. They act over the experience of ancient Israel, in doubting

and murmuring. They dwell upon the objectionable features in their experience, and with their spiritual sight dimmed, everything pertaining to their religious life wears a dark, forbidding aspect. They begin to turn toward the world, as the hearts of the Israelites were constantly turning back to Egypt. In conversation, in dress, in deportment, this class manifest a conformity to the world. How dwelleth the love of Christ in them?

The word of God draws a dividing line between his followers and the worldling. Over that line, toward Egypt, is the life of self-indulgence, fashion, frivolity, and the veriest slavery to sin. Over that line, God is forgotten. When the professed followers of Christ should be fighting the Lord's battles, how often are they out of the path of duty, on Satan's ground. Christ is wounded when any who bear his name are found there; he is crucified afresh, and put to an open shame by those who profess to love him.

In hearing the earnest prayers of Israel, and granting them a great victory over their enemies, the Lord had given a fresh token of his willingness to help his people when they should seek him. How cruel, then, was their unbelief and murmuring. The great sin of Israel was their jealousy that God meant them harm; that he was restricting their liberty, and surrounding them with denials and severities. Yet in all the way of God's leading, they had found water to refresh the thirsty, bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger, and peace and safety under the shadowy cloud by day and the fiery pillar by night. Angels were ministering to them as they climbed the rocky heights, or threaded the rugged paths of the wilderness. It is a mistake to entertain the thought that God is pleased to see his children suffer. All Heaven is interested in the happiness of man. It is in the path that leads away from God to darkness and death that there are pains and griefs, disappointments and sorrows. These are placed by the hand of Infinite Love to warn man not to go on in disobedience and destroy themselves.

God does not close the avenues of joy to any of his creatures. The divine

requirements call upon man to shun those indulgences which would bring suffering and disappointment, and would close to him the door of happiness and Heaven. The world's Redeemer accepts men as they are, with all their wants, imperfections, and weaknesses; and he will not only cleanse from the defilement of sin, and grant redemption through his blood, but will satisfy the heart-longings of all who consent to wear his yoke, to bear his burden. It is his purpose to impart peace and rest to all who come to him for the bread of life. He only requires of men to perform those duties which will lead his steps to heights of bliss to which the disobedient can never attain.

The true, joyous life of the soul is to have Christ formed within, the hope of glory. Then will the servants of the Master feel that it is safe to follow where he leads. They may climb the mountain steeps or tread the burning desert sands singing over the hardest paths, because Jesus is their companion. Had ancient Israel but cherished gratitude to God for his preserving care for his divine companionship in the shadowy cloud and the fiery pillar; had they, instead of murmuring, recounted the blessings which God had bestowed upon them; had they cherished faith, and laid aside their fears and anxieties--they might ever have had the presence of the Divine Helper, and he would have lifted the burden from every weary soul.

The hindrances which keep many from advancing in a life of purity and holiness are created by themselves. The cross which every Christian must bear if he follows Christ, gives increased spiritual strength. In lifting the burdens of Christ, heavier burdens are removed. To all who are willing and obedient, to all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of the greatest discouragement and difficulty is the time when divine help is nearest. When the path of duty is obstructed by difficulties the most formidable, when it seems that the soul must give up in despair, the glory hidden behind the cloud that has darkened the way shines forth in all its brightness.

Those who press on in the path of duty will look back with joy and thankfulness upon the darkest part of the way, where trials and difficulties seemed like a heavy cloud to hide every ray of God's sunshine. The Lord conceals himself from us in the cloudy pillar, as from ancient Israel. His ways are past finding out. Yet all that he makes known of himself, all that he can reveal to the most elevated mind, only convinces us of an infinity beyond, of wisdom, purity, and love.

October 28, 1880

The Fiery Serpents

As the children of Israel cherished the spirit of murmuring and rebellion, they were disposed to find fault with even the blessing which God had graciously bestowed upon them. The simple manna, though palatable at first, grew loathsome to their taste. They had been provided with it for many years--indeed, most of the people had known no other bread--and it seemed to lose its miraculous character. "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

What ingratitude! This people were partaking of the bread of Heaven. "Man did eat angel's food." They were fed every day by God's constant bounty. Yet all the tokens of his love and care failed to inspire their hearts with thankfulness and childlike trust. Did not He who made man know what was best adapted to meet the wants of his people? He had promised that if they would be obedient to his voice there should not be a feeble one in all their tribes. But the food which he provided did not meet their fancy. And in their murmurings they uttered falsehoods, by saying that they had no bread nor water; they had both, provided by a daily miracle.

In the midst of their complaining, a new and terrible evil came upon them. The wilderness through which they journeyed was infested by the most venomous serpents, their sting producing heat, violent inflammation, thirst, and speedy death. Indeed, so terrible were the effects resulting from the bite of these reptiles that they were called fiery serpents. The Lord had hitherto preserved his people from the attacks of these creatures, but he now removed from them his restraining power, that Israel might realize their ingratitude to

God, and be led to repentance and humiliation before him.

Moses faithfully set before the people their great sin in murmuring against God. He pointed them to the fact that every day of their travels in the wilderness they had been preserved by a miracle of divine mercy. The Majesty of Heaven had prepared the way before them. Their feet had not swollen in their long journeys, neither had their clothes grown old. There was no sickness in all their ranks. God had given them food from Heaven, and water from the rock. He had subdued before them the strong and dangerous beasts, as well as the serpents, that inhabited forest and wilderness. If the people still complained, with all these tokens of his love, the Lord would continue to send judgments upon them, until they should appreciate his merciful care.

Because they had been shielded by the power of God, the Israelites did not realize the countless dangers by which they were continually surrounded. They had hardened their hearts in unbelief, and were unwilling to be guided and controlled by God; they dwelt upon imaginary evils, and continually distrusted the hand which had hitherto led them. Again and again the Lord had brought them into strait places to prove whether they would trust in him, after so many evidences of his care. But they failed to endure the test; and now, though the Heaven-sent manna lay fresh upon the ground every morning, they dared to accuse Moses of killing them with hunger. In their ingratitude and unbelief, they had anticipated death, and now the Lord withdrew his protecting hand, and permitted death to come upon them.

In every family of these murmurers were the dying and the dead. The hearts that had been filled with the fires of passion and bitter complaining were now chilled with horror at the frenzied cries of children and dearest friends. All had enough to do, and in deep anguish they ministered to their loved ones, knowing full well that at any moment they might need the same care themselves. Not a word of murmuring escaped their lips. When

compared with the present suffering, the difficulties and trials which before had seemed so great were not worthy of a thought. Confusion and terror reigned in every tent. In the silence of the night, a piercing shriek would arouse the camp to find that their dream of the serpent's deadly sting was a fearful reality. Fathers, mothers, and children were alike attacked. In this terrible calamity, all felt that they must soon perish; for every stone and shrub concealed the venomous reptiles, which, disturbed by foot or hand, gave back the sting of death.

The people were now ready to humble themselves before God. They went to Moses, of whom they had complained so unjustly, and entreated his forgiveness, and his intercession in their behalf. That long-suffering man of God did not for a moment delay to comply with their request. And the Lord hearkened to the prayer of his servant, and commanded him,

"Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."

In obedience to the word of God, Moses made a serpent of brass resembling the creatures by which the people had been bitten, and set it upon a high pole in the midst of the camp. Then the joyful news was sounded throughout the encampment, that all who had been bitten might look upon the brazen serpent and be healed.

Here the Israelites were required to do something for themselves. They must look upon the brazen serpent, if they would live. Many had already died from the sting of the venomous reptiles, and when Moses raised the serpent upon the pole, some would not believe that merely looking upon that metallic image would heal them, and they perished. Yet many had faith in the provision which God had made. Fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters were anxiously engaged in helping their suffering, dying friends to fix their languid eyes upon the serpent. If they could only once look while faint and

dying, they revived, and were entirely freed from the effects of their poisonous wounds.

There was no power in the serpent of brass to cause such a change in those who looked upon it. The healing virtue was derived from God alone. In his wisdom he chose this manner to display his power. It was the faith of the people in the provision made, which was acceptable to God. By this simple means they were made sensible that he had permitted these serpents to afflict them, because of their murmurings, and their lack of faith in him. They were also assured that while obeying God they had no reason to fear; for he would be their friend, and would preserve them from the dangers to which they were continually exposed.

The Hebrews, in their affliction, could not save themselves from the deadly venom of the serpents. God alone could heal sinful, rebellious Israel. Yet he did not see fit to pardon their transgression, without testing their repentance and faith. They must look, in order to live. The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel a lesson. Heretofore they had presented their offerings to God, and had felt that in thus doing they made ample atonement of their sins. They did not by faith rely upon the Redeemer to come, of whom their offerings were only the type. The Lord would now show them that their sacrifices, in themselves, had no more power nor virtue than the serpent of brass, but were, like that, to lead their minds to Christ, the great Sin-Offering. So, also, their offerings were to be brought with subdued wills and penitent hearts, they having faith in the atoning sacrifice of God's dear Son.

None were compelled to look upon the brazen serpent. All could look and live, or distrust the simple provision God had made, refuse to look, and die. The people of God may not always see the reason for his requirements, and may not be able to understand his dealings with them; yet it is not their part to question and doubt his purposes. The lifelong recipients of his favor,

they should yield him ready and willing obedience. All his commands are founded in infinite love and wisdom; and though we may not fully understand his purpose here, yet we shall know hereafter.

As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so the Son of God was lifted up on the cross, that sinners from the ends of the earth might look and live. Multitudes are still suffering from the deadly sting of that old serpent, the devil. The effects of sin can be removed only by the provision which God has made. Here, alone, hope and salvation can be found. As the Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the brazen serpent, so sinners can look to Christ and live. Unlike that inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in himself, to heal the suffering, repenting, bleeding sinner.

Many are unwilling to accept of Christ until the whole mystery of the plan of salvation shall be made plain to them. They refuse the look of faith, although they see that thousands have looked, and have felt the efficacy of looking to the cross of Christ. Many wander in the mazes of blind philosophy, in search of reasons and evidence which they will never find, while they reject the evidence which God has been pleased to give. They refuse to walk in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, until the reason of its shining shall be explained. All who persist in this course will fail to come to a knowledge of the truth. The last occasion for doubt will never be removed. God will give sufficient evidence on which to base faith, and if this is not accepted, the mind will be left in the darkness of doubt and unbelief.

If those who had been bitten by the serpents had stopped to doubt and question before they would consent to look, death would have been the result. Our first duty is to look and live. We should seek now to gather evidence upon which to base our faith. There is an eternity before us, in which to study the mysteries of redemption.

Christ, in his words to Nicodemus, says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent

in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." In both these cases the object was to save the perishing. As the sting of the serpent was certain death, unless the sufferer would avail himself of the remedy provided; so, also, is sin deadly in its effects, unless men look unto Christ, and believe in the merits of his blood. Men of gray hairs, men in the prime of life, youth and children, were to be saved in the same way,--look, and live. The remedy was perfect, when, according to God's direction, they looked upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived, because they believed the word of God, and availed themselves of the provisions made. So, in the plan of salvation, not one who has come to Christ in penitence and faith has ever been turned away.

The people of Israel well knew that in that semblance of a serpent was no healing virtue. They knew that it was only a symbol of the Son of God, and that faith in the divine word, and immediate action, would be the power of salvation to them. So we are to be saved, not by any act which we can perform of ourselves, but by simple obedience,--by doing just as God has said. Our salvation rests upon the ample atonement made by our Saviour, and the veracity of God's word. We must believe that Jesus died to redeem sinners like ourselves, and that God means what he says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Through the merits of Christ we are accepted. Assurance in this case honors the faithfulness of God, while doubt casts discredit upon the Most High.

November 4, 1880

Nearing the Promised Land

After passing to the south of the land of Edom, the Israelites turned northward, and again set their faces toward the promised land. Their route now lay over a vast, elevated plain, where the air was pure and cool, and the breezes swept refreshingly around them. It was a pleasant change from the hot, scorched valley and the dreary deserts through which they had been traveling, and they pressed forward, buoyant and hopeful. Having crossed the brook Zered, they pressed to the east of the land of Moab; for the Moabites and the Ammonites being descendants of Lot, the Lord had commanded his people not to molest them in any way.

Still pushing northward, the hosts of Israel soon reached the country of the Amorites. This strong and warlike people originally occupied the southern part of the land of Canaan; but increasing in numbers, and being attracted by the rich lands east of the Jordan, they crossed the river, made war upon the Moabites, and gained possession of a portion of their territory. Here they had settled, holding undisputed sway over all the land, from the Arnon as far north as the Jabbok. It was necessary to pass through this territory in order to reach the Jordan, and Moses sent a friendly message to Sihon, the Amorite king, at his capital:

"Let me pass through thy land; I will go along by the highway, I will neither turn to the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, and I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet, until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God giveth us."

The answer was a decided refusal; and all the hosts of the Amorites were

marshaled to oppose the progress of the invaders. This formidable army struck terror to the hearts of the Hebrews, who were poorly prepared for an encounter with well-armed and well-disciplined forces. Moses was filled with anxiety. He knew that so far as skill in warfare was concerned, their enemies had every advantage. To all human appearance, a speedy end would be made of Israel. Moses had implicit faith in God, but he had little confidence in the people. He knew that God would be true to his covenant with Israel, that his power would be sufficient to carry them through every danger; but he had been so many times disappointed in the people,--they had so often failed in their allegiance to God, and had so often been filled with rage against himself,--that he now had little hope of seeing them pass safely this trying ordeal. Would they, he anxiously questioned, by unbelief and rebellion separate from God, as they had so often done before, and thus bring upon themselves disaster and defeat? He saw them hopeful because of their recent victory, but he could not discern a deeper humility before God, a firmer reliance upon his mighty arm, and a more lofty courage. He knew that obedience to the divine command would make all the difference between success and failure, triumph and defeat. If God's power were withdrawn, well might sinful Israel fear for themselves and for their children, in the day of peril and conflict.

Moses kept his eye fixed upon the cloudy pillar that enshrined the Son of God, and strengthened his soul with courage as he was assured that the Guiding Hand was with them still. He encouraged the people with the thought that the token of God's presence was still vouchsafed to them, and sought to inspire their hearts, by words of faith and holy cheer: This mighty God, who has so many times delivered his people Israel, is our God still. If we are obedient to his voice, he will be our guide, and will deliver us in every emergency. Therefore obey the divine command with ready mind and cheerful heart, and God will open our passage through the land where he has bidden us to go. The trials and hindrances which you now fear will be removed as you march forward with firm and resolute step in the path where

God leads the way.

Moses not only encouraged the people to trust in God, but to do all that human power could do in preparing for war. Their enemies were violent and blood-thirsty, ready and eager for the excitement of conflict, and confident that with their superior skill and numbers they would wipe out the unprepared Israelites from the land. But the mandate had come from the Possessor of all lands, in view of the refusal of these nations to let Israel pass through their borders, "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon. Behold, I have given unto thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish, because of thee."

These nations on the borders of Canaan God would have spared, had they not stood in defiance of his word, to oppose the progress of Israel. The Lord had shown himself to be long-suffering, of great kindness, and tender pity, even to these idolatrous nations. Abraham was shown in vision that his seed, the children of Israel, after his death should be strangers in a strange land, and should be afflicted four hundred years. But the Lord gave him the promise, "In the fourth generation, shall they come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." At the appointed time, the descendants of Abraham were to receive the land of Canaan for a possession, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

Although the Amorites were an idolatrous people, violent and cruel, God spared them four hundred years to give them unmistakable evidence that he was the only true and living God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. All his wonders in bringing Israel from Egypt, the judgments visited upon the Egyptians because they refused to let his people go, his mighty miracle in opening a passage through the Red Sea, and destroying Pharaoh's host; his

wonderful works in the wilderness, the bread sent down from Heaven, the pure water brought from the rock, the punishment of the rebellious in Israel,-with all these facts those idolatrous nations were familiar. Sufficient evidence was given; they might have known the truth, had they been willing to turn from their idolatry and licentiousness to serve the living and true God. But none were to be compelled to believe, against their will. They were free moral agents, and must decide for themselves their future destiny.

Pharaoh once proudly inquired, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" He learned by his own experience that it was He that hath power to create or to destroy. So the light had been given in the revelation of God's power to those fierce idolatrous nations, that they might know the true and living God. That light had been spurned, rejected; they had turned away from the true God to serve and worship idols, and their cup of iniquity was well nigh full.

When the Lord brought his people, after their long wandering in the wilderness, a second time to the borders of the promised land, additional evidence of his power was granted to those heathen nations. They could see that God was with Israel in the victory gained over king Arad and the Canaanites. They had still another evidence, in the miracle wrought to save those who were perishing from the deadly sting of the serpents. Although the Israelites had been harshly refused a passage through the land of Edom, thus being compelled to take the long and difficult route by the Red Sea, yet in all their journeyings and encampments, past the land of Edom, of Moab, and Ammon, they had shown no hostility; they had done no injury to the people or their possessions. On reaching the border of the Amorites, Israel had asked permission only to travel directly through the country, promising to observe the same rules which had governed their intercourse with other nations. When the Amorite king refused this courteous solicitation, and defiantly gathered his hosts for battle, their cup of iniquity was full. God would now exercise his power for their destruction, even as he had fought

against Pharaoh and his hosts.

Again the great Commander of nations had bidden his people "Go forward." In obedience to the divine command they immediately crossed the river Arnon, and advanced upon the foe. An engagement took place, in which the armies of Israel were victorious; and following up the advantage gained, they were soon in full possession of the country of the Amorites.

It was the captain of the Lord's host who vanquished the enemies of his people. He would have done the same, thirty-eight years before, had Israel believed and trusted in him. They might have gained full possession of the land then, as they were obtaining it now. Here the Lord again proved to his people that he alone was their helper; for no other power could have delivered them in this emergency.

November 11, 1880

A Glorious Victory

Filled with hope and courage by their conquest of the Amorites, the armed hosts of Israel eagerly pressed forward, and, still journeying northward, they soon reached a country which might well test their courage and their faith in God. Before them lay the powerful and populous kingdom of Bashan, crowded with great stone cities, that to this day excite the wonder of the world, sixty walled cities, and unwalled towns without number, being contained in an area not much longer than an ordinary English county. The houses were built of huge black stones, hard as iron, and even more enduring, of such stupendous size that no human force which could have been brought against them in that country would have been sufficient to batter them down. It was a country filled with wild caverns, lofty precipices, yawning gulfs, and rocky strongholds.

The inhabitants of this land, descendants from a race of giants, were themselves of marvelous size and strength, and so distinguished for violence and cruelty as to be the terror of all surrounding nations; while Og, the king of the country, was remarkable for size and prowess, even among that giant race.

In this hour of peril, Moses could have confidence only in God. He alone could subdue their enemies. But the aged leader trembled for Israel. How would they conduct themselves? He remembered how they had been terrified at the mere description of the giants by the men who spied out the land of Canaan thirty-eight years before. He called to mind how often Israel had failed, and how God had given them up to the power of their enemies. What a horror of disaster and defeat must be the result, should they distrust God now!

But the cloudy pillar moved steadily forward, and following its guidance the Hebrew hosts advanced, past cities and towns of these rock houses, to Edrei, where the giant king, with all his forces, awaited their approach. Og had skillfully chosen the place of battle. The city of Edrei was situated upon the border of a table-land rising abruptly from the plain, and covered with jagged, volcanic rocks. It could be approached only by narrow pathways, steep, and difficult of ascent. In case of defeat, his forces could find safe retreat in that vast labyrinth of rocks, where strangers, attempting to follow them, would be lost.

Confident of success, the king came forth with an immense army upon the open plain; while from table-land above, which, as far as the eye could reach, was like a natural fortress, were heard shouts of defiance, and along its whole extent were seen the glittering spears of unnumbered thousands, eager for the fray. When the armies of Israel beheld the lofty form of that giant of giants towering above the soldiers of his army; when they saw the mighty hosts which surrounded him, and the seemingly impregnable fortress, behind which unseen thousands were entrenched; and then looked upon their own aged leader, his head whitened with the snows of a hundred and twenty years; when they considered their comparatively unarmed and defenseless condition,--the hearts of many in Israel quaked with fear.

But Moses was calm and firm: he was following the directions of a higher general, and however much he might distrust the armies of Israel, the God of Israel, never. The Lord had said to Moses, "Fear him not; for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon."

The calm faith and intrepid bearing of Moses, and his words of hope and courage, inspired the hearts of Israel with confidence in God. They felt that

from him alone could they expect deliverance. They trusted all to his omnipotent arm, and they were not disappointed.

Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, nor all combined, could stand before the Captain of the Lord's host. The Lord led the army; the Lord discomfited the enemy; the Lord conquered in behalf of Israel. That entire force, with Og, their king, were destroyed; and the Israelites soon took possession of the whole country. Thus was blotted from the earth that strange and powerful people, who had given themselves up to iniquity and abominable idolatry.

The report brought back by the spies who were sent to view the land of Canaan, was in many respects correct. The cities were walled and very great, and the sons of the giants who dwelt therein were a powerful race, in comparison with whom the spies were like mere pygmies. It was on hearing this report that the people, instead of trusting in God to overthrow their enemies, rebelled against him, and declared the conquest of Canaan an utter impossibility, in their wild frenzy of passion and unbelief, even appointing a captain to lead them back to Egypt, and attempting to put to death the only two of their number who still possessed faith and courage. It was then that the judgment had been pronounced against Israel, that all above twenty years of age should die before reaching the promised land. Ere the Hebrews were led the second time to the borders of Canaan, this judgment had been fulfilled. The bodies of all that rebel host were buried in the wilderness.

In their contests with Og and Sihon, the people of God were brought to the same test beneath which they had so signally failed nearly forty years before. But the trial was now far more severe than when God first commanded them to go forward and their cowardly hearts refused to obey. There was then no army to oppose their progress or to strike terror to their souls. The difficulties which were then to be encountered in the discharge of duty were not nearly so great as now. The clouds that then darkened the path

of faith became more dense and forbidding while they were halting and doubting and standing still, refusing to go forward when commanded to do so in the name of the Lord. When the word came again to Israel, Go forward, they must, if they would possess Canaan, advance against violent, skillful, and well-equipped armies.

They now remembered how once before, when they had marched out to battle, they had been routed, and thousands slain. But they had then gone in direct opposition to the command of God. When for their unbelief he had doomed them to perish in the wilderness, they were seized with horror and remorse; and, still as rebellious as ever, they determined to gain by their own power what God had declared they should not possess. They went out without Moses, God's appointed leader, without the cloudy pillar, the symbol of the divine presence, and without the ark. What marvel that they were utterly defeated!

But now, as they go forth to battle, Moses is with them, strengthening their hearts with words of hope and faith; the Son of God enshrined in the cloudy pillar, leads the way; and in their midst, accompanied by priests and Levites, is borne the sacred ark. Well may they be of good courage; they are following the command of Heaven, Go forward; and victory, complete and glorious, is theirs.

All the experience of Israel has a lesson for us, who are living in the last hours of time. We should carefully consider their course of action and the dealings of God with them, and then imitate their virtues, while we shun those acts which brought upon them his displeasure. This mighty God of Israel is our God. In him we may trust, and if we obey his requirements he will work for us in as signal a manner as he did for his ancient people. It should be the most earnest study and continual effort of modern Israel to bring themselves into close and intimate relationship with God. Then with the mind quickened, the perceptions sharpened, they will discern his infinite

power and overruling providence in all his dealings with man, and in all his created works.

Unseen by human eyes, God's power is constantly exercised for our good. When scientists seek to separate the works of nature from the immediate and constant manifestation of divine power, they are at sea without a compass. Every soul who cherishes the light which God has given will recognize him foremost in all his interest and in all his business. Skeptics may multiply doubts, scoffers may rail; but the true Christian calmly reposes in God, being assured that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all who diligently seek him.

Every one who seeks to follow the path of duty will at times be assailed by doubt and unbelief. The way will sometimes be so barred by obstacles, apparently insurmountable, as to dishearten those who will yield to discouragement; but God is saying to such, Go forward. Do your duty at any cost to yourselves. The sea of trouble which threatens to overwhelm you will open as you advance, revealing a safe path for your feet. The trials and difficulties which seem so formidable, which fill your soul with dread, will vanish as you move boldly forward in the path of obedience, humbly trusting in God.

There are daily, important duties for every soul; not one is excused. The present duty must be done now; for the time is short, and opportunities once lost will never return. There is danger in one moment of hesitancy in face of difficulties. God will be a light to the meek, the humble, the thankful and obedient; but he is a cloud of darkness to the selfish, the proud, the impatient, and the murmuring ones. Sooner or later, light will shine forth upon the pathway of those who hold themselves ready to go when and where Christ leads the way.

Every step in life should be that of faith, of love of consecration! We

should walk in the light, as Jesus is in the light. Christ offers to walk with us through all the journey of life, and cheer our way by his presence. If we do not avail ourselves of his companionship, it is our own fault, our own loss. If we grope in darkness, it is because we refuse the presence of the only one who can make our way bright and joyful. We need to cultivate that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. Our greatest danger is in harboring unbelief, and neglecting to cherish the precious love of Jesus.

November 18, 1880

Balaam Called to Curse Israel

With joyful hearts, and renewed faith in God, the victorious armies of Israel returned from Bashan. By their late successes they had not only come in possession of rich territories, but had gained a most cheering assurance for the future. They felt that the prospering hand of God was indeed with them.

They were now on the very borders of Canaan, only the river Jordan separating them from the promised land. To the west, just across the river, lay a great plain, covered with verdure, watered with streams from copious fountains, and abounding in all the signs of beauty and fertility. They were eager to enter at once upon their inheritance. Their conquest of the Amorites and the giant hosts of Bashan had made them confident of easy success on the other side. Their anticipations were excited to a feverish height. They kept their eyes fixed with eager expectation upon the cloudy pillar, impatient to see it move and lead them on. As yet, however, it gave no signs of moving, but hovered above the tops of the mountains overshadowing the tabernacle.

The period of waiting was employed by Moses in preparing the people for the permanent occupation of Canaan. In this work the great leader's time and attention were fully occupied; but to the people this period of suspense and expectation was most trying, and ere many weeks had elapsed, their history was marred by the most frightful departures from virtue and integrity.

The high table-land which the children of Israel had long been traversing, suddenly subsides near the Jordan, leaving a plain several miles in width, and extending some distance along its bank. This was called the vale of Shittim, because of the great number of shittim, or acacia trees which

flourished there, and by their shade formed an agreeable retreat. This sheltered valley had the genial climate of the tropics, but it was unfavorable to mental or physical activity, as the Israelites proved. Here many of the older people were reminded of their early home by the Nile; for just across the river flourished palm-trees in such abundance that the city of Jericho, on that plain, was called the city of palm-trees.

But agreeable as were their physical surroundings, the Israelites were here to encounter an evil more deadly than mighty hosts of armed men or the wild beasts of the wilderness. That country, so rich in natural advantages, had been defiled by the inhabitants. On every side were places noted for idolatry and licentiousness, the very names being suggestive of the vileness and corruption of the people. The chief god of this region was Baal, and on the heights above the vale of Shittim was the city of Beth-peor, where the most degrading and iniquitous scenes were enacted by men and women as a part of the worship of their gods.

These surroundings exerted a polluting influence upon the Israelites. Their minds became familiarized with the vile thoughts constantly suggested; their life of ease and inaction produced its demoralizing effect upon them; and gradually and almost unconsciously to themselves, they were departing from God, and coming into a condition where they would fall an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

The Moabites had not been molested by Israel, yet they had watched with keen and jealous interest all that had transpired in the surrounding countries. They saw that the warlike Amorites had been conquered, and the powerful and well armed inhabitants of Bashan had yielded, before the mysterious Power enshrined in the cloudy pillar. An unseen influence was at work for the Hebrews, and this was accredited to the God of Israel; for all well knew that, so far as human skill and strength was concerned, it was on the side of the enemies of the Hebrews. It was generally believed in that

country that prophets and sorcerers had power to curse persons and places, so as to frustrate their counsels, enervate their strength, and fill them with fear, terror, and dismay. The Moabites now determined, as did Pharaoh, to enlist the power of sorcery to counteract the work of God; they would have the Israelites cursed.

In this purpose the people of Moab were joined by the Midianites, to whom they were closely united by the ties of nationality and religion. There was, living near the Euphrates, a man named Balaam, who was reported to possess supernatural powers, and whose fame had reached to the land of Moab. It was determined to call him to their aid in this emergency. Accordingly, messengers "of the elders of Moab and of the elders of Midian" were dispatched to Balaam, with valuable gifts to secure his divinations and enchantments against Israel. In this movement, Balak, the king of Moab, had taken the lead, having called in the aid of the Midianites, with the alarming message, "Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.

The ambassadors at once set out on their long journey over the mountains and across the deserts, to Mesopotamia; and having found Balaam, they delivered to him the message of their king:

"Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

Balaam was once a good man, and a prophet of God; but he had apostatized, and given himself up to covetousness, so that he loved the wages of iniquity. He still professed to be a servant of the Most High, though

pursuing a course to gain the favor of the enemies of the Lord for the sake of the rewards that he received from them.

When the messengers announced their errand, Balaam well knew that it was his duty to send them back with a positive refusal. But like many at the present day, he ventured to dally with the tempter, invite his presence, and give room for his temptations. He urged the messengers to tarry with him that night, declaring that he could give no decided answer, till he had asked counsel of the Lord.

Balaam was not ignorant of God's work in behalf of Israel. He knew how Jehovah had displayed his power and majesty in bringing his people from the house of bondage. The destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, the mighty manifestations at Sinai, the countless miracles in the wilderness, and the recent triumphs over Og and Sihon,--these thrilling events had spread far and wide, and with them all Balaam was familiar. He could see how terrible a thing it was for finite man to war against the infinite God. He saw the destruction of those who set themselves in defiance of Omnipotence. Balaam knew that his curse could not harm Israel. God was on their side; and so long as they were true to him, no adverse power of earth or hell could prevail against them.

But the ambassadors from the Moabites had expressed great confidence in him as one who possessed mysterious power to bring destruction upon armies or nations; and his pride was flattered by their words,--"I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." The bribe of costly gifts and prospective exaltation excited his covetousness. He greedily accepted the offered treasures, and then, while professing implicit obedience to the divine will, he labored to have his course in agreement with the purposes of Balak.

Here is a solemn warning for the people of God today, to allow no

unchristian trait to live in their hearts. A sin which is fostered becomes habitual; and, strengthened by repetition, it soon exerts a controlling influence, bringing into subjection all the nobler powers. Balaam loved the reward of unrighteousness. The sin of covetousness, which God ranks with idolatry, he did not resist and overcome. Satan obtained entire control of him through this one fault, which deteriorated his character, and made him a time-server. He called God his master; but he did not serve him; he did not work the works of God.

There are men professing godliness today who manifest no more true love for God than did Balaam. It is solemn mockery to profess a faith which does not exert a controlling power over our lives. Christ declared to his followers that if they made it the great object of life to lay up treasures on earth, they could not be his disciples. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The man whose affections are centered upon God will not be greedy for earthly treasure.

Satan is ever presenting worldly gain and worldly honor to entice men from the service of God. He tells them it is their over-conscientiousness that withholds them from prosperity. Deceived by his temptations, they venture out of the path of strict integrity. One step in the wrong direction makes the next step easier, and they become more and more presumptuous. They will do and dare most terrible things, when once they have given themselves to the control of avarice and a desire for power. If men would only seek for those things which are of priceless value,--immortality of fame and eternal riches,--they would give no place to the temptations of Satan.

The life of Paul was a brilliant success. The world, who knew not Christ and the power of his resurrection, looked upon Paul as one who sacrificed fame and honor and greatness for a life of ignominy, suffering and disappointment. But while his contemporaries who gave themselves to the service of the world and to the persecution of the pure and good, have long

since been forgotten, the name of the great apostle will never perish. It is immortalized in the records above, and has in every generation been enshrined in the hearts of those who love God.

In contrast to the life of Paul, how contemptible appears the course of Balaam, greedily seeking wealth and honor from those who hated the God of Heaven, and willing to purchase these by conformity to a corrupt people. Who can look upon his course without loathing? Had he been true to God, to justice and principle, he would have answered the messengers of Balak: "I am in principle connected with this people whom you wish to curse. Their God is my God. He is above all gods; there is none like him in all the earth. His majesty and power fill me with awe and reverential fear. Leave the service of senseless idols, and leave with them your iniquities, and serve the Lord Jehovah, the only true and living God."

But that cowardly, avaricious spirit, which had been so long fostered, now ruled the man with tyrannical power. He opened wide the door for Satan to take the citadel of the heart when he greedily received the bribe and invited the messengers to remain. The man had become spiritually blind. As it is too often at the present day, the glitter and tinsel of this world had eclipsed the glory of eternal things.

In the night season the angel of God came to Balaam, and said, "What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth. Come now, curse me them: peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go unto them; thou shalt not curse this people; for they are blessed."

The next morning, Balaam reluctantly dismissed the messengers. But he did not candidly repeat the words which God had spoken; and he did not

warn the Moabites that all their efforts against Israel would result in their own destruction. Balaam was displeased that all his bright visions of honor and promotion had been suddenly destroyed. Like a disappointed child, he petulantly exclaimed, "Get you unto your own land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."

November 25, 1880

Balaam's Encounter With the Angel

When the messengers of Balak returned to Moab, after their first visit to Mesopotamia, they reported to their king the prophet's refusal to accompany them, but did not intimate that God had forbidden him. Supposing that Balaam desired more valuable gifts and greater exaltation, Balak and his counselors determined to make the inducements so great that nothing could hinder his compliance with their request. They now sent princes more in number and more honorable than the first, with promises of higher honors, and with authority to concede to any terms which Balaam might demand.

The king of Moab was deeply in earnest, and his urgent message to the prophet was, "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people."

A second time, Balaam was tested and tried. In response to the solicitations of the ambassadors he professed great conscientiousness and integrity, assuring them that no amount of gold and silver could induce him to act contrary to the will of God. This speech reveals the hypocrisy of the man; for the will of God had already been definitely and positively made known to him. His heart was longing to comply with the king's request, and he was seeking some excuse to gratify his desire for riches and honor.

The heart of Balaam was with the enemies of God, rather than with Israel. Had he sincerely wished to do the will of God, he would have utterly refused the rewards of Balak, and would have dismissed the messengers without delay. Thus he might have gained a victory over those strong avaricious propensities which would prove his ruin unless overcome. The sin

of covetousness is fearfully denounced in the word of God. "The wicked boasteth in his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." Worldliness, covetousness, and avarice are vices which are sure to deteriorate the entire man. They are the fruits of selfishness and sin, and grossly dishonor God.

Balaam urged the messengers to tarry, that he might further inquire of God; as though the Infinite One were a man, to be persuaded. In the night season, the Lord appeared unto Balaam and said, "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." The Lord gave Balaam his own way, because he was determined to have it. He did not desire to do the will of God, but chose his own course, and then endeavored to secure the sanction of the Lord.

The Moabites were a degraded, idolatrous people, yet they manifested sincerity and earnestness in their persistent efforts to secure the power of divination against Israel. According to the light which they had received, their guilt was not so great in the sight of Heaven as was that of Balaam. As he professed to be God's prophet, all he should say would be supposed to come from the Lord Jehovah. Hence he was not to be permitted to speak as he chose, but must deliver the message which God should give him. The Lord saw in this pretentious prophet, a man whose heart was defiled with deception and hypocrisy, and dealt with him according to his own perverse and stubborn ways.

This instance is placed on record for the benefit of all succeeding generations. It is dangerous to trifle with God, in order to follow a stubborn, determined will. There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a course similar to that of Balaam. They follow their own ways, and take counsel of their own hearts, under a pretense of being guided and controlled by the Spirit of God. And the prayers of these willfully deceived ones are answered in accordance with the spirit that prompts them. For wise purposes

the Lord often permits them to have their own way. They walk in a thick mist,--the atmosphere which Satan breathes about the soul.

Dangers beset the path of every man who, forsaking the only true Guide, tries by the light of his own wisdom to find a safe way through the dangers and difficulties of this world. Such a man places himself in a situation far more perilous than that of the traveler climbing along the slippery face of a cliff, where, if he lose his balance for a moment, he will fall and be dashed in pieces. David describes the peril of those who do not walk with God, but for a time seem to be prosperous in an evil way: "Thou didst set them in slippery places, Thou castest them down to destruction in a moment. They are utterly consumed with terror."

The careless, presumptuous, and self-confident press recklessly on in forbidden paths, really thinking that they may depart from strict integrity for the time being, for the sake of some worldly advantage, and that after this desire of the depraved heart is gained, they can change their course when they please. Such are walking upon slippery places. It is seldom that they recover their foothold. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; but those who choose to invite temptation, who will venture upon forbidden ground to secure some selfish advantage, will become weak in moral power; and the temptation to evil not being discerned, they will see in it only good, and thus they are left to wander farther and farther from God.

We are living in the last days. Evil prevails on every hand. The removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the failure to practice one good resolution, the cherishing of one evil habit, one neglect of the high claims of duty, breaks down the defenses of the soul, and opens the way for Satan to come in and lead us astray at pleasure. The only safe course is to let our prayers go forth daily from sincere hearts, as did David, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, O God, that my foot steps slip not."

Balaam had received permission to go with the messengers from Moab, if they came in the morning to call him. But annoyed at his delay, and expecting another refusal, they set out on their homeward journey without further consultation with him. He was now freed from their solicitations, and every excuse for complying with the request of Balak had been removed. He could not, however, bring himself to relinquish the honors upon which his heart was set; and since the Lord had not a second time forbidden him to go, he determined to set out at once, and, if possible, overtake the ambassadors.

Accordingly, taking the beast on which he was accustomed to ride, and accompanied by his servants, Balaam began his journey. He feared that even now the divine permission might be withdrawn, and he pressed eagerly forward, hurried, nervous, and impatient, lest he should by some means fail to gain the coveted reward. How little did he in character and appearance resemble a man qualified to execute a divine commission!

God's anger was kindled against Balaam for his Heaven-daring folly, and "an angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him." The animal, seeing the divine messenger, who was, however, invisible to the master, turned aside from the highway into a field. With cruel blows, Balaam brought the beast back into the path; but again, in a narrow place hemmed in by walls, the angel appeared, and the animal, trying to avoid the menacing figure, crushed the rider's foot against the wall.

Had Balaam paused to consider, he would have had sufficient cause to question whether he was not moving contrary to God's will. But he was blinded to the heavenly interposition, and knew not that God was obstructing his path. The man became exasperated, and beating his animal in a most unmerciful manner, forced it to proceed.

Again, in a place where there was no passing, the angel appeared, as before, in an offensive attitude; and the poor beast, trembling with terror,

made a full stop, and fell to the earth under its rider. Balaam lost all self-control, and his mad rage rose to an extreme height. The dumb beast was now gifted with speech, and remonstrated with its phrenzied master for his cruel treatment. "What have I done to thee, that thou shouldst beat me these three times?"

Had Balaam been in possession of his reason, he would have been filled with awe, and would have realized that a supernatural power was barring his way. But ungovernable rage had dethroned reason, and this wonderful miracle was unnoticed. He answered this beast as he would have addressed an intelligent being,--"Because thou hast mocked me, I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." Here was a professed magician, on his way to pronounce a curse upon a whole people with the intent to paralyze their strength, while he had not power even to slay the humble beast upon which he rode!

The eyes of Balaam were now opened, and he beheld the angel of God standing with drawn sword ready to slay him. He was more terrified than the poor beast had been, and "he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." The angel said unto him, "Wherefore hast thou smitten thy beast these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. Thy beast saw me, and turned from me these three times; unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive."

Here is a lesson to all who have reasoning powers, that harsh treatment, even to the brutes, is offensive to God. Those who profess to love God do not always consider that abuse to animals, or suffering brought upon them by neglect, is a sin. The fruits of divine grace will be as truly revealed in men by the manner in which they treat their beasts, as by their service in the house of God. Those who allow themselves to become impatient or enraged with their animals are not Christians. A man who is harsh, severe and domineering

toward the lower animals, because he has them in his power, is both a coward and a tyrant. And he will, if opportunity offers, manifest the same cruel, overbearing spirit toward his wife and children.

God, who created man, made the animals, also. They were to minister to man's comfort and happiness, to serve him, and to be controlled by him. But this power was not to be used to cause pain by harsh punishment or cruel exaction. Yet some are as reckless and unfeeling toward their faithful animals as though the poor brutes had not flesh and nerve that can quiver with pain.

Many do not think that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb beasts cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were the eyes of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness to testify against them in the courts above. A record goes up to Heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced against men who make themselves demons by their dealings with God's creatures.

If animals could speak, what deeds of horror would be revealed,--what tales of suffering, because of the perversity of man's temper! How often those creatures of God's care suffer pain, endure hunger and thirst, because they cannot make known their wants. And how often is it determined by the mercy or the caprice of man, whether they receive attention and kindness, or neglect and abuse. Punishment given in passion to an animal is frequently excessive, and is then absolute cruelty. Animals have a kind of dignity and self-respect, akin to that possessed by human beings. If abused, under the influence of blind passion, their spirits will be crushed, and they will become nervous, irritable, and ungovernable.

There were beasts in Eden, and there will be beasts in the earth made new. Unless the men who have indulged in cruelty toward God's creatures

here, overcome that disposition and become like Jesus, kind and merciful, they will never share in the inheritance of the righteous. They would, if there, exercise the same spirit that had not been overcome here. All disposition to cause pain to our fellow-men or to the brute creation is Satanic. Balaam evinced the spirit which he possessed, in his course toward his beast.

When he beheld the messengers of God, Balaam exclaimed in terror, "I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again." For wise purpose, the Lord suffered Balaam to proceed on his journey, but gave him clearly to understand that his words should be controlled by divine power. God would give evidence to Moab that the Hebrews were under the guardianship of Heaven; and this could not be done in a more effectual manner than by showing them that a man of Balaam's covetous disposition could not, for any promise of promotion or reward, pronounce a curse against Israel.

There are many in the world today whose character is represented by that of Balaam. They have a correct knowledge of most of the doctrines of religion, but with these are mingled superstitions and heresies. Satan has a knowledge of the truth, and so do many who are his servants. Excellent words may proceed from their lips; they may claim to possess great faith, and to enjoy much of the divine blessing; but their hearts are destitute of the grace of God. They are not followers of Christ, and do not those things that please him. The only safety for any, at the present day as well as in ancient times, is to seek diligently to know the will of God, and then be ready to obey that will.

Those who profess to be servants of the living God, frequently unite themselves with ungodly men, expecting to be promoted to honor, and to be rewarded with riches; and many sacrifice conscience, judgment, character, and the favor of God, to form an alliance with worldlings. Such persons call God their Master, but they refuse to keep his commandments. They mistake

gain for godliness, and unless they turn from their evil ways, they must perish with the workers of iniquity.

December 2, 1880

Balaam Not Permitted To Curse Israel

When he was informed of the approach of Balaam, the king of Moab went out with a large retinue to the borders of his kingdom, to welcome the prophet, and show him special honor. After the first salutations had been exchanged, the monarch expressed his astonishment at Balaam's delay, in view of the great riches and honor awaiting him. The answer was:

"Lo, I am come unto thee; have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." Balaam greatly regretted this restriction; he feared that his purpose could not be carried out, because the Lord's controlling power was upon him.

With great display, Balak now escorted his guest to the capital, where a public entertainment was to take place, and special offerings were to be made to secure the favor of their gods. A sumptuous feast had been prepared, and all that the wealth and power of Moab could do, had been done to render their idolatrous services grand and imposing, with the express object of impressing the prophet with the superiority of their religion over any other. Here this professed servant of the living God was seated, with a company of idolaters, at a feast given in honor of their deities. This wicked prophet was indeed selling himself for reward.

In this case we have an illustration of the great blindness which will come upon the minds of those who sacrifice their eternal interests to the love of gain. Balaam's character had been tested and tried, and was found to be dross. The fine gold of principle and steadfast integrity was gone, and the base metal alone appeared.

If men who profess to be children of God, ignominiously yield to the tempter; if they seek the honor which the world proffers them, rather than the honor which comes from above, their boasted power and wisdom will prove to be but weakness and folly. They will reap a harvest of agony and despair. But if those who bear the name of God's servants yield obedience to his will, and boldly confront the powers of darkness, having no harmony or union with the Lord's avowed enemies, although opposition may come fierce and strong; although great financial loss may be sustained; they, like the faithful and true prophets of old, will triumph finally.

The feast ended, the king with all his honorable men escorted Balaam to the high-places of Baal, where he could overlook the immense assemblages of the Hebrews, scattered upon the plain of Shittim, and the table-land above. Behold the prophet as he stands upon the lofty height, looking down over the encampments of God's chosen people. How little do Israel know of what is transpiring so near them. How little do they know of the care of God, extended over them by day and by night. How dull are the perceptions of God's people! how slow are they, in every age, to comprehend his great mercy and love!

While all the powers of earth and hell are combined to destroy, God guards his children still. The Lord would not have his people in continual fear, hence he does not reveal to them a thousandth part of the efforts of their great adversary to allure and destroy. If they could discern the wonderful power of God constantly exerted in their behalf, would not their hearts be filled with gratitude for his love, and with awe at the thought of his majesty and wondrous power.

There, upon the mountain-top, are the emissaries of Satan, devising evil against God's people, who are all unconscious of their danger. But He that keepeth Israel does not slumber. The Lord's eye discerns every plot against his own, and no weapon formed against his church shall prosper. God

restrains the power of wicked men. He says to them, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." What a thought is this! what a theme for contemplation! and what a response of love and faithfulness should it call forth from every child of God!

Balaam had some knowledge of the sacrificial offerings of the Hebrews, and he thought that by surpassing them in costly gifts, he might secure the divine blessing, and insure the accomplishment of his sinful projects. Thus the sentiments of the idolatrous Moabites were gaining control of his mind. Surely, his wisdom had become foolishness; his spiritual vision was beclouded; he had brought blindness upon himself by yielding to the power of Satan.

Balaam ordered seven altars to be erected, and with a zeal worthy of a better cause, he offered upon each altar an ox and a ram. He then withdrew to an "high place," to meet with God, promising to make known to Balak whatever the Lord should reveal.

Balaam had been greatly terrified by his encounter with the angel, on the journey to Moab. But he now flattered himself that by his offerings the divine anger would be appeased; and his first words on entering the presence of God were an enumeration of these sacrifices on Baal's heights. But they had been offered without repentance, faith, obedience, or love, by hearts that were filled with enmity to God, his ways, and his purposes. He who is perfect in wisdom and holiness, cannot accept the fruit of hypocrisy, covetousness, and malice.

The same spirit which actuated Balaam, exists in the hearts of men today. How many claim to be Christians, while they are as destitute of true godliness as was the presumptuous prophet. They scorn the idea of repentance toward God because they have transgressed his law; they claim Christ as their Saviour, while their actions show that they have not his spirit.

They are at war with the sacred law of God, and seek to hide their wicked defection under the grace and mercy of Christ, whose mission to earth was to vindicate the claims of his Father's law. "I have," he asserts, "kept my Father's commandments."

It was the love of God toward the children of men that moved him to proclaim his law from Sinai. Because the understanding of men had become darkened by continual transgression, God, in his infinite mercy, condescended to bestow upon them the living oracles in all their original purity. To this law the carnal heart is opposed; and wicked men will, like Balaam, unite with the Lord's enemies in seeking to destroy his holy law, and to ruin the influence of those who vindicate it. But God has preserved his great rule of right, unchanged through all the ages. Like the fountain from which it springs, it is full of goodness, purity, and truth. Like the eye of God, it pierces through all the deceitfulness of sin, even to the "discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

That law flashes conviction on every side. Sinners desire to be freed from it, and many who call themselves Christians clothe their sinful, hypocritical souls in the garments of Christ's righteousness, and trample under their feet God's great rule of right. The worship offered to God by this class is similar to Balaam's offering in behalf of Balak. They are equally offensive to God.

Notwithstanding the sinfulness of Balaam's course, the Lord saw fit to convey through him a message to the king of Moab; and the words uttered were not for him alone, but were to be traced on the pages of history as an admonition and encouragement to Israel in all ages.

The impatient king, with the nobles and princes of Moab, stood beside the smoking sacrifice, while around them gathered expectant multitudes, eagerly watching for the return of the prophet. He came at last, and the

people waited breathlessly for the words that should paralyze forever that mysterious power working in favor of the hated Israelites. In solemn silence they listened for him to utter the curse. He spoke:

"Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the East, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Balaam confessed that he came with the purpose of cursing Israel, and strengthening the hearts of the people of Moab. But the power of the Lord rested upon him, and controlled his speech. The words he uttered were directly contrary to the sentiments of his heart. In the most solemn prophecy he pronounced blessings upon Israel, while his soul was filled with curses. God had given Balaam an evidence of divine power, in speaking through the dumb beast, and this wicked man was now an instrument in the hand of God as verily as the beast had been. He had no more power to control his words, and no more reason to take glory to himself, than had the animal upon which he rode.

Balaam was shown the peculiar favor with which God regarded Israel, and their distinctive character as his chosen people. He saw that the position to be maintained by the Israelites--a complete separation from all surrounding nations--represented the relation which all true Christians should sustain to the world. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." At the time these words were spoken, the Israelites had no permanent settlement, and their peculiar character, their manners and customs, were not familiar to Balaam. Yet how strikingly was this prophecy

fulfilled in the after-history of this people! Through all the years of their captivity in Babylon, through all the ages since they were dispersed among the nations, they have maintained the distinctive characteristics of their nationality and their religion.

Not only was Balaam shown the history of the Hebrew people as a nation, but he beheld the increase and prosperity of the true Israel of God to the close of time. He saw the especial favor of the Most High attending his faithful and obedient people. The great truths which Balaam uttered were forcibly impressed upon his own mind. He saw those who love and fear God, supported by his arm as they entered unfalteringly the dark valley of the shadow of death. And he saw them coming forth from their graves, crowned with glory, honor, and immortality.

He beheld the vast multitude of holy, happy ones, rejoicing in the unfading glories of the earth made new. Gazing upon the scene, the prophet exclaimed, "Who can count the dust of the righteous, or the number of the fourth part of Israel?" And as he sees the crowns of glory on every brow, the joy beaming from every countenance, and looks forward to that endless life of unalloyed felicity, he utters the solemn prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

What a testimony is this, borne before king and princes! The light of Heaven has been permitted to shine upon the prophet's mind, revealing to him the purposes of God toward his people. If Balaam has a disposition to accept the light which God has given, he will now make true his words; he will sever at once and forever all connection with Moab. He will no longer presume upon the mercy of God, but will return to him with deep repentance and humiliation. But Balaam did no such thing. He loved the wages of unrighteousness, and this he was determined to secure at any cost.

It is difficult for a man who once places his feet in a wrong path; to

retrace his steps. When men yield to temptation for lust of gain or for love of honor, and set themselves to injure or destroy God's people, they enter upon a path that ends only in destruction. They are doing the work of Satan. They are actuated by his spirit, and view matters from his stand-point. God may convict them of their wrong course, as he convicted Balaam; and if they would make a decided change, they might be redeemed; but they seldom do this. They will not humble their hearts and be converted. Such men are following the same course pursued by Balaam. They really desire their end to be like that of the righteous, but are unwilling to live the life of the righteous.

December 9, 1880

God's Purpose Toward Israel Unchanged

Balak had confidently expected a curse that would fall like a withering blight upon Israel, and the words of the prophet filled him with surprise and horror. He passionately exclaimed, "What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether."

Balaam endeavored to make a virtue of necessity, and professed to have spoken from a conscientious regard for the will of God the words which had been forced from his lips by divine power. His answer was, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?"

Balak could not even now relinquish his hope of securing the destruction of Israel. He decided that the imposing spectacle presented by the vast encampment of the Hebrews, arranged in perfect order--each tribe around its own standard, and the tabernacle of God among them--had so intimidated Balaam that he dared not practice his divinations against them. The king hoped that a change of place might effect something in his favor. He would take the prophet to some point where only a small part of the host of Israel might be seen; and if he could there get Balaam to curse them in detached parties, the whole camp might soon be devoted to destruction. In all this, Balak seems still to have had perfect confidence that Balaam's enchantments could paralyze the strength of Israel, and bring confusion and defeat upon their armies.

Balaam was now conducted to the top of an elevation called Pisgah, where another trial was to be made. He had not given up all hope of the reward, and he was willing to do all in his power to carry out the purposes of the king. On this height were erected, as before, seven altars, whereon were

placed the same offerings as at the first. The king and his princes were again left by the sacrifices, while Balaam retired to meet with God. Again the prophet was intrusted with a divine message, which he was powerless to alter or withhold.

When he appeared to the anxious, expectant company, the eager question was put to him, "What hath the Lord spoken?" The answer, as before, struck terror to the heart of king and princes:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse It. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought? Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

In this prophecy Balaam sets forth the unchangeable character of God. Men are fickle, unreliable; especially is this the case when their minds are not under the direction of the Holy Spirit. When men are controlled by the prince of darkness, no dependence can be placed upon their promises or engagements. But God being infinite in wisdom and goodness, his purposes and decrees are immutable.

It is stated in the Scriptures that God repented that he had done so much for man, when only ingratitude and disobedience were the return for all his mercies. Here the Lord speaks after the manner of men, that finite man may understand him. When God has pronounced judgments against a people, as

he did against Nineveh, and, like Nineveh, they believe the word of God, humble themselves before him, and turn from their evil ways, he revokes his sentence, and gives the transgressors of his law another trial. But in all the history of God's dealings, it will be found that although he may bear long with the sinner, disobedience will surely meet its punishment. There are limits to the forbearance of God; there is a point at which it becomes necessary to interpose his vengeance, and visibly to rebuke the impiety of men. And it is no less apparent, that those who love and obey God's law will realize that he means what he says, and that all his precious promises to the faithful and obedient will be fulfilled to the letter.

The Lord solemnly announced that it was his purpose to bless Israel, and that he would not sanction oppression or outrage against the posterity of Jacob. While they should comply with the conditions which he had given them, he would be faithful in the fulfillment of all his promises. Balaam was made to understand the confidence and strength of Israel. "The shout of a king is among them." Christ, enshrined in the cloudy pillar, was in their midst, reigning over and protecting them, and leading them forth to battle and to victory. Their recent conquests, while moving forward in the strength of God, had inspired them with hope and courage. At the word of God they were ready to advance or retreat, to put on the armor or to lay it off, with the same confident assurance of final victory.

"God brought them out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn." The rhinoceros is one of the most powerful of animals, and Balaam uses this creature as a figure to show how vain it is for any earthly power to array itself against the Most High. God had accomplished his will in bringing Israel from bondage and idolatry in Egypt, notwithstanding the opposition of Pharaoh and his hosts. It would be safer for lesser animals to attack the powerful unicorn, than for finite man to seek to turn aside the purposes of the Infinite One.

Awed by these revelations of divine power, Balaam exclaimed, "Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." The great magician had tried his power of enchantment, in accordance with the desire of the Moabites; but concerning this very occasion it should be said of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" The fact would be recorded upon the pages of history, that while Israel was under the divine protection, no people or nation, though aided by all the power of Satan, should be able to prevail against them. All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of his people--that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry.

The favor of God as this time manifested toward Israel was to be an assurance of his protecting care for his obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to annoy, misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and faith in God.

The future success of Israel, and the doom of their enemies, is further set forth in the words, "The people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain." Surely, this message should have been a sufficient warning to both Balaam and the king of Moab, to make no further attempt to injure the people so signally protected by infinite power.

December 16, 1880

The Prosperity of Israel Foretold

The king of Moab was disheartened and distressed at the second failure of his efforts to secure a curse upon Israel. In the anguish of his soul he exclaimed, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." Yet a faint hope still lingered in his heart, and he determined to make another trial. He now conducted Balaam to Mount Peor, where was the temple noted most of all for the disgusting scenes of licentiousness there enacted in honor of their god. Here the same number of altars were erected as before, and the same number of sacrifices were offered; but Balaam went not alone, as at other times, to learn God's will. He made no pretense of sorcery, but, standing by the altars, he looked around upon the widely-spread tents of Israel. Again the Spirit of God rested upon him, and the divine message came from his lips in the same poetic language as before:

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

The prosperity of God's chosen people is here represented by some of the most beautiful figures to be found in nature. The prophet likens Israel to fertile valleys, covered with abundant harvests; to flourishing gardens, watered by never-failing springs; to the fragrant sandal-tree and the stately cedar. The figure last-mentioned is one of the most strikingly beautiful and appropriate to be found in the inspired word. The cedar of Lebanon has the

most honorable position among the trees of the Bible. It was regarded with reverence by all the people of the Holy Land. The class of trees to which it belongs is found wherever man has gone, in all the earth. It flourishes in the heat, yet defies the cold. It grows luxuriantly beside the rivers and fountains of waters, and yet thrives upon the sandy waste. It plants its roots deeper among the rocks of the mountain, and boldly stands in defiance of the tempest. Its leaves are bright and green when all else has perished at the breath of winter. The wind, playing upon its foliage, calls forth a strain of soft, sad music, and a flood of perfume that fills the air with its spicy fragrance. The divine hand has exalted the cedar as king over the forest. It is called the tree of the Lord, and is named among the most precious and beautiful of God's works in the earth. So great was its value that even in ancient times only kings and princes could dwell in houses of cedar.

As the fervid imagination of the prophet kindled at the view which God presented before him, he could picture the prosperity of Israel by nothing more beautiful than groves of cedars stirred by the wind of the morning, and waving their green boughs in the valleys. The righteous in all ages are represented by the cedar of Lebanon. The highest honors belong to those who humbly walk with God. The lowliest disciple of Jesus is in God's sight of higher rank than kings or princes.

Balaam prophesies that Israel's king would be greater and more powerful than Agag. This was the name given to the kings of the Amalekites, who were at this time a very powerful nation, but, if true to God, Israel would subdue all her enemies. The king of Israel was the Son of God--the majesty of Heaven; and his throne was one day to be established on the earth, and his power to be exalted above all earthly kingdoms.

Balaam lifts his voice of warning to all men who should live upon the earth, from Balak to the last enemies of God, to desist from their purpose of destroying God's children; for the curse intended for Israel would recoil upon

the guilty heads of those who framed it.

As he listened to the words of the prophet, a tempest of disappointed hope, of fear and rage, swept over Balak's soul, and he broke forth in a flood of angry reproaches. He was indignant that Balaam could have given him the least encouragement of a favorable response, when everything was determined against him. He regarded with scorn the prophet's compromising, deceptive course. In terror and dismay he smote his hands together, feeling that his people must indeed become a prey to Israel. He did not understand how deeply Balaam desired to gratify the hopes of the Moabites, and that he had been compelled by the power of God to bless, where he had hoped to curse. Enraged at the prophet's folly in letting slip the proffered wealth and honor, the king exclaimed fiercely, "Therefore now flee thou to thy place. I thought to promote thee to great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor." The answer was that the king had been forewarned that Balaam could speak only the words that God should give him.

Before returning to his people, Balaam uttered a most beautiful and sublime prophecy of the world's Redeemer, and the final destruction of the enemies of God: "I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and shall destroy the children of Sheth." He was permitted to look down through the ages to the first advent of Christ, and then forward to his second appearing, in power and glory. He would see the King above all kings, but not at present. He would behold his majesty and glory, but at a great distance. He would be among the number of the wicked dead, who should come forth in the second resurrection, to hear the awful doom, "Depart from me, ye cursed." He would behold the redeemed ones in the city of God, while he himself would be shut out with the wicked.

Balaam closed by predicting the complete destruction of Moab and

Edom, of Amalek and the Kenites, thus leaving to the Moabitish king no ray of hope. The prophecy of Israel's triumph, uttered by this apostate, is similar to the declaration made by Judas, when he brought back the thirty pieces of silver, and declared before the dignitaries of the church the innocence of Christ.

Balaam had been permitted to behold the signal manifestations of divine power. God had communicated through him the most sublime, precious, and sacred messages of truth; yet he did not humble himself to repent of his avarice and presumption. No further light would be granted him. He had rejected the last call of mercy. He could no longer halt between two opinions; he could not serve God and mammon. He had sacrificed the favor of Heaven to obtain the wages of unrighteousness, and he was numbered with the enemies of God.

These lessons the people of God at this time should take to heart. They may have a knowledge of divine things, and ability to fill an important place in the work of God; yet, unless they cherish a simple dependence upon their Redeemer, they will be ensnared and overcome by the enemy.

By nobleness of aim and completeness of execution, they may win for themselves a name and honor higher than that of kings, if they will make God their trust, and suffer no outside influence to withdraw their interest or attention from the work appointed them. Those who would be men of power must determine to make the noblest use of every faculty and every opportunity. They must make the glory of God the first object of life, and ever remember that goodness alone is true greatness.

Balaam had been compelled to bless, when his heart longed to curse; he had been disappointed in his hope of riches and honor; and he was almost as deeply grieved at the result of his efforts as was Balak. A plan was now suggested to his mind--by the Prince of Darkness himself--that seemed to

promise the destruction of Israel. It was proposed to the king and immediately adopted.

The Moabites had found that so long as Israel remained true to God, he would be their shield, and no power of earth or hell could do them harm. The plan now was to raise a barrier between them and God, by enticing them to sin. If they could be led to engage in the licentious worship of Baal and Ashteroth, their omnipotent Protector would become their enemy, and they would fall an easy prey to the fierce, warlike nations around them. Balaam soon left for his distant home; but his diabolical scheme was immediately carried out.

December 30, 1880

Israel Depart From God

While Balak and his counselors were plotting to entice God's people into sin and thus secure their overthrow, the Israelites, all unconscious of their danger, were enjoying ease and quiet in their tents among the acacia groves in the vale of Shittim. They had little to occupy their minds or their time, and they felt little anxiety for the future. They had prevailed against the warlike inhabitants of the surrounding country, and they felt that they had only to cross the Jordan and the goodly land would be all their own. Their condition of ease and inactivity was unfavorable to moral and physical vigor, as well as to purity of thought and life, while a knowledge of the licentious character of the surrounding nations had to some extent familiarized their minds with thoughts of vice and lessened their abhorrence of crime.

At this time, Midianitish women were seen stealing into the camp, singly and in little companies. Their appearance excited no alarm, and so quietly were their plans conducted, that the attention of Moses was not called to the matter. It was the object of these women in their association with the Hebrews to first draw their attention from the God of Israel to heathen traditions, rites, and customs, and then to allure them into transgression of the divine law. These motives were studiously concealed under the garb of friendship, so that they were not suspected, even by the great leader. These heathen women feared to excite the indignation of Moses, but they did not consider that no evil work could be concealed from the all-seeing eye of God.

Their hellish plans were all too successful. It was not long before the poison of licentiousness and idolatry had spread like a deadly infection through the congregation of Israel. The people seemed to be infatuated. The

rulers and leading men were among the first to step over the line; and so general was the defection, that it is recorded in the Sacred Word, that "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor." Alas that the people who had been so signally protected from Satan's power, should now deliberately walk into the net which he had laid for them!

Suddenly Moses was aroused to perceive the mighty evil in the camp, and he was horrified as he discovered its nature and extent. So successful had been the plots of these vile, artful women, that his own people were participating in the abominable scenes enacted at the worship of Baal, and the sacrifice and sacrilegious feasts were becoming established among the Israelites. The aged leader was filled with indignation, and the wrath of God was kindled against the people. By divine authority, Moses addressed to the rulers of Israel the command: "Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor."

This order was promptly obeyed. The people had already been awakened to the enormity of their sin, by the swift judgments of God. A terrible pestilence had broken out in the camp, and twenty-four thousand of the congregation fell a prey to its ravages. None knew where this visitation would end, yet they felt that their punishment was just. Overwhelmed with terror, they hastened to the tabernacle, and with tears and deep humiliation, confessed their sin.

While the people were thus weeping before God, at the door of the tabernacle, while the plague was still doing its work of death, and the magistrates executing their terrible commission, one of the nobles of Israel came boldly into the camp, accompanied by a Midianitish princess, whom he gallantly escorted to his tent. This daring outrage stirred the indignation of all Israel, and swift retribution followed the offenders. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, rose up from among the congregation, and slew them both. This prompt and determined act evinced a just abhorrence of the sins

which had brought so great calamities upon Israel. God approved the course of Phinehas, and the plague was stayed; while the priest who had so zealously executed the divine judgment was honored before all Israel, and the priesthood was confirmed to him and to his house forever.

As we read this history, it seems almost incredible that a man could be so blinded by the bewitching power of woman as to indulge such stubborn and Heaven-daring rebellion, in face of the most terrible visitations of divine wrath. But human nature is the same in every age. The temptations of Satan are no less strong today than in the days of ancient Israel.

Satan has ever achieved his greatest successes through the neglect of God's people to maintain their separation from the world,--its customs, its practices, and principles. There are but two great parties among men,--the servants of Christ, and the servants of Satan. Their leaders are opposites in every particular. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to conquer the prince of darkness, says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Here Christ makes a marked distinction between his followers and the world. Those who are of the world are in direct opposition to those who love God and keep his commandments. The heart must be kept with all diligence, that the human be not exalted above the divine. If those who profess to love and serve God, follow blind impulse, rather than reason and conscience, they will fall by the artifice of Satan. The affections should be guarded and controlled, lest they be placed upon unworthy objects, that are forbidden in the word of God.

Samson, that mighty man of valor, was under a solemn vow to be a Nazarite during the period of his life; but, becoming infatuated by the charms of lewd woman, he rashly broke that sacred pledge. Satan worked through his agents to destroy this ruler of Israel, that the mysterious power which he possessed might no longer intimidate the enemies of God's people. It was the

influence of this bold woman that separated him from God, her artifices that proved his ruin. The love and service which God claims, Samson gave to this woman. This was idolatry. He lost all sense of the sacred character and work of God, and sacrificed honor, conscience, and every valuable interest, to base passion.

The life of Solomon should prove a beacon of warning to God's people in every age. The Lord had erected a barrier between Israel and other nations. He had made that people the depositaries of his law, and their safety lay in preserving their peculiar, holy character. But as King Solomon's heart was lifted up in pride, he became eager for still greater wealth and power. To secure these, political alliances were formed with idolatrous nations.

Honor and riches flowed in to him as the result; but these temporal advantages were dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. His kingdom was enriched with the gold of Tarshish, but the fine gold of character was tarnished by the corrupting influence of paganism. Once over the wise barrier which God had erected, the king took, one after another, the fatal steps that led him away from hope, and happiness, and Heaven. From the wisest of the rulers, Solomon became a despot. Satan triumphed as this man, who had thrice been called the beloved of his God, became a slave of passion, and sacrificed his integrity to the bewitching power of woman.

The cases mentioned are sufficient to show the danger of corrupting the soul by mingling with God's enemies. These examples are placed on record for the benefit of those who live amid the perils of the last days. The devices of Satan are no less now than in ancient times. Indeed, as we near the period of Christ's second coming, Satan redoubles his efforts to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. The youth especially are in constant and fearful danger of being overcome by his temptations.

In the judgments that followed Israel's sin, we may see with what

abhorrence God looks upon worldliness, idolatry, and licentiousness. The same dangers exist today that threatened the prosperity, and even the existence, of his ancient people. Temptations to licentiousness have been steadily increasing from that time to the present, and similar scenes are constantly enacted, with similar efforts at concealment. A bewitching power is brought to bear on every soul not fortified by firm principle. Warnings of fathers and mothers and of God's ambassadors are all unheeded. The affections which should be centered upon God are given to the idolatry of unworthy objects.

Watchfulness and vigilance are needed now. The lustful eye must be turned off from beholding vanity. Boldness and immodesty must be met with a decided rebuke. Let none yield to a spirit of self-confidence, and feel that they are in no danger. As long as Satan lives, his efforts will be constant and untiring to make the world as wicked as before the flood, and as licentious as were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The prayer may well be offered daily by all who have the fear of God before them, that he will preserve their hearts from evil desires, and strengthen their souls to resist temptation. Those who, in their self-confidence, feel no need of watchfulness and unceasing prayer, are near some humiliating fall. All who do not feel the importance of resolutely guarding their affections will be captivated by those who practice their arts to ensnare and lead astray the unwary.

Satan exulted to see Samson, a man whom God could have used to his glory, so infatuated that he could betray his strength into the hands of Delilah. Satan knew that he had taken Samson captive. Few who go thus far, again see clearly the aggravated character of sin. Reputation, strength, and usefulness are sacrificed for sinful indulgence. Blind infatuation leads men on in the way to destruction. The power of Satan, his arts and machinations--who can know them? Those who, in defiance of all the warnings and entreaties of God's word, venture to indulge in sin, are sleeping on the very brink of eternal ruin. Because God bears long with transgressors of his law,

because he sends them warnings and entreaties, because punishment does not immediately follow their evil deeds, they abuse his mercy and forbearance, and blindly rush on in a course of crime.

If those who now depart from the straight line of virtue and integrity were as promptly rebuked by the swift judgments of God as were the offenders in Israel's day, crime of this character would be less prevalent. When assailed by temptation, many have not moral strength to say, as did Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" They do not give a decided refusal to the first invitation to transgress the law of God; and soon unlawful indulgence becomes habitual, and they are ready to deny that it is a sin.

Unwise marriages are the curse of this age. Such an alliance can but be disastrous to both parties. That love which has no better foundation than mere sensual gratification will be headstrong, blind, and uncontrollable. Honor, truth, and every noble, elevated power of the mind, is brought under the slavery of passions. The man who is bound in the chains of this infatuation is too often deaf to the voice of reason and conscience; neither argument nor entreaty can lead him to see the folly of his course.

Men and women professing godliness should tremble at the thought of entering into a marriage covenant with those who do not respect and obey the commandments of God. It was this that opened the flood-gates of sin to the antediluvians. Such a connection with the world is a direct departure from God's express requirements,--"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

In these alliances the creature receives the love which should be given to the Creator. There is danger in entering into any intimate relation with those who have no connection with Heaven. This is the friendship which Inspiration calls enmity with God. We cannot be too jealous of ourselves,

lest by associating with worldlings we fall into the same habits. It was for this reason that the Israelites were commanded to dwell alone, as a people separate from all other nations. The friendship of the Lord's enemies is more to be dreaded than their enmity; for Satan is constantly working through pleasing, intelligent unbelievers, to tempt the people of God to sin.

When one commandment of the decalogue is broken, the downward steps are almost certain. When once the barriers of female modesty are removed, the basest licentiousness does not appear exceeding sinful. Alas, what terrible results of woman's influence for evil may be witnessed in the world today! Through the allurements of "strange women," thousands are incarcerated in prison cells, many take their own lives, and many cut short the lives of others. How true the words of Inspiration, "Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell."

Beacons of warning are placed on every side in the pathway of life, to prevent men from approaching the dangerous, forbidden ground; but notwithstanding this, multitudes choose the fatal path, contrary to the dictates of reason, regardless of God's law, and in defiance of his vengeance.

Those who would preserve physical health, a vigorous intellect, and sound morals must "flee youthful lusts." Those who will put forth zealous and decided efforts to check the wickedness that lifts its bold, presumptuous head in our midst, are hated and maligned by all wrong-doers, but they will be honored and recompensed of God.

The judgments visited upon Israel for their sin at Shittim, destroyed the survivors of that vast company, who, nearly forty years before, had provoked the Lord to swear in his wrath that they should not enter Canaan. When, at the command of God, the people were numbered just prior to the death of Moses, it was found that "there was not left a man of them, save Caleb, the son of Nun, the son of Jephunneh." Thus had the word of God been strictly

fulfilled.

January 6, 1881

God's Judgment Upon the Midianites

Moses' work for Israel was almost done; yet one more act remained for the aged leader to perform, ere he should go to his long rest. "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites," was the divine command; "afterward thou shalt be gathered unto thy people." This mandate was communicated to Israel, not as the word of Moses, but of Christ, their invisible leader; and it was immediately obeyed. One thousand men were selected from each of the tribes of Israel, and sent out against the Midianites. In the battles which followed, that people were defeated, with great slaughter.

The men who promptly and speedily executed the divine judgments upon those heathen nations have been pronounced harsh and unmerciful in destroying so many human lives. But all who reason thus, fail to understand the character and dealings of God. In his infinite mercy, the Lord had long spared those idolatrous nations, giving them evidence upon evidence that he, the mighty Jehovah, was the God whom they should serve. He had commanded Moses not to make war upon Moab or Midian, for their cup of iniquity was not yet full. Additional evidence was to be given; clear and distinct light from the throne of God itself was to shine upon them.

When the king of Moab had called Balaam to pronounce a curse upon Israel, and thus accomplish their destruction, the goodness and mercy of God was strikingly displayed. That corrupt and hypocritical gain-seeker, whose heart longed to curse God's people for reward, was constrained to pronounce upon them the richest and most sublime blessings. The Moabites themselves could see that it was the power of God which controlled the avaricious prophet, and compelled him in the most exalted strains of inspiration to proclaim Israel God's chosen, and his almighty power her protection. Here

the last ray of light shone upon a stiff-necked people who had set their wills in defiance to the will of God. When, at the suggestion of Balaam, the snare was laid for Israel, which resulted in the destruction of many thousands, then it was that the Midianites filled up the measure of their iniquities. Then their day of probation ended, the door of mercy was to them closed, and the mandate went forth from Him who can create and can destroy, "Vex the Midianites, and smite them; for they vex you with their wiles."

Those who would complain of God, or question the wisdom and justice of his dealings with his creatures should realize their own incompetence, with their finite wisdom, to determine what conduct is befitting to the judge of all the earth. They should make it their chief anxiety to so conduct themselves as not to become subjects of his wrath, and should leave the Lord to deal with the work of his hands according to his own wise purposes.

Moses had been filled with grief and indignation at the deceitful wiles by which Israel had been enticed to sin and thus bring upon themselves the wrath of God. In the command to make war upon the Midianites, Moses saw not only the justice of God in visiting his judgments upon the guilty, but his mercy in giving Israel the victory over a people who were seeking by every hellish art to accomplish their destruction. The Israelites were to engage in this warfare, not to gratify malice or revenge, but as God's instruments, to do his bidding, being influenced solely by zeal for the divine glory.

Men do not understand what they are doing, when they permit themselves even for a moment, to doubt the wisdom and benevolence of God,--to regard as a species of cruelty the judgments visited upon the stubborn and rebellious. Few realize the malignity of sin. It is a deadly leprosy, contaminating all who are brought in contact with it. If men persist in showing contempt for divine authority, God, who created them, and whose property they are, has a perfect right to take from them the blessings which they have abused. God's name and authority as ruler in the universe must be

maintained. When idolatry is rearing its proud head, when blasphemy and rebellion are strengthening, then God reproves the sins of the nations, and the manifestations of divine anger which they had provoked come upon the transgressors of his law. The Most High delivers his word of doom, and chooses the instruments to perform his will. These messengers of God are required to faithfully perform the work appointed them, however repugnant it may be to their natural feelings. Sacred history records no instance in which these men were reprov'd for too great thoroughness and severity; but God has many times reprov'd his servants for lack of faithfulness in executing his judgments. In all this, God would teach us the lesson that in the future Judgment retribution will surely be visited upon "every soul of man that doeth evil," "according to the deeds done in the body."

God's method of dealing with sin is not in harmony with the views cherished by a large class who occupy a prominent position among the professed followers of Christ. Many of these men cherish sin, and laud the benevolence and long-suffering of God, and dwell upon the loving character of Jesus,--all mercy, all tenderness,--while they pass over the threatenings of God's wrath against sin and sinners, and our Saviour's scathing denunciations of hypocrisy and self-deception. It is those who have not a keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin that are ready to question the justice of God in punishing with such severity the sins of the Amalekites, Canaanites, and Midianites. Those who love sin are unable to comprehend God's dealings with his subjects.

In our day, as in ancient times, there is disagreeable work to be done in reprov'g sin. In this work, God uses men as his instruments,--men of determined purpose, whom no threat or peril can intimidate, no hardship turn aside from the path of duty,--men who will never forget their sacred commission as servants of the Most High. The Lord calls for men to act promptly, with the courage of heroes, and the firmness and faith of martyrs, to tear down the idolatrous images that have usurped his place in the minds

of men, and meet the armed force of wrong on battle fields. But in all this there is no excuse for any to indulge in harshness or severity to gratify their own wrong feelings.

God wants men whom he can use to his own glory, either to bear reproof and execute justice, or, with a heart full of piety and benevolence, to carry light into darkened homes, to speak peace to the troubled soul, and point the sinner to the pardoning love of Christ. The great want of this age is men fitted to do God's will,--men who will listen with praying hearts for God's words, and will hasten to obey his voice.

There are men full of zeal, who claim to be doing God's will, while in reality they are governed by human impulse. They feel at liberty to question, criticise, and challenge every one who does not act in harmony with their ideas. They make themselves offensive to God and to the people. They wound continually, and by their wrong course create in others a spirit of distrust and hatred for God, because he employs such men to do his work. But the Lord does not give these men the great work which they consider theirs. If he did, he would give them grace to perform it after Heaven's order, not their own. Those who are permitted to become co-workers with God, should ever cultivate the feeling that in every plan and work, they are doing the will of the Most High; and that in any and every emergency, God's Spirit, not man's is to bear sway.

Balaam, having yielded himself to the control of covetousness, and hardened his heart by persistent rebellion, had joined his fortunes with the Midianites, and he perished in the general slaughter. He had felt a presentiment that his own end was near when he exclaimed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." The fate of Balaam is similar to that of Judas, and their characters bear a marked resemblance to each other. Both had received great light and enjoyed special privileges; but a single cherished sin, like gangrene, poisoned the entire character, and drove

them to perdition.

While the victorious Israelites completely destroyed the armies of Midian, they spared all the women and children, and brought them into the camp as captives. When Moses ascertained this, he became alarmed and indignant, and thus reproved the officers of the host: "Behold they caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." There had been a lack of thoroughness in executing the commands of God. The war against Midian had been a just retribution upon a guilty people, of whom the women had been the principal criminals. Had these idolatrous, licentious women been preserved as captives, their presence would have constantly endangered the morals of Israel. The sympathy which would spare these transgressors was contrary to the will of God.

There is a sympathy for sin and sinners that is dangerous to the prosperity of the church at the present day. You must have charity is the cry. But that sentiment that would excuse wrong and shield the guilty, is not the charity of the Bible. The friendship of the wicked is more dangerous than their enmity; for none can prevail against the servants of the living God, except by tempting them to disobedience.

The offensive character of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too merciful to punish the transgressors of his law, let them look to Calvary; let them realize that it was because Christ took upon himself the guilt of the disobedient, and suffered in the sinners stead, that the sword of justice was awakened against the Son of God. It was to save us from shame and everlasting contempt that he endured the scorn and mockery which the world heaped upon him. It was our sins that caused the Saviour of the world such intense agony, pouring darkness into his soul, and extorting from his pale lips the anguished cry, "My God, my God, why

hast thou forsaken me?"

He was numbered among the transgressors, he made his soul an offering for sin, that in his righteousness the believing, repenting sinner might stand justified before God.

After all this, if man refuses to respond to the great sacrifice which has been made to ennoble and to save him, if he obstinately chooses the path of sin, will the great Judge of all the earth excuse the willful transgression of his holy law? Surely, everything that is noble and generous in our natures must respond to such love as Jesus manifested in suffering for our sake. It was an unexampled humiliation for him to take upon himself the nature of fallen man, and sacrifice his life for a race of rebels; and the manner of his death makes that humiliation more apparent. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Jesus was not insensible to ignominy. He felt the disgrace of sin as much more keenly than it is possible for man to feel it, as his divine and sinless nature was exalted above the nature of man. We should never entertain the thought that the Majesty of Heaven, so holy and undefiled, was not acutely sensitive to scorn and mockery, abuse and pain. He asks the murderous mob in Gethsemane, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" This shameful treatment Jesus keenly felt, yet for our sakes he endured the most ignominious and most painful death which it was possible for mortals to experience; a death which was appropriate for the basest of criminals was that which the Lord of Glory suffered to ransom guilty man. Let none flatter themselves that they can continue in sin, and yet share in the great salvation which Christ has so dearly purchased. God is merciful and compassionate, but he is also just. Let the cross of Calvary forever settle this matter. As surely as Christ, the guiltless, suffered for the guilty, so surely will the wrath of God fall upon the heads of those who persist in their transgression of his law.

January 13, 1881

On the Borders of Canaan

The Lord announced to Moses that the appointed time to deliver Israel was at hand, and as the aged prophet stood upon the heights overlooking the river Jordan and the promised land, he gazed with deep interest upon the inheritance of his people. That vast, garden-like plain, with its deep verdure and feathery palm-trees, spread out invitingly before him, and he felt an intense longing to share with Israel in the possession of that land which had been the object of their efforts, the goal of their hopes, for so many years.

Would it be possible that the sentence pronounced against him for his sin at Meribah,--the one defect that marred a life of faithful, devoted service,--might be revoked? With deep earnestness he pleaded, "O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in Heaven or on earth that can do according to thy works and according to thy might! I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon."

The answer was, "Let it suffice thee; speak to me no more of this matter, lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan."

Without a murmur or complaint, Moses humbly submitted to the decree of God; and now his great anxiety was for Israel. Who will feel the interest for their welfare that he has felt? Who will manifest the same untiring, unselfish, devotion? From a full heart, Moses pours forth the prayer, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep that have no

shepherd."

Here were exhibited the same spirit of unselfishness, the same zeal for the honor of God, and the same interest in the welfare of the people of his care, that had characterized the life of Moses. The aged leader had not lived for himself, but for Israel. There is not to be found in the history of the great men of earth,--of kings, statesmen, or philosophers,--a parallel to this self-sacrifice and devotion.

The Lord hearkened to the prayer of his servant, and the answer came, "Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient." Joshua had long attended Moses, and being a man of wisdom and ability, of faith and piety, he was chosen to succeed him. Moses was to instruct Joshua concerning the responsibilities of his position as the visible leader of Israel, and to assure him that if he would be faithful to his sacred trust the Lord would ever be his counselor and support.

By the laying on of Moses' hands, and a most impressive charge, Joshua was solemnly set apart as the leader of Israel. He was also admitted to a present share in the government as an evidence to the people that no jealousy stirred the heart of Moses at the thought that another was to take his place and lead Israel to the promised land. Moses instructed the people to respect Joshua, and inspired them with confidence in him as the man divinely appointed as his successor. The word of the Lord came through Moses to the congregation, "He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord. At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

The position of Joshua differed in some respects from that of Moses. Not only was the latter a prophet and a ruler in Israel, but he officiated in the capacity of high priest, and asked counsel directly of God himself. But after Moses, neither Joshua nor any other of the rulers of Israel was permitted to come to the Lord except through the high priest.

At the command of God, Moses assembled the people, and proceeded to instruct them concerning the course which they should pursue upon their entrance into the promised land: "When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein; for I have given you the land to possess it."

The triumph of the wicked is short. The pleasures of sin are ever purchased at a tremendous cost; for the wrath of God is continually hanging over the sinner, and in the end, he will learn indeed that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Every corrupt passion, every wrong feeling, or sinful act, not only dishonors God, but brings guilt and misery upon ourselves. Only in the strength of God can we succeed in subduing the enemies of our souls. While the foes of Christ are continually at work as Satan's agents to entice us into sin, we must firmly resist their advances, looking to God for counsel and assistance. Every sinful desire must be repressed, every wrong trait overcome, or they will prove our ruin.

God requires his people to separate themselves from sin and sinners, choosing their society only when there is an opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of all who have in any way exerted an influence to draw us into sin. None will be punished with greater severity than those who have enticed God's people from their integrity.

Every natural trait of character should be brought under the control of the will, and this must itself be kept in harmony with the will of God. It is one of the greatest deceptions that can come upon the mind to imagine ourselves more merciful or just than God. Man is impulsive and changeable. Even the best acts prompted by the natural heart are faulty. And how true is the testimony of the Sacred Record, that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Our only safe course is to condemn what God condemns, and cherish what he cherishes.

Had the Lord spared the inhabitants of Canaan, the Israelites would have been in constant danger of contamination. The outward tokens of heathen worship would have had an influence to pervert the senses, and lead the servants of God into idolatry. Hence the repeated command addressed to them, to dispossess the Canaanites, by every means in their power, and as fast as they were able to subdue them. The Israelites were not to yield to cowardice, sloth, or self-indulgence, nor to set up their ideas of clemency in opposition to the command of God. They were not to conform to the customs of the heathen, nor to preserve the monuments of their abominable idolatries. However precious the material, or exquisite the workmanship, all that pertained to the heathen worship must be destroyed.

God knew the dangers to which his people would be exposed. Satan would work through those corrupt idolaters to destroy Israel, and temptation would address them with all the grace of manner and fascination of art. Few realize the power of Satan to ensnare and lead astray. Even in the days of Israel it had been for thousands of years his constant study to make the way to destruction easy and inviting. In this hellish work the great adversary employs numberless co-laborers to attract unwary feet away from God, away from Heaven. In view of all these allurements in the wrong direction, the Lord carefully instructed his people how to conduct themselves in order to resist temptation.

The apparent severity of God's dealings with the Canaanites did not, as many suppose, proceed from harshness or cruelty. The love of God is beyond our comprehension; it is high as the heavens, and broad as the universe. Every soul whom he has created is precious in his sight,--so precious that he gave his only begotten Son to die for that lost, perishing sinner. When men shall manifest toward their fellow-creatures a love superior to this, then they may talk of compassion where God has exercised severity.

The children of Israel had learned by their own bitter experience that the first step taken in departing from God makes the next step more easy, while the way to return becomes as difficult as are the ice-clad mountain steeps to the benumbed traveler. It seemed a small matter to our first parents to do only one little act which God had forbidden,--to take from the forbidden tree the fruit so attractive to the eye and pleasant to the taste; but by this one act they forfeited their allegiance to God, the great lawgiver, and opened the flood-gates of misery to the world. God alone can measure the evils which may result from one wrong step,--evils which at the critical moment the tempted soul does not consider. The only safeguard for frail, erring man is to obey, without hesitation or argument, the expressed will of God, regardless of all promise of pleasure or profit as the reward of sin. When God speaks, it is enough.

The Lord mercifully set before his people the terrible results that would follow association with the idolatrous Canaanites: "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover, it shall come to pass that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them." By mingling with the heathen, Israel would become estranged from God, and would finally pursue the same course which had provoked his wrath against the Canaanites.

The after-history of God's chosen people shows that these warnings were real prophecies, which have been most strikingly fulfilled. The Israelites yielded only a partial obedience to the command of God, and for many generations they were afflicted by a remnant of the idolatrous nation, who were spared as the prophets had foretold, as "pricks in their eyes, and as thorns in their side."

Additional warning and instruction on this point was afterward given to Israel by the Lord through his servant Joshua: "Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of those nations, even those that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them and they to you; know for a certainty that the Lord will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

Should they enter into any friendly relation with those nations standing under the curse of God, the Hebrews would be infatuated and beguiled by the arts of idolatrous women, and would be led to form marriages with them. All the influence of these heathen women would be exerted to lead God's people into idolatry, and thus the devices of Satan would prove successful. The Lord would have his people regard the Canaanites as enemies to Israel and to God,--enemies who would be constantly on the watch for some occasion to avenge their own defeat. On condition that Israel be true to God, his power would be manifested in their behalf, and the gracious promise was, "One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you." But if they provoked the Lord by separating from him, he would withdraw his protection, and make these nations instruments to chastise and bring them back to their allegiance. Should they still continue to withdraw from God, he would not restrain the

cruelties of these wicked nations, and they would grievously torment Israel, and at length drive them from their possessions.

When God's people should be placed in a condition of outward security and ease, and surrounded with every earthly blessing, they would be in the greatest danger of forgetting their constant Benefactor. This is the special danger of all whom God has blessed with means or with influence. All our powers should ever be diligently employed in the service of our Maker; yet how many allow themselves to be diverted from this object by worldly associations. The Lord has repeatedly warned his people not to mingle with those who have not the fear of God before them. While we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we are to shun temptation as far as possible. We must obey the divine word on every point, if we would have the strength of Israel's God as our support and our defense.

January 20, 1881

The Cities of Refuge

At the command of God, Moses fixed the future boundaries of the land of Canaan. He then proceeded to select a prince from each tribe, and committed to them the work of dividing the land by lot among the different tribes when they should come in possession. In this arrangement the tribe of Levi alone was exempted. They were considered as especially set apart to the service of God, and hence were given no inheritance among their brethren. Instead of this, forty-eight cities in different parts of the country were to be assigned them, as a permanent dwelling-place.

And now the Lord proceeded to give his people another evidence of his care and tender compassion for the unfortunate and the erring. To provide for the effectual punishment of murder, it was customary in ancient times for the execution of the murderer to devolve upon the nearest relative or the next heir of the deceased; and in extreme cases the avenger might pursue the criminal anywhere, and execute vengeance upon him without the formality of a trial. While the Lord would have the crime of murder regarded with great abhorrence, he would carefully guard the innocent. Hence, without entirely destroying the custom of private vengeance, he makes the most thorough provision that the guiltless be not rashly slain without trial, nor the guilty escape punishment.

Of the cities assigned to the Levites, six were appointed as cities of refuge, to which the man-slayer might flee for safety. This provision was not designed for the willful murderer; but "that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person unawares." "And they shall be unto you cities of refuge, that the man-slayer die not until he stand before the congregation in judgment." Special directions were given to determine whether the man was

guilty of willful murder, or had taken life by accident.

The cities so wisely provided were to be located within a half-day's journey of every part of the land. It would not often happen that the avenger of blood would be in the spot, hence the unfortunate man-slayer would have an opportunity to flee, and but few would be overtaken before they gained the place of safety.

But if the fugitive would escape with his life, there must be no delay; family and employment must be left behind, there was no time to say farewell to loved ones. His life is at stake, and every other interest must be sacrificed to the one purpose,--to reach the city of refuge. Weariness is forgotten, difficulties are unheeded. He does not for one moment slacken his pace until he is safe within the walls of the city.

The roads to these cities were always to be kept in good repair; all along the way, sign-posts were to be erected bearing the word Refuge in plain, bold characters, that the fleeing one might not hesitate for a moment. Any person,--Hebrew, stranger, or sojourner,--might avail himself of this provision. The case of the fugitive was to be fairly tried by the proper authorities, and if found guiltless of intended murder he was to be protected in the city of refuge. Should he carelessly wander away beyond the prescribed limits, and the avenger of blood find him, his life would pay the penalty of his disregard for the Lord's provision. Those who remained within the city until the death of the high-priest were then at liberty to return to their possessions.

Among the specific directions for the trial of persons suspected of murder were the following: "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die." How wise and just is this injunction. If the charge was supported by only one witness, the accused person was not

to be condemned, although circumstantial evidence might be strong against him. On the other hand, if proved guilty no atonement or ransom could rescue him. However distinguished his position might be, he must suffer the penalty of his crime. The safety and purity of the nation demanded that the sin of murder be severely punished. Human life, which God alone could give, must be sacredly guarded.

The blood of the victim, like the blood of Abel, will cry to God for vengeance on the murderer and on all who shield him from the punishment of his crime. Whosoever,--be it individual or city,--will excuse the crime of the murderer, when convinced of his guilt, is a partaker of his sin, and will surely suffer the wrath of God. The Lord designed to impress upon his people the terrible guilt of murder, while he would make the most thorough and merciful provision for the acquittal of the innocent.

God understands the perversity of the human heart. Personal enmity, or the prospect of personal advantage, has ruined the reputation and usefulness of thousands of innocent men, and in many cases has resulted in their condemnation and death. The worthless lives of violent and wicked men have been preserved by a bribe, while those who were guilty of no crime against the laws of the nation have been made to suffer. By their wealth or power, men of rank corrupt the judges and bring false witness against the innocent. The provision that none should be condemned on the testimony of one witness, was both just and necessary. One man might be controlled by prejudice, selfishness, or malice. But it was not likely that two or more persons would be so perverted as to unite in bearing false witness; and even should they do so, a separate examination would lead to a discovery of the truth.

This merciful provision contains a lesson for the people of God until the close of time. It was Christ who gave to Moses those explicit directions for the Hebrew host; and when personally with his disciples on earth, the great

Leader repeated the same lesson as he taught them, how to treat the erring. One man's testimony was not to acquit or to condemn. One man's views and opinions were not to settle disputed questions. In all these matters, two or more were to be associated, and together they were to bear the responsibility in the case. God has made it the duty of his servants to be subject one to another. No one man's judgment is to control in any important matter. Mutual consideration and respect imparts proper dignity to the ministry, and unites the servants of God in close bonds of love and harmony. While they should depend upon God for strength and wisdom, ministers of the gospel should confer together in all matters requiring deliberation. "That by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

The laws instituted by God for the prevention and punishment of crime were marked by strict and impartial justice. But the sinfulness of man perverts the wisest laws, both human and divine. It is because men in authority can be bribed to excuse sin, and let the guilty pass unpunished that justice has fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. These evils are causing the earth to become as corrupt as in the days of Noah. The most terrible crimes are becoming so common as hardly to awaken a feeling of horror. Our own nation is guilty before God of permitting the most atrocious crimes to pass unheeded. The accumulating weight of unpunished sin is sinking the nation to destruction. The wrongs they do not condemn and punish are making this people the subjects of God's retributive justice. Licentiousness, robbery, and murder, continually on the increase, are deluging our world, and preparing it to receive the unmingled wrath of God.

The injunctions of God to the Hebrews should cause us to be filled with horror at the thought of even unintentionally destroying a human life. But when man is put to death by his fellow-man, to serve some selfish purpose,--as Naboth was slain that Ahab might obtain the coveted vineyard,--what honor [horror], what anguish, should be felt by those who make and execute the laws! How zealous should be their efforts to ascertain the facts, and then

decide the case with strict integrity, and execute the penalty with impartial justice.

It was the opposite course pursued by the antediluvian world that made the growth of wickedness so rapid, and violence and crime so widespread, that God cleansed the earth from its moral pollution by a flood. It was the fact that licentiousness and murder were lightly regarded that fitted Sodom for God's judgments. Had those in authority taken upon themselves the work which the Lord had appointed them,--fathers commencing in their own families to correct wrong, and magistrates and rulers acting with promptness and decision to punish the guilty,--others would have feared, and crime would have decreased. God would not then have deemed it necessary to take the matter in hand himself, and by terrible things in righteousness, execute the justice which had been perverted by men in authority.

To increase the horrors of murder, and aid in the detection of the criminal, the Lord ordained that when the body of a murdered person was found in the land, the most solemn and public ceremony should be held, under the direction of the magistrates and elders in connection with the priests of God's appointment. "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him; then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain; and it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley. And the priests, the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord: and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried. And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the

valley; and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord."

After the most diligent search had failed to discover the murderer, the rulers were by this solemn ceremony to show their abhorrence of the crime. They were not to regard with carelessness and negligence the deeds of the guilty. In all their acts they were to show that sin has a contaminating influence,--that it leaves a stain upon every land and every person who will not by all possible means seek to bring the wrong-doer to justice. God regards as his enemies those who will by any act of negligence shield the guilty. They are in his sight partakers in the evil deeds of the sinner.

Here are lessons which God's people at the present day should take to heart. There are grievous sins indulged by individual members of the church,--covetousness, over-reaching, deception, fraud, falsehood, and many others. If these sins are neglected by those who have been placed in authority in the church, the blessing of the Lord is withheld from his people, and the innocent suffer with the guilty. The officers in the church should be earnest, energetic men, having a zeal for God, and they should take the most prompt and thorough measures to condemn and correct these wrongs. In this work they should act, not from selfishness, jealousy, or personal prejudice, but in all meekness and lowliness of mind, with a sincere desire that God may be glorified. Inhumanity, false dealing, prevarication, licentiousness, and other sins, are not to be palliated or excused; for they will speedily demoralize the church. Sin may be called by false names, and glossed over by plausible excuses and pretended good motives, but this does not lessen its guilt in the sight of God. Wherever it may be found, sin is offensive to God, and will surely meet its punishment.

The cities of refuge appointed for God's ancient people are a symbol of the Refuge provided and revealed in Jesus Christ. The offering made by our Saviour was of sufficient value to make a full expiation for the sins of the whole world, and all who by repentance and faith flee to this Refuge, will find security; here they will find peace from the heaviest pressure of guilt, and relief from the deepest condemnation. By the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and his work of mediation in our behalf, we may become reconciled to God. The blood of Christ will prove efficacious to wash away the crimson stain of sin.

A merciful Saviour appointed the temporal cities of refuge, that the innocent might not suffer with the guilty. The same pitying Saviour has by the shedding of his own blood wrought out for the transgressors of God's law a sure Refuge, into which they may flee for safety from the pangs of the second death. And no power can take out of his hands the souls who flee to him for pardon.

As the man-slayer was in constant peril until within the city of refuge, so is the transgressor of God's law exposed to divine wrath until he finds a hiding-place in Christ. As loitering and carelessness might rob the fugitive of his only chance for life, so delays and indifference may prove the ruin of the soul. Our adversary, the devil, is on the watch constantly to destroy the souls of men, and unless the sinner is sensible of his danger and earnestly seeks shelter in the eternal Refuge, he will fall a prey to the destroyer.

March 3, 1881

The Law Repeated

Moses obeyed the command of God to recapitulate the law in the hearing of all the people. He vividly portrayed the scenes of sacred grandeur which their fathers witnessed at the mount, when Israel was taken into covenant with the Lord as a peculiar treasure,--as a holy nation to be united with a holy God.

At the wonderful manifestations of divine power upon that solemn occasion,--the mysterious trumpet tones waxing louder and more terrible, the peals of thunder reverberating from every mountain side, the lightning's flash illuminating the stern and solemn heights, and on Sinai's summit, amid cloud, and tempest, and thick darkness, the glory of God as a devouring fire,--at these tokens of Jehovah's presence, the hearts of Israel failed with fear, and the whole congregation "stood afar off." Even Moses exclaimed, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Then above the warring elements was heard the voice of Jehovah, speaking the ten precepts of his law.

As God's great mirror revealed to the people of Israel their true condition, their souls were overwhelmed with terror. The awful power of God's utterances seemed more than their quaking frames could bear. They entreated Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." As God's great rule of right was presented before them, they realized, as never before, the offensive character of sin, and their own guilt, in the sight of a pure and holy God.

That law is the mirror into which we also are to look attentively to see ourselves as we appear in God's sight. It is Heaven's great standard of right, with which we are to compare our life and character. Because the law points

out our sins and declares our guilt, we are not to trample it under our feet, or to turn from the picture where our character stands revealed. We are not to forget what manner of persons we are, and make no effort to remove the defects from our moral character. We must exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. We must be doers of the word, and not hearers only. The heart, the seat of the affections, must be transformed, the moral nature renewed by grace.

What a precious truth, that the only One who can give peace to the weary, sin-sick soul, is the originator of the very law the sinner has violated. All power in Heaven and on earth is given to Christ, and while his soul was made a sacrifice for sin, he will accept the humble penitent, and give him rest and peace. He knows the enormity of man's guilt and for this reason he came to earth to open a way whereby men may be released from the bondage of sin, and obtain power to obey the law of God. Thus may we become a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Moses endeavors to impress upon Israel the importance of obeying the law of God. He urges them to show their love for God by making those sacred principles the rule of their daily life. They must be willing to suffer any inconvenience, rather than break one of God's commandments. Such a course would be more pleasing to God than mere professions of loyalty, or words of praise. And obedience to God was their only safety as individuals, or as a nation; for this alone would secure the divine favor, and insure to them happiness and prosperity in the land to which they were going.

The very same Jesus, who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, led the Hebrew hosts, is our leader. He who gave wise and righteous and good laws to Israel, has spoken to us as verily as to them. Our prosperity and happiness depends upon our unwavering obedience to the law of God. Finite wisdom could not

improve one precept of that holy law. Not one of those ten precepts can be broken without disloyalty to the God of Heaven. To keep every jot and tittle of the law is essential for our own happiness, and for the happiness of all connected with us. "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Yet finite man will present to the people this holy, just, and good law as a yoke of bondage,--a yoke which man cannot bear! It is the transgressor that can see no beauty in the law of God.

The whole world will be judged by this law. It reaches even to the intents and purposes of the heart, and demands purity in the most secret thoughts, desires, and dispositions. It requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. God claims, from every soul of the human family, perfect obedience to his law. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

The least deviation from that law, by neglect, or willful transgression, is sin, and every sin exposes the sinner to the wrath of God. The unrenewed heart will hate the restrictions of the law of God, and will strive to throw off its holy claims. Our eternal welfare depends upon a proper understanding of the law of God, a deep conviction of its holy character, and a ready obedience to its requirements. Men must be convicted of sin before they will feel their need of Christ. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Satan is continually at work to lessen man's estimate of the grievous character of sin. Those who trample under their feet the law of God, have rejected the only means to define to the transgressor what sin is. They are doing the work of the great deceiver.

Whenever the people of Israel had met with difficulties in their journeyings, they had been ready to ascribe all their troubles to Moses. But now as he stands before them to bear his last testimony, their suspicions that he is controlled by pride, ambition, or selfishness, are removed. They listen

with confidence to his words as he assures them that the reproofs, warnings, and encouragements, which he had given them, with the statutes and judgments, were not spoken by his own authority, but they were the words of the mighty God of Israel. "Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.... For what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?"

Moses assures his people that no other nation has so wise, righteous, and merciful, rules of life as had been vouchsafed to the Hebrews. Obedience to these sacred precepts would preserve harmony between man and man, and between man and his Maker, and would cause Israel to be regarded by all surrounding nations as a wise and understanding people. In what contrast to the teachings of God's ancient servant are the words of many who profess to be Christ's ambassadors, while they teach the people to transgress God's holy law. In the day when every work will be brought into Judgment before God, the question will be asked of these false guides, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord?" In that day, these profane triflers with God's holy law, will be overwhelmed with terror and despair.

Moses related to the people the simple facts in their history as they had occurred. He faithfully set before them their own errors, and the transgressions of their fathers, and told them plainly that distrust and unbelief had been their great sin. He did not call up bitter memories, or indulge in censure and reproof, to gratify his own feelings. He presented these things to show that it was unsafe for them to rely upon their own wisdom. With the pitying tenderness which a godly father exercises toward an erring son, he sought to awaken in them true sorrow for their sins, and heart-felt repentance toward God. He impressed them with the fact that God was not in any way

chargeable for their misfortunes. He had been faithful to his promises, but they had broken their solemn pledge to him; they had transgressed his holy requirements, and his wrath had been kindled against them again and again.

God was presented before them, not as a stern, relentless judge, but as a loving, compassionate father. They were assured that when they would truly repent, he would pardon their sins. Moses presented before the people the love of God as displayed in their past journeyings, in pardoning their transgressions, and still retaining them as his people. He reminded them that they had often felt dissatisfied, impatient, and rebellious, toward God, because of their long wandering in the wilderness. But the Lord had not been chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan. He was more grieved than they because he could not bring them into immediate possession of the promised land, and thus display before all nations his mighty power in the deliverance of his people. But they had not been prepared to enter Canaan. With their manifest distrust of God, with their pride and unbelief, they would in no way represent that people whose God is the Lord. They did not bear his character of purity, goodness, and benevolence.

Their fathers had forfeited his favor by their disobedience. Had they submitted to his authority, as a nation being governed by his judgments, and as individuals walking in his ordinances, they would long ago have been settled in Canaan, a prosperous, holy, happy people. Their delay to enter the goodly land dishonored God, and detracted from his glory in the sight of surrounding nations.

Their own perversity of spirit made it impossible for God to manifest his power in protecting them from the nations that opposed their passage to Canaan. When those who had been God's chosen people, who had witnessed so many displays of his greatness, and the majesty of his power, should imitate the iniquities of the heathen, the guilt of Israel would be as much greater than was that of the idolatrous nations, as were their privileges. Not

one of the good things which God had promised to his people would fail if they would comply with the conditions upon which these blessings were bestowed. If God's angels wrought with the armies of Israel to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan because of their wickedness, the Hebrews must be free from the sins of those nations. They must maintain a high standard of purity and holiness, and must show in all their words and acts that they loved, feared, and obeyed, the great Ruler of the universe.

God could not sanction sin, nor protect iniquity. Justice and love are the ruling attributes of his character. While he will punish the transgressors of his law, that others may fear, he has ever tempered judgment with mercy. God singled out the Hebrew nation and connected them with himself, that he might make them representatives of his own character. He would make them a beacon of light to all surrounding nations, that his name might be glorified, and his service exalted. By communion with God, the Israelites were to become partakers of the divine nature, their hearts, debased by sin, were to be purified, their aspirations ennobled. They were to stand forth before the world as an example of what men may become through Jesus Christ. Those whom God would elevate and ennoble by connection with himself, would become, by transgression, wholly debased and Satanic in character. It was for them to choose the course which they would pursue.

The history of the children of Israel is written for our admonition. We are probationers as they were. We may connect with God as was their privilege. We may become strong in the strength of Israel's God, if we will believe and obey his word as did Caleb and Joshua. But if we are doubting, and unbelieving, and rebellious, as were the multitudes who fell in the wilderness, we shall be found unworthy to possess those mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for us.

March 10, 1881

God's Care for Israel

The time drew near when Moses was to leave to others the command of Israel. In obedience to God's decree, he must soon go up to Mount Nebo to die. But before he should leave the congregation, the Lord directed him to rehearse to them the main facts of their deliverance from Egypt and their journeyings in the wilderness. He was to present before them the wonderful manifestations of God's power in bringing them forth from the iron furnace, which figure well illustrated their cruel and degrading bondage in Egypt. They would never have been delivered from their oppressors but for the interposition of the God of Heaven.

Moses was not only to present before the people the merciful manifestations of divine power in all their journeyings, but to recapitulate the law of God spoken from Sinai. When the law was repeated by the mouth of Jehovah to their fathers, the present congregation of Israel were too young to comprehend the awful grandeur and solemnity of the occasion. Their fathers heard the voice of God, and witnessed his power, and were made to feel the sacred character of his holy law; but they had not kept that law, and for their transgressions, they fell in the wilderness without seeing the goodly land. The sins and mistakes which brought upon the fathers the wrath of God, were to be rehearsed before their children, that they might see the awful results of transgression of God's law. As they were soon to pass over Jordan and take possession of the promised land, God would present before them in a correct light the claims of his law, and enjoin upon them obedience as the only condition of their prosperity. It was not enough for them to be God's people in name only. Their love to him, their right to the name of the Israel of God, would be manifested by their obedience.

Moses stands before the people to repeat his last warnings and admonitions. His face is illuminated with a holy light. His hair is white with age; but his form is erect, his countenance expressing the unabated vigor of health, and his eye clear and undimmed. It was an important occasion. He was once more to give to the people the words of God. With deep feeling and poetic eloquence he magnified the Lord God of Israel. The great mercy, and the unfailing love of their Almighty Protector were portrayed in the most sublime and impressive language. He gave warnings, reproofs, cautions, and encouragement, as Christ had given him the words.

Moses dwelt with great earnestness upon the Lord's wonderful works in bringing his people from Egypt. He set before them the many blessings they had received, for which their hearts should have been filled with gratitude to God, instead of cherishing doubt and unbelief. He dwelt with peculiar earnestness upon the period when they were an unorganized, helpless mass of people, making their way in a disorderly march toward the Red Sea. The Lord favored them with his presence. The cloudy banner in the sky, the standard of their invisible Leader, was a sure guide, a canopy to protect them from fiery heat by day, and a pillar of fire, illuminating their encampment by night, constantly assuring them of the divine presence. And this angel of God, leading their armies in all their journeyings, was their Redeemer.

"When Israel, of the Lord beloved, Out from the land of bondage came,
Their fathers' God before them moved, An awful guide in cloud and flame.
ST1881 3/10 5 "By day along the astonished land, The cloudy pillar
glided slow; By night, Arabia's crimson sands Returned the fiery column's
glow."

Moses reminds them how, on the third day of their journey, the way grew strange and perplexing, and night found them walled in right and left by ranges of impassable mountains, while directly in front was the Red Sea. They were filled with apprehension, they knew not what course to pursue;

yet they had followed the leading of the cloudy pillar. In weariness and hunger, they camped beside the sea, their hearts oppressed with dark forebodings. Then, to complete their despair, they saw and heard the Egyptian host in close pursuit. The armies of Israel were panic-stricken; to all appearance they were a sure prey to their bitterest enemies. But lo, they see the pillar of fire rise from the front, and pass grandly to the rear of the Hebrew host; as a massive wall between them and the Egyptians,--a bright light to the Hebrews, a cloud of thick and awful darkness to their enemies.

While the people reproached Moses as the cause of all their perplexities, the Lord bade him say to the terror-stricken multitude, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today." "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." In obedience to the divine command, Go forward, the vast army move to the water's edge, then Moses lifts up the rod, and at its stroke the angry waves pile up on either side, revealing the path for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. But no voice had spoken to the defiant king to go forward; and the path of God's providence, the path of safety for his people, was to the enemies of God the path of defeat and destruction. The waters closed over them, and Moses said to the Hebrew host, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.

The thrilling incidents of this night passage had been oft repeated to the Israelites; but never before had it been so vividly portrayed. All who had taken an active part on this occasion, with the exception of Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, had died in the wilderness. Those who were now responsible men, were children at the time of their passage through the Red Sea, and they had not correct and distinct ideas of this wonderful manifestation of God's power in their deliverance. This important event, rehearsed by Moses with earnestness and solemn eloquence, softened their hearts, and increased their love, their faith and reverence for God.

Moses repeated the song of thanksgiving which he had composed, and which thousands of the Hebrew host united in singing on the shores of the Red Sea, not only men, but women also lifting up the voice of praise, joining to pour forth their exultant, Heaven-inspired gratitude. This song is one of the most sublime and thrilling expressions of triumph and of praise to be found in all the annals of history. Moses recounts the wonderful deliverance which God has wrought for his people and extols his justice and faithfulness and love.

The Lord frequently permits his people to be brought into strait places, that they may turn to him, their protector and deliverer, as a child would turn to his parents when in trouble and fear. It is no evidence that God is against us, because we are afflicted. When Christ was on earth, a man born blind was brought to him to be healed. The question was asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The Saviour answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This answers the troubled questioning of many minds, "Why should these things be? Is it because of our sins that distress and sorrow have come upon us?" It is true that pain and death are the consequence of sin. But the Lord permits those he loves to be brought into trial, that they may learn the precious lessons of trust and faith. If trials are received aright, they will prove of the highest value to us in our religious experience. As they lead us to put our trust more firmly in God, we become better acquainted with his character.

When the Lord has answered our prayers, and proved himself better to us than our fears, we should not fail to express our gratitude for his mercies. Like the Hebrew host, we should praise him for his wonderful works. Here many fail to glorify God. They do not tell of his goodness, making known to all around them that the Lord is to them a present help in every time of need.

We should praise God for every blessing we enjoy, and above all else

should we express our gratitude for the provisions of his grace. What compassion, what matchless love, hath God shown to us, lost sinners, in connecting us with himself to be to him a peculiar treasure! What an infinite sacrifice has been made by our Redeemer, that we may be called children of God! and what a tribute of love and gratitude should it call forth!

If the heart be given to God in earnest, sincere affection, we shall love those for whom Christ died, and thus may we reflect back glory to God. By meditating upon his word and drawing nigh to him in the simplicity of faith we may behold his excellency and his glory, and thus be changed into the same image. We should offer unto God the sacrifice of praise continually, giving thanks unto his name.

March 24, 1881

The Last Words of Moses

In all the dealings of God with his people there is, mingled with his love and mercy, a striking exactness and firmness of decision. This is clearly exemplified in the history of the Hebrew people. God had bestowed great blessings upon Israel. His loving-kindness toward them is thus touchingly portrayed by his own hand: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them." And yet what swift and severe retribution was visited upon them for their transgressions. How, then, can sinners in any age hope to escape the wrath of God?

Again, more wonderful than his mercy toward Israel is the love which Christ has manifested in his infinite sacrifice to redeem a lost race. His earthly life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. And yet Christ himself plainly declares, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." While he tells us of the love of God, he also pictures the awful scenes of the Judgment and the retribution that shall be visited upon the wicked. In all the Bible, God is presented not only as a being of mercy and benevolence, but as a God of strict and impartial justice.

The great Ruler of nations had declared that Moses was not to lead the congregation of Israel into the goodly land, and all the earnest pleadings of God's servant could not secure a remission of his sentence. He knew that he must die. Yet he had not for a moment faltered in his interest and care for Israel. He had faithfully sought to prepare the congregation to enter upon the promised inheritance, and had repeated before them the law of God, and his wonderful dealings with them as a people. He would in every possible way

guard them from transgression.

He now completed the work of writing all the laws, the statutes and judgments which God had given him, and all the regulations concerning the sacrificial system. The book containing these was placed in charge of the proper officers, and was for safe-keeping deposited in the side of the ark. An erring people often interpret God's requirements to suit their own desires; therefore the book of the law was to be sacredly preserved for future reference.

Moses was filled with fear that the people would depart from God, their only helper. In a most sublime and thrilling address he set before them the blessing which would be theirs, if they lived in obedience to God, and then declared the terrible curses that would rest upon them, should they depart from him. "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other, and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

He closed with these solemn and impressive words: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length

of thy days. That thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

At the divine command, Moses and Joshua now repaired to the tabernacle, while the pillar of cloud came and stood over the door. Here the people were solemnly given into Joshua's charge. The leadership of the man who had so long and so faithfully cared for Israel was now ended. Still Moses forgets himself in his interest for his people. In the presence of the assembled multitudes the great leader in the name of God, addressed to his successor these words of holy cheer; "Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them; and I will be with thee." He then turned to the elders and officers of the people giving them a solemn charge to faithfully obey the instructions he had communicated to them from God.

Together Moses and Joshua stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the eyes of all the congregation were fixed upon them. The aged man, now doubly dear, must soon be taken from them; and they recall with a new and deeper appreciation, his parental tenderness, his wise counsels, and his untiring labors. His successor was the man of God's choice, but he had far less experience. How could he bear alone the burdens which had rested so heavily even upon Moses? The people called to mind how often Moses had stood between them and God's vengeance for their sins. How often had his earnest pleadings turned aside the blow! They would gladly have kept him with them, but they knew that this was impossible. Their grief was heightened by remorse. They bitterly remembered that their own perverse course had provoked Moses to the sin for which he must die.

God designed to arouse the Israelites to see the sinfulness of their course. The removal of their beloved leader would be a far stronger rebuke than any which they could have received, had his life and mission been continued. Now the Lord would make them feel that they are not to make the

life of their future leader as hard and trying as they have made that of Moses. God speaks to his people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, he speaks to them in blessings removed, that they may be led to see their sins and return to him with all the heart.

That very day there came to Moses the command, "Get thee up unto Mount Nebo, ... and behold the land of Canaan, which I gave unto the children of Israel for a possession. And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people." Often had Moses left the camp of Israel, in obedience to the divine summons, to commune with God; but he was now to depart on a new and mysterious errand. He must go forth to resign his life into the hands of his Creator. Moses knew that he was to die alone; no earthly friend would be permitted to minister to him in his last hours.

He was not beyond temptation, and there was a mystery and awfulness about the scene before him, from which his heart shrank. He was in the full vigor of health, with all his powers in active exercise. Was some strange and fearful sickness to come upon him? Must his body lie unburied, a prey to the wild beasts and the fowls of the air? Was this to be the end of his life of toil and sacrifice? But the severest trial was his separation from the people of his care and love,--the people with whom his interest and his life had been identified for forty years. His heart was filled with anxiety for their future, and oppressed with forebodings of evil, as he remembered their constant tendency to depart from God. Never had his faith been more severely tried. But he had learned to trust in God, and he calmly submitted to the decree of infinite love and wisdom.

Moses did not entertain the opinion now cherished by most of the Christian world, that as soon as a good man dies, he enters the mansions of eternal bliss, in a land of which Canaan with all its attractions, was but a dim type. Had he believed this, he would not have pleaded so earnestly for

permission to cross the Jordan and share the inheritance of his people.

Again the Spirit of God rested upon his servant, and in the most sublime and touching language he pronounced a blessing upon the tribes individually. He then closed with a general benediction, in which he set forth God's care for Israel, and the exalted position which they might occupy, if they would live in obedience to his law. "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel, then, shall dwell in safety alone. The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel. Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

March 31, 1881

The Death of Moses

When Moses had ended his last words to Israel, he turned from the congregation, and in silence and alone he made his way up the mountain side. He went to Pisgah, the loftiest ridge, and then to Nebo, the highest point on that ridge. Upon that lonely height he stood, and gazed with undimmed eyes upon the scene spread out on every side. Far away to the west lay the blue waters of the Great Sea; in the north, snowy Hermon stood out against the sky; to the east was the table-land of Moab, and beyond lay Bashan, the scene of Israel's triumph; and away to the south stretched the desert of their long wanderings.

In solitude, Moses reviewed his life of vicissitudes and hardships since he turned from courtly honors and from a prospective kingdom in Egypt, to cast in his lot with God's chosen people. He called to mind those long years in the desert with the flocks of Jethro, the appearance of the angel in the burning bush, and his own call to deliver Israel. He again beheld the mighty miracles of God's power in the plagues upon Egypt, the wonderful passage through the Red Sea, the symbol of God's presence in the cloud and the pillar of fire, the water bursting from the rock, the daily bread descending from heaven with the falling dew, the victories which the Lord had given them over their enemies, their quiet and secure repose in the midst of a vast wilderness, and the unsurpassed glory and majesty of the divine presence which had been revealed to him. As he reviewed these things, he was overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness and power of God. His promises were sure to Israel. When they were faithful and obedient, no good thing promised had been withheld from them.

Moses had been disappointed and grieved by the continual rebellion of

Israel. Notwithstanding all his prayers and labors during their forty years' journeying, only two of all the adults in the vast army that left Egypt, were found so faithful that they could see the promised land. As Moses reviewed the result of his labor, his life of trial and sacrifice seemed to have been almost in vain.

Yet he regretted not the burdens he had borne for an ungrateful people. He knew that his mission and work were of God's own appointing. When first called to lead Israel from the house of bondage, he shrank from the responsibility, and entreated the Lord to choose some man better qualified to execute this sacred work. His request was not granted. Since he had taken up the work, he had not laid it down, nor cast aside the burden. When the Lord had proposed to release him, and destroy rebellious Israel, Moses could not consent. He chose still to bear the burden which had been placed upon him.

The servant of God had enjoyed special tokens of the divine favor; he had obtained a rich experience during his travels in the wilderness, in witnessing the manifestations of God's power and glory; and in reviewing the scenes of his life, he concluded that he had made a wise decision in choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

As Moses looked back upon his experience as a leader of God's people, only one wrong act marred the illustrious record. If he could atone for that one transgression, he would not shrink from death. He was assured that repentance, humiliation, and faith in the Promised One, who was to die man's sacrifice, were all that God required. In humility and faith, Moses again confessed his sin, and implored pardon in the name of Jesus.

Angels of God presented to Moses a panoramic view of the land of promise. Every part of the country was spread out before him, not faint and uncertain in the dim distance, but standing out clear, distinct, and beautiful to

his delighted vision. He seemed to be looking upon a second Eden. There were mountains clothed with cedars of Lebanon, hills gray with olives, and fragrant with the odor of the vintage, wide green plains bright with flowers and rich in fruitfulness, the palm-trees of the tropics side by side with waving fields of wheat and barley, sunny valleys musical with the ripple of brooks and the song of birds, goodly cities, and fair gardens, lakes rich in "the abundance of the sea," grazing flocks upon the hill-sides, and even amid the rocks a place for the wild bee to secrete its treasures. It was indeed such a land as Moses, inspired by the Spirit of God, had described to Israel: "Blessed of the Lord,... for the precious things of heaven, for the dew and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, .. and for the chief things of the ancient mountains,... and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof."

As the glories of the promised land faded from his sight, a scene of deeper interest passed before him. He was permitted to look down the stream of time, and to behold the first advent of our Saviour. He saw Jesus as a babe at Bethlehem. He heard the voices of the angelic host break forth in that glad song of praise to God and peace on earth. He beheld Christ's humble life in Nazareth, his ministry of love and sympathy and healing, his rejection by a proud and unbelieving nation, the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal, the cruel mockery and scourging, and that last crowning act of nailing him to the tree. Moses saw that as he had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of God must be lifted upon the cross, to give his life a sacrifice for men, that whosoever would believe on him should "not perish, but have eternal life."

Grief, amazement, indignation, and horror filled the heart of Moses, as he viewed the hypocrisy and Satanic hatred manifested by the Jewish nation against their Redeemer, the mighty angel who had gone before their fathers, and wrought so wonderfully for them in all their journeyings. He heard Christ's agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He

saw him rise from the dead, and ascend to his Father, escorted by adoring angels. He saw the shining portals open to receive him, and the hosts of Heaven welcoming their Commander with songs of everlasting triumph. As Moses looked upon the scene, his countenance shone with a holy radiance. How small appeared his own trials and sacrifices when compared with those of the Son of God! He rejoiced that he had been permitted, even in a small measure, to be a partaker in the sufferings of Christ.

Again the vision faded, and his eye rested upon the land of Canaan, as it spread out in the distance. Then, like a tired warrior, he lay down to rest. "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth Peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

Many who had been unwilling to heed the counsels of Moses while he was with them would now be in danger of committing idolatry over his dead body. Hence his resting-place was concealed from men. But angels of God buried the body of his faithful servant, and watched over the lonely grave.

The life of Moses was marked with supreme love to God. His piety, humility, and forbearance, had given him a strong influence over the host of Israel. His zeal and his faith in God were greater than those of any other man upon the earth. He had often addressed his people in words of stirring eloquence. No one knew better than he how to move the affections of his hearers. He conducted all matters connected with the religious interests of the people with great wisdom.

Satan exulted that he had succeeded in causing Moses to sin against God. For his transgression, Moses came under the dominion of death. Had his life not been marred with that one sin, in failing to give to God the glory of bringing water from the rock, he would have entered the promised land, and would have been translated to Heaven without seeing death. But the

servant of God was not long permitted to remain in the tomb. Christ himself with the angels who buried Moses, came down from Heaven, and called forth the sleeping saint, and bore him up in triumph to the city of God.

As the Prince of life and the shining ones approached the grave, they were opposed by Satan with his company of evil angels, who were determined that the power of death should not be broken. But the glory attending the Son of God compelled the hosts of darkness to fall back. Satan insolently claimed the body of Moses because of his one transgression. Christ condescended to enter into no dispute with his adversary but meekly referred all to his Father, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." Moses had humbly repented of his sin, no stain rested upon his character, and his name in Heaven's book of records stood untarnished. By the power of his word, Christ opened the prison-house, and set death's captive free.

Upon the mount of transfiguration, Moses was present, with Elijah, who had been translated. They were sent as the bearers of light and glory from the Father to his dear Son. Such is the last scene revealed to mortal vision in the history of that man so highly honored of God.

Moses was a type of Christ. He received the words from the mouth of God, and spoke them to the people. God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty, before he could be prepared to lead the armies of Israel in their travels from Egypt to the earthly Canaan. The Israel of God who are now passing on to the heavenly Canaan have a Captain who needed no earthly teaching to perfect him for his mission as a divine Leader. He manifested no human weakness or imperfection; yet he died to obtain for us an entrance into the promised land.

April 7, 1881

The Jordan Crossed

The Israelites deeply mourned for their departed leader, and thirty days were devoted to special services in honor of his memory. Never, till he was taken from them, had they so keenly felt the value of his wise counsels, his parental tenderness, and his unwavering faith. They knew then that his ripe judgment and self-sacrificing devotion, could never be replaced on earth. Yet while their hearts were filled with grief at their great loss, they knew that they were not left alone. The pillar of cloud still rested over the tabernacle by day, the pillar of fire by night, an assurance that God would be with them still, if they would be true to him.

Joshua was now the acknowledged leader of Israel. He had been prime-minister to Moses during the greater part of the sojourn in the wilderness. He had seen the wonderful works of God wrought by Moses, and well understood the disposition of the people. He was one of the twelve spies sent out to search the promised land, and one of the two who gave a faithful account of its attractiveness, and who encouraged the people to go up and possess it in the strength of God. He was well qualified for his important office. The Lord had promised to be with him as he had been with Moses, and to give him the conquest of Canaan, if he would faithfully observe the divine requirements. Joshua realized the magnitude and importance of the trust committed to him, and he had looked forward to the work before him with great anxiety; but the assurance of divine guidance and support removed his fears.

A few miles beyond the Jordan, just opposite the place where the Israelites lay encamped, was the large and strongly fortified city of Jericho. It could present a serious obstacle to the Hebrews, and Joshua now sent two

spies to visit this city and learn something concerning its population and the strength of its fortifications. These men narrowly escaped death in their perilous mission; for the inhabitants, terrified and suspicious, were constantly on the alert. But the spies finally returned safely, bringing encouraging tidings,--"Truly, the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." It had been privately declared to them in Jericho: "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath."

Arrangements were now made for crossing the Jordan. The people prepared a three days' supply of food, and the men of war made ready for battle. All heartily acquiesced in the plans of their leader, and assured him of their confidence and support." All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage."

But all well knew that without divine aid they could not hope to make the passage. At this time of the year,--in their spring season,--the melting snows of the mountains had so raised the Jordan that the river overflowed its banks, making it impossible to cross at the usual fording-places. God willed that the passage of the Israelites over Jordan should be miraculous. Joshua commanded the people to sanctify themselves, for upon the morrow the Lord would do wonders among them. At the appointed time, he directed the

priests to take up the ark containing the law of God, and bear it before the people. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."

The priests obeyed the commands of their leader, and went before the people carrying the ark of the covenant. Orders had been given for the multitude to fall back, so that there was a vacant space of three-fourths of a mile about the ark. The immense hosts watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan. They saw them with the sacred ark move steadily forward, toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers seemed to be dipping into the waters. Then suddenly the current was borne back, while the tide below swept on, and the deep bed of the Jordan was laid bare. At the divine command the priests descended to the middle of the channel, and stood there, while the great multitudes advanced, and crossed to the farther side. Thus was impressed upon the minds of all Israel the fact that the power which stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that opened the Red Sea before their fathers forty years before.

The priests and the ark still remained in their position in the middle of the river-bed. At the Lord's command, twelve men, one out of each tribe, were directed to take each man a stone from the channel, and to carry it to the dry land, as a memorial for all future generations. "that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off."

When this had been done, the priests themselves were directed to come up, bearing the ark on their shoulders. They did so, and when their feet had reached the western shore, the waters rushed down, a resistless flood, in the natural channel of the stream.

When the kings of the Amorites and the kings of the Canaanites heard

that the Lord had stayed the waters of the Jordan before the children of Israel, their hearts melted with fear. The Israelites had slain two of the kings of Moab, and now this miraculous passage over the swollen and impetuous Jordan filled all the surrounding nations with great terror.

The long years of wandering were ended; the Hebrew hosts had at last reached the promised land. In the midst of the general rejoicing, Joshua did not forget the commandments of the Lord. In accordance with the divine instruction he now performed the rite of circumcision upon all the people who had been born in the wilderness. After this ceremony, the hosts of Israel kept the passover in the plain of Jericho.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and his people because the Hebrews had failed to possess the land of Canaan, which they expected to inherit soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because Israel had wandered so long in the wilderness, and they proudly lifted themselves up against God, declaring that he was not able to lead them into the land of Canaan. The Lord had now signally manifested his power and favor, in leading his people over Jordan on dry land, and their enemies could no longer reproach them.

April 14, 1881

The Taking Of Jericho

As Joshua withdrew from the armies of Israel to meditate and pray for God's special presence to attend him, he beheld a man of lofty stature, clad in war-like garments, with drawn sword in his hand. Joshua did not recognize him as one of the warriors of Israel, and yet he had no appearance of being an enemy. In his zeal he accosted him, saying, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

The glory of God hallowed the sanctuary, and for this reason the priests never entered the place sanctified by the divine presence with shoes upon their feet. Particles of dust might cleave to them, which would desecrate the holy place. Therefore the priests were required to leave their shoes in the court, before entering the sanctuary. In the court, beside the door of the tabernacle, stood a brazen laver, wherein the priests washed their hands and their feet before going in to minister before the Lord. All who officiated in the sanctuary were required of God to make special preparation to enter the place where his glory was revealed.

It was the Son of God who stood as an armed warrior before the leader of Israel. It was the One who had conducted the Hebrews through the wilderness, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

In order to impress upon the mind of Joshua the fact that his visitor was

no other than Christ, the Exalted One, he said, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot." He then gave to Joshua instructions for the taking of Jericho, that mighty stronghold whose idolatrous inhabitants had so long defied the God of Israel.

Encouraged by this fresh assurance of divine support, Joshua proceeded to marshal the hosts of Israel. In the foremost ranks were placed a chosen body of armed men, not now to exercise their skill in warfare, but to believe and obey the instructions given them from God. Next followed seven priests with trumpets. Then the ark of God, surrounded by a halo of divine glory, was borne by priests clad in the rich and peculiar dress denoting their sacred office. The vast army of Israel followed in perfect order, each tribe under its respective standard. Thus they compassed the city with the ark of God. No sound was heard but the tread of that mighty host and the solemn peal of the trumpets, echoing among the hills and resounding through the streets of Jericho.

With wonder and alarm the watchmen of the doomed city marked every move, and reported to those in authority. They knew not the meaning of all this display; but when they beheld that mighty host marching around their city once each day, in all the pomp and majesty of war, with the added grandeur of the sacred ark and the attendant priests, the impressive mystery of the scene struck terror to the hearts of priests and people. Again they would inspect their strong defenses, feeling certain they could successfully resist the most powerful attack. Many ridiculed the idea that any harm could come to them through these singular demonstrations on the part of their enemies. But others were awed as they beheld the majesty and splendor of the procession that each day wound grandly about the city. They remembered that the Red Sea had once parted before this people, and that a passage had just been opened for them through the river Jordan. They knew not what further wonders God might work for them. They kept their gates carefully closed, and guarded them with mighty warriors.

For six days the host of Israel performed their circuit around the city. The seventh day came, and with the first dawn of light, Joshua marshaled the armies of the Lord. Now they were directed to march seven times around Jericho, and at a mighty peal of the trumpets to shout with a loud voice, for God had then given them the city.

The vast army marched solemnly around the devoted walls. All was silent as the dead, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional sound of the trumpet, cutting the blank stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone frowned darkly down, defying the siege of men.

Suddenly the long procession halts. The trumpets break forth in a blast that shakes the very earth. The united voices of all Israel rend the air with a mighty shout. The walls of solid stone with their massive towers and battlements totter and heave from their foundations, and with a crash like a thousand thunders, fall in shapeless ruin to the earth. Paralyzed with terror, the inhabitants of Jericho, with all their men of war, offer no resistance, and the hosts of Israel march in and take possession of the city.

How easily the armies of Heaven brought down the walls of that proud city,--that city whose mighty bulwarks forty years before struck terror to the unbelieving spies.

The word of God was the only weapon used. The Mighty One of Israel had said, "I have given Jericho into thine hand." If a single warrior had brought his strength to bear against the walls, the glory of God would have been lessened and his will frustrated. But the work was left to the Almighty; and had the foundation of the battlements been laid in the center of the earth and their summits reached the arch of heaven, the result would have been all the same, when the Captain of the Lord's host led his legions of angels to the attack.

Long had God designed to give the city of Jericho to his favored people, and to magnify his name among the nations of the earth. When he led Israel out of bondage, he purposed to give them the land of Canaan. But by their wicked murmurings and jealousy they had provoked his wrath, and he had caused them to wander for weary years in the wilderness, till all those who had insulted him with their unbelief were no more. In the capture of Jericho, God declared to the Hebrews that their fathers might have possessed the city forty years before, had they but trusted in him.

The history of ancient Israel is written for our benefit. Paul says, "But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Many who profess to keep God's commandments, as did ancient Israel, have hearts of unbelief. Favored with great light and precious privileges, they will nevertheless lose the heavenly Canaan, even as the rebellious Israelites failed to enter the earthly Canaan.

As a people we lack faith. Few would in these days follow the directions of God, through his chosen servant, as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho. The Captain of the Lord's host did not reveal himself to all the congregation. He communicated only with Joshua, who related the story of this interview to the Hebrews. It rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to follow the commands given by him in the name of the Captain of the Lord's host, or to rebel against his directions and deny his authority.

They could not see the host of angels marshaled by the Son of God who led their van; and they might have reasoned: "What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns meanwhile! This can have no effect upon those strong and towering fortifications."

But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls, afforded opportunity for the increase of faith among the Israelites. They were to become thoroughly impressed with the idea that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to putting themselves out of the question and relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

Would those who today profess to be God's people conduct themselves thus, under similar circumstances? Doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans, would suggest ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loth to submit to so simple an arrangement, and one that reflected no glory upon themselves, save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of conquering a mighty city in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should wield authority over human reason. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.

God will do marvelous things for those who trust in him. The reason why his professed people have no strength, is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal his power in their behalf. He will help his believing children in every emergency, if they will place their entire confidence in him, and implicitly obey him.

There are deep mysteries in the word of God, there are mysteries in his providences, and there are mysteries in the plan of salvation, that man cannot

fathom. But the finite mind, strong in its desire to satisfy curiosity, and solve the problems of infinity, neglects to follow the plain course indicated by the revealed will of God, and pries into the secrets hidden since the foundation of the world. Man builds his theories, loses the simplicity of true faith, becomes too self-important to believe the declarations of the Lord, and hedges himself in with his own conceits.

Many who profess to be children of God are in this position. They are weak because they trust to their own strength. God works mightily for a faithful people, who obey his word without questioning or doubt. The Majesty of Heaven, with his army of angels, leveled the walls of Jericho before his people. The armed warriors of Israel had no cause to glory in their achievements. All was done through the power of God. Let the people give up all desire for self-exaltation, let them humbly submit to the divine will, and God will again manifest his power, and bring freedom and victory to his children.

April 21, 1881

The Sin of Achan

Soon after the conquest of Jericho, Joshua determined to take possession of Ai, a city about ten miles farther north. Accordingly, chosen men were sent to visit this place to ascertain the number of its inhabitants, and the strength of its fortifications. The spies returned with the tidings that the city contained but few defenders, and that a small number of the Hebrew host could easily overthrow it.

The great victory which God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because the Lord had promised them the land of Canaan, they felt secure, and failed to realize the necessity of putting forth every effort in their power, and then humbly seeking for divine help, which alone could give them the victory. Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai, without seeking by earnest prayer to obtain counsel from God.

The congregation of Israel had begun to exalt their own strength and skill, and to look with contempt upon the inhabitants of the land. Jericho had been marvelously overthrown, and an easy victory was expected at Ai. Hence three thousand men were considered sufficient to make the attack. The Israelites rushed into battle, without the assurance that God would be with them. They were unprepared for the determined resistance which they met, and, terrified by the numbers and thorough preparation of their enemies, they turned and fled. They were hotly pursued by the Canaanites, and thirty-six of their number slain.

The unexpected defeat brought grief and discouragement upon the whole congregation of Israel. Joshua looked upon their ill-success as an

expression of God's displeasure, and in deep humiliation he fell to the earth upon his face before the ark. The elders of Israel united with him in this act of self-abasement, and dumb with astonishment and dismay they remained in this position until the even. Then Joshua presented the matter before the Lord in earnest prayer:

"Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us around, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

Joshua manifested a true zeal for the honor of God, yet his petitions were mingled with doubt and unbelief. The thought that God had brought his people over the Jordan to deliver them up to the power of the heathen was a sinful one, unworthy of a leader of Israel. Joshua's feelings of despondency and distrust were inexcusable in view of the mighty miracles which God had wrought for the deliverance of his people, and the repeated promise that he would be with them in driving out the wicked inhabitants of the land.

But our merciful God did not visit his servant with wrath because of this error. He graciously accepted the humiliation and prayers of Joshua, and at the same time gently rebuked his unbelief, and then revealed to him the cause of their defeat:

"Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their

backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

Israel had sinned; and as their chief magistrate, Joshua had a work to do to search out the guilty one, and put away the sin from the congregation. Instead of concluding that the Lord had brought upon his people defeat and ruin, Joshua should rather have made diligent inquiry if all Israel had been faithful to their covenant with God.

The Lord had wrought wondrously for his people. It was not their skill or valor that had overthrown the mighty walls of Jericho. The power of the Lord of hosts had given them the victory. That city might be regarded as the first-fruits of Canaan, and hence was to be wholly devoted to the Lord. The only advantages which the people were to gain from their success were the destruction of their enemies, and the control of the country. Therefore they were forbidden to appropriate any of the spoils. The gold and silver, with the vessels of brass and iron, were to enrich the treasury of the Lord. Besides these, all the wealth of that great city, with every living creature, was to be utterly consumed with fire. Should any Israelite venture to reserve a portion of the spoils, the curse which rested upon Jericho would surely fall upon him.

Here the Lord gave expression to his abhorrence of idolatry. Those heathen nations had turned from the worship of the living God, and were paying homage to demons. Shrines and temples, beautiful statues, and costly monuments, all the most ingenious and expensive works of art, had held the thoughts and affections of the veriest slavery to Satanic delusions.

The human heart is naturally inclined to idolatry and self-exaltation. The costly and beautiful monuments of heathen worship would please the fancy and engage the senses, and thus allure the Israelites from the service of God. It was to remove this temptation from his people that the Lord commanded

them to destroy those relics of idolatry, on penalty of being themselves abhorred and accursed of God.

When Joshua was appointed as the leader of Israel, all the people entered into a solemn covenant to be loyal and obedient. They assured their leader,--"All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage."

Yet in spite of all this, and upon the very occasion of a most glorious victory, one man in Israel ventured to transgress the command of God. When Achan saw among the spoils a magnificent Babylonish robe, his cupidity was aroused. Conscience was silenced with the plea that the richly adorned garment was too costly to be consumed, and he hastily rescued it from the flames. One step in transgression prepared the way for another, and he next appropriated the gold and silver which should have gone into the treasury of the Lord. The things which God had cursed, Achan eagerly gathered as a precious treasure, and secreted them in his tent. No human eye saw the act, but the eye of God was upon the sinner, and marked his transgression. No human voice was raised to testify against him, but God became his accuser, and appointed him to utter destruction.

Achan had fostered covetousness and deception in his heart, until his perceptions of sin had become blunted, and he fell an easy prey to temptation. Those who venture to indulge in a known sin will be more readily overcome the second time. The first transgression opens the door to the tempter, and he gradually breaks down all resistance and takes full possession of the citadel of the soul. Achan had listened to oft-repeated warnings against the sin of covetousness. The law of God, pointed and

positive, had forbidden stealing and all deception, but he continued to cherish sin. As he was not detected and openly rebuked, he grew bolder; warnings had less and less effect upon him, until his soul was bound in chains of darkness.

There are many Achans among the professed people of God today. They have become so familiar with sin that they no longer perceive its heinous character. If just retribution should be visited upon all who are guilty of sins similar to that of Achan, how would the numbers in our churches be lessened! God's eye is upon the sinner, and a righteous Judge will in no case clear the guilty.

The history of Achan teaches the solemn lesson, that for one man's sin, the displeasure of God will rest upon a people or a nation till the transgression is searched out and punished. Sin is corrupting in its nature. One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands. Those who occupy responsible positions as guardians of the people are false to their trust, if they do not faithfully search out and reprove sin. Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or popularity. And by some it is considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God should never allow his own spirit to be mingled with the reproof which he is required to give; but he is under the most solemn obligation to present the word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name. Those who by their carelessness or indifference permit God's name to be dishonored by his professed people, are numbered with the transgressor,--registered in the record of Heaven as partakers in their evil deeds.

A deplorable state of coldness and backsliding exists in the Christian world today. The Spirit and power of God seems in a great measure to have departed from his professed people, and the enemy of truth rejoices at their weakness and defects. Infidelity is lifting its proud head, and denying the

evidences of Christianity, because of the sins existing among professed followers of Christ. Many who are zealous for the honor of God, feel that he has indeed hid his face from them, but, like Joshua, they are more ready to complain of God than to make diligent search for the sins which have shut out his blessing.

There is need of earnest work to set things in order in the church of God, and it is fully as essential to do this work as it is to preach or to pray. If we would enjoy the favor of God, we must search our own hearts and lives to see if we are not cherishing that which God has cursed. Is there not some unlawful gain placed with our own possessions? Have we robbed God by retaining the portion which should be appropriated to his treasury? Have we withheld from the poor the means which God has given us to supply their necessities?

While we profess to revere and obey God's holy law, are we keeping the first four commandments, which require us to love God supremely? Are we keeping the last six, which teach us to love our neighbor as ourselves? Is there not a cause for our great spiritual weakness, for the lack of fervency and grace and power in preaching God's word? Do we not encourage sin, by failing to meet it with plain and pointed reproof? We may have the clearest understanding of God's word, we may make a high profession of godliness, yet if injustice or iniquity is concealed among us, we need not wonder that our souls are dry and fruitless as a withered branch.

The love of God will never lead to the belittling of sin; it will never cover or excuse an unconfessed wrong. Achan learned too late that God's law, like its author, is unchanging. It has to do with all our acts and thoughts and feelings. It follows us, and reaches every secret spring of action. By indulgence in sin, men are led to lightly regard the law of God. Many conceal their transgressions from their fellow-men, and flatter themselves that God will not be strict to mark iniquity. But his law is the great standard

of right, and with it every act of life must be compared in that day when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. Purity of heart will lead to purity of life. All excuses for sin are vain. Who can plead for the sinner when God testifies against him?

Through divine grace, all men may live in harmony with the requirements of God's law. It is not enough that we have not blotted the page of life with revolting crimes; unless the record bears witness of noble deeds, of self-denying efforts to save not only our own souls but the souls of others, we shall be found wanting.

The spirit of hatred against reproof is steadily increasing. It is considered uncharitable to deal plainly and faithfully with the erring. Sin is glossed over, and thus blindness has come upon souls until it is impossible for them to discriminate between right and wrong, between sin and holiness. Many have closed their ears to reproof, and hardened their hearts against every influence which would set their sins before them.

We repeat, God holds the church responsible for the sins of its individual members. When coldness and spiritual declension exist, God's people should put away their pride and self-confidence and self-exaltation, and should come to the Lord in sorrow and humility, not charging him with injustice, but seeking wisdom to understand the hidden sins which shut out his presence.

Those who have the true love of God in their hearts will not teach that sin should be handled with gloved hands. The words of God to Joshua contain a solemn lesson for every one who professes to be a follower of Christ,--"Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you."

May 5, 1881

The Sin of Achan

The Lord not only made known to Joshua the cause of Israel's defeat, but gave him definite instructions for the detection and punishment of the criminal: "In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof: and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel." The Lord did not immediately point out the sinner, but left the matter in doubt for a time, that Israel might feel their responsibility for the sins existing among them, and thus be led to searching of heart and humiliation before God.

In the morning the whole congregation assembled before the Lord, and a most solemn and impressive ceremony began. Step by step the investigation went on. Closer and still closer came the fearful test, until Achan was pointed out as the man whose sin had brought upon Israel the wrath of God.

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." A messenger was immediately

despatched to the tent; he returned with the spoils, thus establishing the guilt of Achan, and vindicating the justice of God.

For a Babylonish robe and a paltry treasure of gold and silver, Achan consented to sell himself to evil, to bring upon his soul the curse of God, to forfeit his title to a rich possession in Canaan, and lose all prospect of the future, immortal inheritance in the earth made new. A fearful price indeed he paid for his ill-gotten gains.

Shall man declare the judgment upon Achan too severe? God himself pronounced the sentence, and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Achan's confession was made too late to be of any value. He saw the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened, with thirty-six valiant men sacrificed; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He saw Joshua and the elders of Israel bowed to the earth in grief too great for words, their heads covered with dust in token of self-abasement. Had he then made confession, he would have given some proof of true penitence; but he still kept silence. He listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed in the camp of Israel, and even heard its character definitely stated. But he had not the honor of God or the good of Israel at heart, and his lips were sealed. Then came the solemn and searching investigation. How his soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family, and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him.

So great had been his hardihood and persistence, that even at the last Joshua feared he would assert his innocence, and thus enlist the sympathy of the congregation and lead them to dishonor God. He would not have confessed, had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. It was this hope that led to his apparent frankness in acknowledging his guilt and relating the particulars of the sin. In this manner will confessions be made by the guilty when they stand condemned and hopeless

before the bar of God, when every case has been decided for life or for death. Confessions then made will be too late to save the sinner.

There are many professed Christians whose confessions of sin are similar to that of Achan. They will, in a general way, acknowledge their unworthiness, but they refuse to confess the sins whose guilt rests upon their conscience, and which have brought the frown of God upon his people. Thus many conceal sins of selfishness, overreaching, dishonesty toward God and their neighbor, sins in the family, and many others which it is proper to confess in public.

Genuine repentance springs from a sense of the offensive character of sin. These general confessions are not the fruit of true humiliation of soul before God. They leave the sinner with a self-complacent spirit to go on as before, until his conscience becomes hardened, and warnings that once aroused him produce hardly a feeling of danger and after a time his sinful course appears right. All too late his sins will find him out, in that day when they shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever. There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they are proved, and confessing sins known only to ourselves and God.

While the Israelites were still encamped on the east side of Jordan, the tribes of Gad and Reuben, seeing that the country was favorable for their occupation of raising sheep and cattle, desired to settle there, and accordingly presented their request to Moses. The great leader was displeased at this request, supposing that these tribes were seeking to avoid the conflicts which their brethren must encounter in dispossessing the Canaanites. He said, "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" Moses feared that sloth and cowardice, the result of unbelief, prompted this suggestion, and that these tribes would incur the Lord's displeasure.

The men of Gad and Reuben assured their leader that they would not

shun the burdens and responsibilities which the Lord had laid upon all Israel. After preparing homes for their families they would take their position beside their brethren, in all their conflicts, until every man had come in possession of his inheritance. Moses consented to this, but fearing that these tribes might yet fail to keep their promise, he added "If ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Here is a lesson which professed Christians at the present day may study with profit. God's displeasure rests upon those who seek only their own ease and temporal prosperity, leaving their brethren to endure hardship and privation and to bear heavy responsibilities in the church. There is an unceasing conflict between the cause of truth and holiness and that of error and ungodliness. All who claim to be children of God must be armed for the battle. God has not left this warfare upon a few soldiers, while the others rest at ease. Said the great apostle, to his Corinthian brethren, "I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened." All who profess any interest in the cause of God, the advancement of truth, and the conversion of sinners, should be soldiers in the Lord's army. They should have one interest, one motive, one object, as long as life shall last. The great reason why so little is accomplished in the cause of God is indolence and indifference of his professed people.

"Satan's power is increasing, he is terribly in earnest, knowing that his time is short, he is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Those who would escape his wiles must be vigilant and determined. If we would meet the demands for this time, we must put on the whole armor, and go forth with energy, perseverance, and unswerving faith. In God alone is our strength. Indolence and slothfulness, presumption and self-confidence, will alike bring defeat and destruction. God takes cognizance of the works of all. Those who have sought their ease, and shunned care, anxiety and labor for God's cause, may be sure their sin will find them out. Those who, like

Achan, cherish selfishness, avarice and deception, may be sure that God's eye is upon them. As he searched out Achan, he will search them out, as he pronounced a curse upon Achan, he will surely pronounce a curse upon them.

Some may claim that these severe denunciations belong only to the Jewish age, that we are now in a dispensation of mercy rather than of wrath and condemnation. But New Testament history presents many instances which show that the same sins which brought the wrath of God upon his people anciently will bring his wrath upon his church today.

John the Baptist, addressed the scribes and Pharisees, who made high claims to learning and piety: "Ye generation of vipers who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth therefore, fruits worthy of repentance." And although Christ had such a love for humanity, as was never possessed by man or angel, he uttered the fearful sentence, "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven [in light and privilege] shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

The judgment visited upon Ananias and Sapphira was to be a warning to the church through all time. The sin committed by these persons was similar to that of Achan, and the power of God searched them out and brought swift retribution upon them. He who bade Joshua, rise from his position of humiliation and search within the camp of Israel for the reason of their defeat, the same Jesus searched out the hidden iniquity of Ananias and his wife and told Peter what course he must pursue toward them.

While the servants of God are in constant danger of indulging a zeal that is wholly human, and while great harm is done by those who seem to be in

their element in censuring, reproof, and condemning their brethren, there is fully as great danger of going to the opposite extreme, and making the sum and substance of Christian duty consist in love. The apostle Paul writes to his son Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." This work is just as essential to the prosperity of the church as is the exercise of gentleness, forbearance and love. Those who are consecrated to God will be as faithful to reprove and rebuke sin with all long-suffering and doctrine, as to comfort and encourage the desponding, and strengthen the weak. All who love God will show their abhorrence of sin.

May 12, 1881

A Praiseworthy Example

After Joshua had executed the divine sentence upon Achan, and had thus turned away from Israel the wrath of God, he was commanded to marshal all the men of war and again advance against Ai. The armies of Heaven now fought for Israel, and their enemies were put to flight.

Mindful that their only hope was in obedience to God, Joshua now assembled all the people as Moses had commanded, and rehearsed to them the blessings which would follow their obedience to the law, and the curses that would fall upon them should they disregard it. Then he repeated before them the law of ten commandments, and also all the statutes and precepts which Moses had recorded. Again Joshua led Israel forth to battle with their enemies. The Lord wrought mightily for his people, and their armies pressed forward, gaining fresh courage with every victory.

Seven years after their entrance into the promised land the whole congregation assembled, and the sacred tabernacle, which had been so long borne with them in their journeyings, was permanently set up at Shiloh. The land was now divided among the several tribes, and the conquest went on with renewed vigor, until "Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." The glorious promises which God had made to Israel had been fulfilled. "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

Joshua now summoned the men of war who had chosen their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, and commended them for their courage and

fidelity. They had fully kept their pledge to Moses, having shared all the conflicts of their brethren, and now they were at liberty to return to their families and their homes.

As these tribes were to dwell at a distance from the tabernacle, Joshua feared that they might lose their interest in its services and thus be led to depart from God. With deep solicitude he exhorted them: "Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

When these tribes had returned to their possessions, they united to erect a large altar near the place where the Israelites had miraculously crossed the river. This altar was not designed for sacrifice or worship, but simply as a witness that, although separated by the river, they were of the same faith as their brethren on the other side, and were entitled to equal privileges in the tabernacle at Shiloh and the services there performed.

Although those who engaged in erecting this altar were actuated by the most worthy motives, yet it threatened to cause serious difficulty between them and their brethren across the Jordan; for the latter, hearing what had been done, supposed that this altar was designed to take the place of the tabernacle at Shiloh, and that it would thus lead the people away from the true faith and bring the wrath of God upon the whole nation.

The congregation of Israel became excited and indignant, and determined to make war upon the offenders at once. But men of caution suggested the better plan of sending a representative from each tribe to require an explanation of their motive in erecting this altar. Phinehas the high priest, and ten princes, one from each tribe, were sent. They considered the guilt of their brethren already proved, and met them with sharp rebuke. They

accused them of rebelling against the Lord, and bade them remember how the wrath of God had been visited upon Israel for joining themselves to Baal-Peor. Notwithstanding the terrible judgments upon the guilty on that occasion, many were still cherishing the same sins, and Phinehas and his companions feared that their brethren, being surrounded by the worshipers of this idol, might again be led to partake of their iniquity.

The Lord had positively commanded that no sacrifice should be offered except at the door of the tabernacle. In behalf of all Israel, Phinehas stated to the children of Gad and Reuben that if they were unwilling to abide in that land without an altar for sacrifice and worship, they would be welcomed to a share in the possessions and privileges of their brethren on the other side. Again he warned them not to depart from God. Achan and his whole family had perished because they transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and for that one man's sin, all the congregation of Israel had suffered. What, then, would be the dire result if that large company should be disobedient to God?

The Reubenites and their associates courteously permitted Phinehas to finish his discourse before attempting to make their defense. Then they replied to his accusation in a manner which not only does them the highest credit, but teaches a forcible lesson of Christian forbearance. They expressed no anger or resentment at the ungrounded suspicions and sharp rebukes of their brethren; but in the most sincere and solemn manner they declared their innocence, and appealed to the Lord, who knew their hearts, to testify against them if they were at fault, declaring that if guilty of the sin attributed to them, their lives would justly be forfeited.

Then they proceeded to explain their motives and intentions in the building of the altar. They had feared that in future years their children might be excluded from the tabernacle by their brethren on the other side, as having no part in Israel. Then this altar, erected after the pattern of the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, would be a witness that its builders were also worshipers of

the living God.

The ambassadors readily accepted this candid explanation and expressed great joy that the hearts of their brethren were still true to the God of Jacob. The tidings were immediately carried back to the congregation of Israel, and all thoughts of war were dismissed, and the people united in heartfelt rejoicing and praise to God.

Had the suspected tribes stood upon their dignity and answered their accusers in a defiant manner, war would have been the result, and many lives must have been sacrificed. But their willingness to explain, their forbearance and courtesy, settled everything without a rupture.

Upon their altar the children of Gad and Reuben now placed an inscription pointing out the purpose for which it was erected, and they said, "It shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God." Thus they sought to prevent future misunderstanding concerning their religious faith and their connection with Israel, and to remove anything which might be a source of stumbling to their brethren.

The difficulties and misunderstandings that still arise among the people of God are often similar in their nature and results to those that threatened to prove so disastrous to Israel. The ten tribes were filled with fear lest the people whom God had accepted as his own, should become divided in interest and worship, hence their promptness in rebuking at once the supposed defection of their brethren. Yet in that very effort to maintain the honor of God and the purity of Israel, we see what serious and even fatal results might have followed from a simple misunderstanding.

Men who were honestly seeking to promote the cause of true religion were misjudged and severely reprimanded. The wisdom manifested in their course under these trying circumstances is worthy of imitation. What great

evils might be averted if such a course were followed by the members of all our churches. An individual may be unjustly suspected or censured by his brethren, but he should not for this reason yield to anger, or cherish a desire for retaliation. Such an occasion furnishes an opportunity for the development of the precious grace of meekness and forbearance.

Care should be exercised by all Christians, to shun the two extremes, of laxness in dealing with sin on the one hand, and harsh judgment and groundless suspicion on the other. The Israelites who manifested so much zeal against the men of Gad and Reuben remembered how, in Achan's case, God had rebuked the lack of vigilance to discover the sins existing among them. Then they resolved to act promptly and earnestly in the future; but in seeking to do this they went to the opposite extreme. Instead of meeting their brethren with censure, they should first have made courteous inquiry to learn all the facts in the case.

There are still many who are called to endure false accusation. Like the men of Israel, they can afford to be calm and considerate, because they are in the right. They should remember with gratitude that God is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misinterpreted by men, and they may safely leave all in his hands. He will as surely vindicate the cause of those who put their trust in him, as he searched out the hidden guilt of Achan.

How much of evil would be averted, if all, when falsely accused, would avoid recrimination, and in its stead employ mild, conciliating words. And at the same time, those who in their zeal to oppose sin have indulged unjust suspicions, should ever seek to take the most favorable view of their brethren, and should rejoice when they are found guiltless.

The great diversity of religious faith, and the alienation of feeling existing among professed Christians, are serious hindrances to the progress of the gospel. Happy will it be for God's people when they shall be able to

unite zeal and firmness with meekness and forbearance. As religious controversies are usually conducted, they are productive of more harm than good. In many cases there is manifested so little Christian humility and forbearance that the unbeliever is confirmed in his doubts and prejudices. Sinners are gratified to see the differences and animosities existing among the professed followers of Christ. Many of the unconverted point to these wrongs to excuse their own neglect.

It is the will of God that union and harmony should exist among his people. Our Saviour prayed that his disciples might be one, as he is one with the Father. It should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity; but to do this we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth. It is through obedience to the truth that we are to be sanctified; for while Jesus prayed that his followers might be one, he prayed also, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." We are exhorted to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. This is the evidence of our discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" and conversely, our Saviour desired that his disciples might be one, that the world might know that the Father had sent him. What a thought! that the love and unity among Christians are presented as proof of our Saviour's divine mission to the world.

May 19, 1881

Joshua's Farewell Address

Under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites as a nation maintained their allegiance to God, and his blessing attended them. Among the wooded hills and fertile valleys of the promised land, doubly attractive after the long desert wanderings, the chosen tribes dwelt safely; and the years passed on, peaceful and prosperous.

As Joshua felt the infirmities of age stealing upon him, and realized that his labors must soon cease, he assembled the elders, the judges, and the officers of Israel, that he might communicate to them his last warnings and admonitions. The people looked upon the form of their veteran general, who had led them on from victory to victory, and they were ready to ascribe to him the honor of placing them in possession of that good land. But, like his great predecessor, Joshua showed them that their enemies had been conquered because the Lord had fought for Israel, and that God alone should have all the glory.

Although the Canaanites had been subdued, they still possessed a considerable portion of the land promised to Israel; and Joshua exhorted his people not to settle down at ease, and forget the Lord's command to utterly dispossess these idolatrous nations. Lest the Israelites should be disheartened, he assured them that if they would be true to God, his presence and power would attend them in their future conflicts as in the past. He earnestly sought to inspire their hearts with faith and courage. "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left."

He repeated the instructions given by Moses, that they were to form no allegiance with the idolatrous nations that God had appointed to utter destruction. They were forbidden to manifest the least respect for the gods of the heathen, to take oath by their names, or to join in their worship in any manner. They were warned that familiarity with idolatry would remove their abhorrence of it, and would expose them to God's displeasure.

We are in as great danger from contact with infidelity as were the Israelites from intercourse with idolaters. The productions of genius and talent too often conceal the deadly poison. Under an attractive guise, themes are presented and thoughts expressed that attract, interest, and corrupt the mind and heart. Thus, in our Christian land, piety wanes, and skepticism and ungodliness are triumphant.

The Israelites were exhorted to make the Lord first in their thoughts and affections, and to cleave unto him as their source of strength. "For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day." Joshua reiterated the words of Moses: "One man of you shall chase a thousand; for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you."

He warned the people that if they should in any manner unite with the remnant of the heathen nations still among them, and contract marriages with them, the protecting care of God would surely be removed from Israel, and those very nations would be the instruments of their punishment. "They shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

Joshua declared to the people that his work among them was done; for he was soon to die. He appealed to themselves as witnesses that God had faithfully fulfilled his promises to them. "And ye know in all your hearts and

in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." He assured them that as the Lord had fulfilled his promises, so would he fulfill his threatenings. If they were disobedient to his requirements, he would destroy them, as he had destroyed their enemies.

The Lord has not changed. His character is the same today as in the days of Joshua. He is true, merciful, compassionate, faithful in the performance of his word, both in promises and threatenings. One of the greatest dangers that besets the people of God today, is that of association with the ungodly; especially in uniting themselves in marriage with unbelievers. With many, the love for the human eclipses the love for the divine. They take the first step in backsliding by venturing to disregard the Lord's express command; and complete apostasy is too often the result. It has ever proved a dangerous thing for men to carry out their own will in opposition to the requirements of God. Yet it is a hard lesson for men to learn that God means what he says.

As a rule, those who choose for their friends and companions, persons who reject Christ and trample upon God's law, eventually become of the same mind and spirit. We should ever feel a deep interest in the salvation of the impenitent, and should manifest toward them a spirit of kindness and courtesy; but we can safely choose for our friends only those who are the friends of God.

Those who make the word of God their rule of life are hated by the world. The ungodly are not willing to have their consciences aroused; and the silent example of Christ's true followers is a constant reproof. There are many professed Christians who partake of the spirit of the world, and love its friendship. But none need be deceived by their example; for the word of truth declares that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Those who take human feeling and human reasoning for their guide, will as surely separate

from the wisdom of God, as did ancient Israel when they forsook the Lord to serve Baal and Ashtaroth.

Once more, before his final removal from the people of his care, Joshua assembled the chosen tribes to speak to them the words of God. He rehearsed before them their own history and the history of their fathers from the days of Abraham. He did not conceal their errors and mistakes; and with earnestness and gratitude he dwelt upon the dealings of God with them. He reminded them that it was not their own strength or valor which had given them the land of Canaan. God himself had said, "I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them. Of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not, do you eat."

In view of all that God had done for them, Joshua exhorted the people, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." The human mind is naturally inclined to dwell upon the things which are seen and heard, and to neglect the things which are unseen. The Lord had done marvelous things for his people in the manifesting of his power as the only true and living God; yet many had been led astray by the Satanic delusion that God might be represented by material objects, the works of men's hands. By the contemplation of these things, their minds were diverted from God.

Among the multitudes that came up out of Egypt were many who had been worshipers of idols; and such is the power of habit that the practice was secretly continued, to some extent, even after the settlement in Canaan. Joshua was sensible of this evil among the Israelites, and he clearly perceived the dangers that would result. He earnestly desired to see a thorough reformation among the Hebrew host. He knew that unless the people took a decided stand to serve the Lord with all their hearts, they would continue to separate themselves farther and farther from him. Then

would the Lord remove his protecting care, and suffer them to be driven out and scattered, by the very people whom he had commanded them to destroy.

Said Joshua, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua endeavored to show the people that God's requirements were just and merciful. He would lead them to serve him, not by compulsion, but willingly. Love to God is the very foundation of pure and undefiled religion. To engage in his service as an unpleasant task, merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, would bring no sweet peace, no assurance of God's favor.

While a portion of the Hebrew host were spiritual worshipers, many were mere formalists; no zeal or earnestness characterized their service. Some were idolaters at heart, who would be ashamed to acknowledge themselves as such. Joshua urged them to consider in all its bearings the important matter which he had set before them, and to decide if they really desired to live as did the idolatrous nations around them. If it seemed evil to them to serve the Lord, if his requirements seemed a grievous exaction, he bade them that day choose whom they would serve,--the idols worshiped by their fathers from whom Abraham was called out, or the gods of the Amorites, "in whose land ye dwell."

In these last words was a keen rebuke to the idolatry of Israel. The gods of the heathen had no power to bestow peace or prosperity. Their worshipers had ascribed to them praise and honor for all the bounties bestowed by the mercy and love of God. Hence the Lord had removed from them his blessing, and had left them to the mercies of the gods in whom they trusted. That wicked people had been destroyed; and the good land which they once possessed, had been given to God's people. Then what suicidal folly for Israel to choose the gods for worshiping whom the Amorites had been

destroyed!

When a man comes to his right mind, he begins to reflect upon his relation to his Maker. It is moral madness to prefer the praise of men to the favor of God, the rewards of iniquity to the treasures of Heaven, the husks of sin to the spiritual food God gives his children. Yet how many who display intelligence and shrewdness in worldly things, manifest an utter disregard to those things that pertain to their eternal interest.

Joshua assured the Israelites that of themselves they could not serve the Lord. The natural heart is a battle-field, upon which there is a constant warfare; conscience seeking to hold sway, and passion also struggling for the victory. God would not grant them his favor and support while they persisted in transgression. If they honored him, he would honor them. If they should forsake him, and serve strange gods, he would forsake them. As God is a being of perfect truth and holiness, it was impossible for them to serve him and yet continue in sin; for he could not unite with iniquity. Only by thorough repentance and reformation of life, could they hope to secure the divine favor.

God's plan for the salvation of men, is perfect in every particular. If we will faithfully perform our allotted part, all will be well with us. It is man's apostasy that causes discord, and brings wretchedness and ruin. God never uses his power to oppress the creatures of his hand. He never requires more than man is able to perform; never punishes his disobedient children more than is necessary to bring them to repentance; or to deter others from following their example. Rebellion against God is inexcusable.

The judgments of God quickly following upon transgression, his counsels and reproofs, the manifestations of his love and mercy, and the oft-repeated exhibitions of his power,--all were a part of God's plan to preserve his people from sin, to make them pure and holy, that he might be their

strength and shield and their exceeding great reward. But the persistent transgressions of the Israelites, their readiness to depart from God, and their forgetfulness of his mercies, showed that many had chosen to be servants of sin, rather than children of the Most High.

God had created them, Christ had redeemed them. From the house of bondage their cry of anguish went up to the throne of God, and he put forth his arm to rescue them; for their sake, bringing desolation upon the whole land of Egypt. He had granted them high honors. He had made them his peculiar people, and had showered upon them unnumbered blessings. If they would obey him, he would make them a mighty nation,--a praise and excellence in all the earth. God designed to magnify his name through his chosen people, by showing the vast difference existing between the righteous and the wicked, the servants of God and the worshipers of idols.

Joshua sought to show his people the inconsistency of their course of backsliding. He wished them to feel that the time had come to make a decided change, to put away every vestige of idolatry, and to turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart. He endeavored to impress upon their minds the fact that open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy, and a lifeless form of worship.

If the favor of God was worth anything, it was worth everything. Thus Joshua had decided; and after weighing the whole matter, he had determined to serve him with full purpose of heart. And more than this, he would endeavor to induce his family to pursue the same course.

God said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." The promises of God to Abraham and his posterity, and through Christ to the nations of the earth, may appear to have been

unconditional. But such was not the case. Whether Abraham would share in their fulfillment, was determined by the course which he pursued. The Lord approved his faithfulness in the government of his household. Abraham firmly restrained evil, and endeavored by precept and example to promote justice and godliness among them. Thus he worked in harmony with God, faithfully performing his part in the great plan.

Our dangers are similar to those which threatened the prosperity of ancient Israel. The oft-repeated warnings against idolatry addressed to the Hebrew host, are no less applicable to us. Everything which leads the affections away from God is an idol, and betrays us into sin. If we serve God willingly and joyfully, preferring his service to the service of sin and Satan; if we choose him, openly and boldly turning from all the attractions and vanities of the world, we shall enjoy his blessing in this life, and shall dwell forever in his presence in the future life.

The Lord our God is a jealous God. He is just and holy. He will not be trifled with. He reads a deceptive heart. He abhors a double mind. He hates lukewarmness. We cannot serve God and mammon, for they are antagonistic.

May 26, 1881

The Stone of Witness

Joshua's farewell address to Israel produced a deep impression upon them. They knew that they were listening to his dying testimony, and that no feeling of pride, ambition, or self-interest could influence him. By long experience, the aged leader had learned how to most effectually reach the hearts of the people. He realized the importance of the present opportunity, and improved it to the utmost.

His earnest appeals called forth the response: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve the Lord, for he is our God."

Still Joshua warned the people to make no rash promises which they would be unwilling to fulfill, but to carefully consider the matter, and decide upon their future course. "If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." Thus faithfully he sought to arouse them to a higher sense of God's claims upon them, and a deeper conviction that their only safety was in obedience to his law.

The congregation answered with one accord, "We will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Now therefore put away (said he) the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

This solemn covenant was recorded in the book of the law, to be sacredly preserved. Joshua then set up a great stone under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." Here Joshua plainly declares that his instructions and warnings to the people were not his own words, but the words of God. This great stone would stand to testify to succeeding generations of the event which it was set up to commemorate, and would be a witness against the people, should they ever again degenerate into idolatry.

Israel was the Lord's peculiar treasure. The high estimation in which he held them is shown by the mighty miracles wrought in their behalf. As a father would deal with a beloved son, so had the Lord succored, disciplined, and chastened Israel. He sought to inspire in their hearts that love for his character and requirements which would lead to willing obedience.

Through his people Israel, God designed to give to the world a knowledge of his will. His promises and threatenings, his instructions and reproofs, the wonderful manifestations of his power among them, in blessings for obedience, and judgment for transgression and apostasy,--all were designed for the education and development of religious principle among the people of God until the close of time. Therefore it is important that we acquaint ourselves with the history of the Hebrew host, and ponder with care the dealings of God with them.

The words which God spoke to Israel by his Son were spoken for us also in these last days. The same Jesus who, upon the mount, taught his disciples

the far-reaching principles of the law of God, instructed ancient Israel from the cloudy pillar and from the tabernacle, by the mouth of Moses and Joshua. The lessons were the same,--that love for God would lead to purity of heart, and would be manifested in good works.

Those who place in contrast the teachings of Christ when he was upon the earth, and the principles of true religion as taught in the days of Moses, know not what they assert. Christ cannot be arrayed against himself. When he was upon earth, our Saviour made sinners feel that they could not trample upon the law of God with impunity. The same lesson was taught to ancient Israel. In the days of Moses sin could be pardoned only through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Jesus taught the same when he walked as a man among the children of men.

Religion in the days of Moses and Joshua was the same as religion today. When Christ dwells in the heart, his spirit will be manifested in the life. It will be calm, patient, noble, and unselfish. The marked contrast which exists between the lives of those who serve God and those who serve him not is a constant rebuke to the sinner. The world rejected Christ because his life was in such marked contrast to their own. In every generation, those who are seeking to follow his example will be distinct from the world.

By various means the Lord has sought to preserve the knowledge of his dealings with the children of men. Moses, just prior to his death, not only rehearsed to Israel the important events in their history, but at the command of God he embodied them in sacred verse. Thus the glorious and thrilling scenes of Israel's triumph, the sublime and awful manifestations of infinite majesty and power, the divine requirements, promises, and threatenings, clothed with all the beauty of poetic genius, were to be present for all the generations to come. Thus the record of God's requirements and his dealings with Israel would not appear uninteresting or repulsive, but attractive and entertaining.

The people of Israel were required to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and their children's children. It was to be chanted by the congregation when assembled for worship, and to be repeated by the people as they went in and out about their daily duties. This song was not only historical, but prophetic. It recounted the wonderful dealings of God with his people in the past, and also foreshadowed the great events of the future, the final victory of the faithful when Christ shall appear the second time in power and glory.

It was the imperative duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children, that they might never be forgotten. "Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear."

In after generations, this prophetic song would explain the dealings of God with his people, and reveal the cause of their dispersed and scattered condition. Thus would it vindicate the justice of God, and establish the divine inspiration of Moses. It would condemn the wickedness of Israel, and would ever be a convicting power to call them back to their allegiance to God as the only hope of deliverance.

The great stone set up by Joshua was to stand as a constant reminder to Israel of the covenant which they had made with God, and a silent witness of their faithfulness or apostasy. So also the song of Moses was to testify

against them, should they depart from God. Many of the Israelites were unacquainted with the books of Moses. But it was the purpose of God that this inspired song should awaken in thoughtful minds a desire to learn more of God's wonderful dealings with his people, and lead to the study of his revealed word. Thus would they be led to realize the goodness of God toward them, and their duty to love, and obey, and worship him.

If it was necessary for God's ancient people to often call to mind his dealings with them in mercy and judgment, in counsel and reproof, it is equally important that we contemplate the truths delivered to us in his word,-truth which, if heeded, will lead us to humility and submission, and obedience to God. We are to be sanctified through the truth. The word of God presents special truths for every age. The dealings of God with his people in the past should receive our careful attention. We should learn the lessons which they are designed to teach us. But we are not to rest content with them. God is leading out his people step by step. Truth is progressive. The earnest seeker will be constantly receiving light from Heaven. What is truth? should ever be our inquiry.

The prophetic word shows clearly that we are living near the close of this world's history, and that we may soon expect the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of Heaven. As the Israelites journeyed toward the earthly Canaan, so are we pressing onward to reach the heavenly Canaan. The history of their backslidings is repeated among the people of God today. Faith and piety are waning. Many who once loved the appearing of Christ, are setting their affections upon this world, and are conforming to its habits and customs. The fear of God is not kept before the mind, and the natural desires and inclinations gain control.

The apostle presents before us the history of the children of Israel, and states that these things are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. He exhorts us not to lust after evil things as they

lusted. The very same enemy that tempted the people of God in ancient times, will tempt his people in these last days. We should be earnest, active, and vigilant, in making ready for the appearing of our Lord. Every device will be employed to lead men away from God. Infidelity is exerting itself to the utmost. The present age is characterized by intense earnestness and activity in worldly pursuits; but zeal and energy in the service of God are sadly deficient.

In the days before the flood, the people were so engrossed in worldly things, and so corrupted by iniquity, that the Spirit of God ceased to strive with men. When God's word loses its power upon the people, a Satanic infatuation leads them in direct opposition to his revealed will. Christians are absorbed in the questions, What shall we eat, and what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? When the energies are employed in buying and selling, planting and building, to the neglect of eternal interests; when the truth of God addressed to the ear ceases to impress the mind or affect the heart, the preaching is in vain; the hearing is in vain. Then indeed will the condition of the world become as it was in the days of Noah.

Many of the things of this life which are a blessing when temperately enjoyed, become a curse when their use is carried to excess. The dressing mania is a device of Satan. Love of dress is an idolatrous shrine at which the women of this age are worshiping. They are so fully occupied with outward display, that they have no time to pray, no time to become acquainted with the Scriptures, no time to improve the talents which God has given them. They have no time to cleanse the soul-temple from its idolatrous shrines; and at last the Spirit ceases to strive with many, and they go down to the grave unprepared. The temptation to idolatry is even greater today than in the days of Israel.

Concerning the last days, our Saviour asks the significant question: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The

Scriptures declare that as it was in the days of Noah, before the judgments of God fell upon the corrupt inhabitants, so shall it be in the last days, just prior to the pouring out of God's unmingled wrath upon the earth. Men will be living a godless life, professing to be Christians, but by their acts contradicting their profession. They will be heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Is not this idolatry? and is not the guilt of God's professed people as much greater than was that of ancient Israel, as the light which we enjoy is greater than theirs?

God would have his ministers in this dispensation keep before the people, not only the mercy and love of Christ, but the doctrines of the Bible. These should be presented in simple language, adapted to the comprehension of children. Let the young be faithfully instructed in the truths of God's word. The history of the past, the present, and the future, as revealed in the sacred Scriptures, should be taught in a pleasing, yet serious manner. Let the dealings of God with his people be rehearsed again and again, until the youth become familiar with the record.

The lives and teachings of Christian parents should be in marked contrast with those of unbelievers. Worldlings teach their children to love display, and to bow to the idol of fashion. They sacrifice themselves and their children upon this altar of Moloch. But Christians who profess to be seeking the heavenly Canaan, should obey the instructions of the Bible. We urge modern Israel to lay aside their ornaments, their jewels of silver and gold and precious stones, to put off their costly-apparel, and to seek for the inward adorning, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Let children be educated, not to become devotees of fashion, but to be servants of God.

If it was important for Israel to teach their children of the wonderful works of God, his character and requirements, it is important that we put forth at least equal efforts to teach our children the same truths.

June 2, 1881

The Angel's Reproof

Although the last admonitions of Joshua, and the solemn covenant which Israel had made with God, seemed to make a deep impression upon them, yet time soon proved that the influence was not permanent. After the death of their leader and of the elders who were associated with him, the people began gradually to relapse into idolatry.

Joshua had not been permitted to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. A remnant of the heathen nations was spared for a time, that the Lord might through them test the faith and obedience of his people, and that those whose hearts were cherishing idolatry might be revealed and punished.

The generation that succeeded Joshua were directed to carry forward the work which he had left unfinished; but they did not obey the divine command to utterly destroy the heathen. Some of the tribes made war on the Canaanites, but failing to receive the help which they should have had from their brethren, they became weary of the conflict, and spared their most dangerous enemies. Frequent intercourse soon removed all fear of danger; and now the Israelites took another step in transgression, by connecting themselves in marriage with the heathen. When this was done, the difficulties of the situation were greatly increased. It was no easy matter to make war with relatives, and to extirpate or banish their own kindred.

By their disregard of God's command, the Israelites had woven for themselves a net in which their feet were soon entangled. Ere long, many of the Hebrews were induced to attend heathen festivals. Lascivious songs and licentious indulgence, formed a prominent part in the idolatrous worship. Exposed to these contaminating influences, the Israel of God steadily

became corrupted. In imitation of the gods of the heathen, images were made to represent Jehovah, and thus idolatry spread like a plague throughout the land.

The evil made little headway until the generation was extinct which had made the covenant with God; but the parents had prepared the way for the apostasy of their children. God's commandments had been disregarded, his safeguards removed, his barriers broken down.

The correct and simple habits of the Hebrews had preserved them in physical health; but association with the heathen had led to the indulgence of appetite and sensual passions; and this had lessened physical strength, and enfeebled the mental and moral powers. God removed his protecting care and support, and the Israelites were no longer able to contend with their enemies. Soon they were brought into subjection to the very nations whom through God they might have subdued.

The Lord did not permit the sins of his people to pass without rebuke. There were still faithful worshipers in Israel; and many others, from habit and early association, attended the worship of God at the tabernacle. A large company were assembled upon the occasion of a religious feast, when an angel of God, having first appeared at Gilgal, revealed himself to the congregation at Shiloh. He addressed them in words of solemn reproof:

"I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you."

This angel, the same that appeared to Joshua at the taking of Jericho,-- was no less a personage than the Son of God. It was he who had brought Israel out of Egypt, and established them in the land of Canaan. He showed them that he had not broken his promises to them, but they themselves had violated their solemn covenant.

"And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept." "And they sacrificed there unto the Lord." But their repentance produced no lasting results. The people mourned because their sins had brought suffering upon themselves; but did not sorrow that God was displeased, and his name dishonored. True repentance includes more than sorrow for sin. It demands a resolute turning away from evil. We may profess to feel deep sorrow for our sins, we may weep over our wrong course; but if we make no change in that course, our sorrow will avail nothing.

Before they entered the promised land, the Israelites had been faithfully taught their duty toward the heathen. They were to make no league with the inhabitants, but to utterly destroy their idols, and to cast down their altars. Now the Angel solemnly declares, "Ye have not obeyed my voice." And in sadness he asks, ``Why have ye done this?"

The people could now see the sinfulness and ingratitude of their course. This was the golden opportunity for them to return to their allegiance to God, and to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Had they manifested a willingness to act when duty was made known; had they entered at once upon the performance of the work that had been neglected, then the curse of God might have been turned away from Israel. But they returned to their evil ways, and the Lord left them to suffer the consequence of their own neglect.

The experience of the Israelites is that of many at the present day. Warnings and reproofs from God are continually given to his people. Godly

sorrow, which produces repentance unto salvation, would lead them to make an immediate and decided change. But here many fail. Confessions are made, sorrow is expressed, tears are shed; but there is no permanent change of life. Unless the heart is renewed by divine grace, and earnest effort is made to resist temptation, we shall be overcome again and again.

Among God's preferred people, there are men in responsible positions who are content to remain in a state of coldness and backsliding. Their piety vanishes at the approach of temptation. To gain the friendship of worldlings, they will risk the consequences of losing the favor of God. The Lord is trying his people as silver is tried. Closer and still closer will come the searching test, until the heart is wholly submitted to God, or hardened in disobedience and rebellion. God distinguishes between those who walk in the path of self-denial and obedience, which he has marked out, and that class who choose to follow their own ways. Too late we may see, as did the children of Israel, the folly of neglecting and disregarding God's commands.

As the Hebrews were warned not to assimilate to the heathen around them, so are we warned against conforming to the spirit and customs of the ungodly. Christ speaks to us in language that need not be misinterpreted: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Christ himself is the true pattern. His life of self-denial we are to imitate. His earnest labor for the salvation of souls we must copy. His purity and holiness must be reflected in us, or we shall never be permitted to sit with him in his throne.

It is not safe for Christians to choose the society of those who have no connection with God, and whose course is displeasing to him. Yet how many professed Christians venture upon the forbidden ground. Many invite to their homes relatives who are vain, trifling, and ungodly; and often the example

and influence of these irreligious visitors produce lasting impressions upon the minds of the children in the household. The influence thus exerted is similar to that which resulted from the association of the Hebrews with the godless Canaanites.

God holds the parents accountable for disregarding his command to separate themselves and their families from these unholy influences. While we must live in the world, we are not to be of the world. We are forbidden to conform to its practices and fashions. The friendship of the ungodly is more dangerous than their enmity. It misleads and destroys thousands who might, by a proper and holy example, be led to become children of God. The minds of the young are thus made familiar with irreligion, vanity, ungodliness, pride, and immorality, and the heart not shielded by divine grace, gradually becomes corrupted. Almost imperceptibly, the youth learn to love the tainted atmosphere surrounding the ungodly. Evil angels gather about them, and they lose their relish for that which is pure, refined, and ennobling.

Professed Christian parents will pay the greatest deference to their worldly and irreligious guests, while these very persons are leading the children of those who pay them so much polite attention, away from sobriety and from religion. The youth may be trying to lead a religious life, but the parents have invited the tempter into their household, and he weaves his net about the children. Old and young become absorbed in questionable enjoyments, and the excitement of worldly pleasure.

Many feel that they must make some concessions to please their irreligious relatives and friends. As it is not always easy to draw the line, one concession prepares the way for another, until those who were once true followers of Christ, are in life and character conformed to the customs of the world. The connection with God is broken. They are Christians in name only. When the test hour comes, then their hope is seen to be without foundation. They have sold themselves and their children to the enemy. They

have dishonored God, and in the revelation of his righteous judgments, they will reap what they have sown. Christ will say to them, as he said to ancient Israel, "Ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this?"

How are parents neglecting their precious opportunities? It is their privilege to serve and honor God in their household. They should reject every form of idolatry and corruption. They should keep the atmosphere of the home pure and healthful, thus attracting holy angels to be their guests. They should educate and discipline their children to be Bible readers and Bible Christians.

Abraham's course in controlling his children and his household, and instructing them to fear and obey God, was approved of Heaven. Because he had been faithful to the trust already given, God committed to him greater responsibilities, making him the depository of divine truth for all the generations to come. He had honored God in his household, and God honored him before the world. It was declared that through his posterity, all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

God would do great things for his people at the present day, if they would but imitate Abraham's example of faithfulness and obedience. The Lord is waiting and longing to reveal to us the right arm of his power. He will work mightily for us, if we will but faithfully improve the opportunities and blessings already given.

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," was the admonition of Christ to his disciples. We, too, have need of watchfulness and earnest prayer. We are surrounded by the perils of the last days. It is a time of special danger to the young. We should feel the most intense interest to secure the salvation of the children whom God has given us. When so much is at stake, how can we set up idols in our hearts? How can we be indolent and trifling, vain, proud, and careless? We have foes to fight within; we have victories to

gain over our own sinful propensities. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are seeking continually to weaken our spirituality. We must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Let us not yield to sloth, unbelief, and idolatry, as did the children of Israel. If the enemies of our souls are not driven out, they will increase in power, and will hold us in the slavery of sin. We can have no fellowship with the Lord's enemies, within or around us, without endangering our own souls, and the souls of those whom God has committed to our care.

June 9, 1881

Idolatry Punished

Of the generation that arose after the death of Joshua, the Sacred Record states that "they knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger."

Notwithstanding their apostasy and great wickedness, the Lord did not utterly forsake his people. From time to time he raised up faithful and valiant men to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies. But the hearts of the people had become so corrupted by an evil course that it was not an easy task to restore purity of faith or of worship. When the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would return to their idolatry.

"They ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died."

The Lord sought to bring his people into a position where he could manifest his power in their behalf; but their hearts were set to depart from God, and they would not submit to his requirements. What blindness! what inexplicable folly! and equally incomprehensible is the course of those whom God has endowed with intellectual gifts and surrounded with temporal

blessings, yet who will prefer worldly gain, and even the indulgence of debasing passions, to the favor of God and his infinite love.

Although the Israelites, as a nation, departed from God, yet there was ever a remnant who resolutely withstood the evil influences surrounding them, and maintained their allegiance to Jehovah. These were constantly growing in courage and true godliness. They clung to the Lord more firmly as they saw the apostasy of their brethren. Their faith grew stronger, with every conflict.

It is through the infinite mercy of God that his people at the present day are granted the high honor of being sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. But unless we give ourselves unreservedly to his service, and walk in obedience to his commandments, we can bring no proof that we are members of the royal family. Would that we could ever realize the love which God has manifested toward us fallen sinners, in giving his only Son for our salvation! We should never lose sight of the fact that those whom Christ redeems at such an infinite price are to be purified, that they may be unto him a peculiar people, zealous of good works. We should feel that Christ has placed upon us special honors in thus distinguishing us from the world, when he might have left us to perish in our sins.

God would have his people present a marked contrast, in character and conduct, to the unbelieving world. We are to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." Only by constant watchfulness and earnest prayer, mingled with faith, can we preserve our peculiar, holy character as sons and daughters of God.

It is far more easy to profess and resolve than to perform. Like ancient Israel, many covenant to cleave unto the Lord, and serve him, and then soon forget their vows, and join with the ungodly in the pursuits of worldly gain

or pleasure. We should be jealous of ourselves, lest we depart from God. "For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven?" The blessings and privileges which we enjoy place us under the most solemn obligation to improve these gifts to the glory of our Creator. They should inspire in our hearts love to God, and an earnest determination to obey his requirements. Let us not become self-confident or presumptuous, but rather fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.

The cause of Israel's weakness lay in their departure from God by disobedience to his commandments. The reason of the weakness and backsliding of modern Israel is their neglect to obey the divine law. God requires from all mankind obedience to his commandments. The whole world will be judged by the moral law according to their opportunity of becoming acquainted with it, whether by reason, or tradition, or the written word.

God's law is spiritual. It takes cognizance of our most secret thoughts, purposes, and motives. The judgment, the will, and the affections must be controlled by its precepts. Its principles require love to God and to man; without this love, external compliance will not be accepted. This law is the standard of Christian character. Like a faithful mirror, it reveals to the children of men the defects in their moral character. It makes them watchful against temptation. It teaches them to be exact in judgment, and correct in spiritual discernment. The law of God is holy, just, and good. When our lives conform to this standard we are happy.

The Lord was constantly seeking to impress upon ancient Israel their duty to obey his law; and those words of warning and reproof apply with as much greater force to this generation as our light and privileges are greater than were those of Israel. We have seen how the disregard of God's

requirements brought trouble upon his ancient people, and finally resulted in their entire separation from him. Their sad history should be a lesson to us that nothing should be permitted to rival God in our affections. He alone can give rest, and peace, and happiness to the soul. God alone is entitled to our supreme love, to our entire confidence. He should be the object of our gratitude and adoration, our reverence and unquestioning submission. If we fail to love him with all the heart, we rob him of the service which is his due.

Through his pride and ambition, Satan became the enemy of God and man. Though he forfeited his position in Heaven, he has succeeded in his presumptuous efforts to become the god of this world. Satan used the Canaanites as his instruments to allure Israel from God, and lead them to give honor to himself. It was to secure their own safety and happiness that the Lord commanded his people to extirpate those wicked nations.

In their prosperity, Israel forgot God, as they had been warned that they would do. But reverses came. The Hebrews were subdued by the king of Mesopotamia, and held in severe bondage for eight years. In their distress, they found that their idolatrous connections could not help them. Then they remembered the wonderful works of God, and began to cry unto him, and the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. The spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war, and the Lord delivered the king of Mesopotamia into his hand.

When Othniel was designated as the man whom God had chosen to lead and deliver Israel, he did not refuse to take the responsibility. In the strength of God he at once commenced to repress idolatry as the Lord had commanded, to administer justice, and to elevate the standard of morality and religion. As Israel repented of their sins, the Lord manifested his great mercy toward them, and wrought for their deliverance.

For forty years Othniel ruled in Israel. During this time the people

remained faithful to the divine law, and consequently enjoyed peace and prosperity. But when his judicious and salutary control ceased with his death, the Israelites again relapsed into idolatry. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again.

Had Israel been true to God, their example of faithfulness would have been followed by their children; but the sins of after generations testified to the indolence, and slothfulness, and neglect of the parents. A solemn responsibility still rests upon parents in the education of their children, to mould their characters after the pattern which God has approved, and not after the pattern of the world. Christian parents should teach their children the solemn and momentous truths of God's word, especially those truths which particularly relate to the present time. Faithful, earnest, and frequent prayer should be offered that these children may be fitted for any position of trust to which God shall call them, in society or in the church. They should be taught to love righteousness and to hate evil.

One family educated according to the Bible rule may exert an influence directly upon thousands, and through them upon others, until multitudes shall be brought to fear and honor God, and a glorious company of white-robed ones shall stand round about the throne,--a precious harvest from the seed sown by those faithful parents. But Satan is determined that this mighty influence for God and Heaven shall not be exerted in the home circle. He will deceive the parents if possible. He will make them careless, inattentive, indolent, in the service of God. He will make them negligent in training their children according to the Bible standard, negligent in conforming their own lives to the life of Christ; for Satan knows that in most cases he can thus secure the parents and children also, and through them can ruin many souls.

As the Israelites were prone to idolatry, so are the people of the present age. The same adversary that succeeded in leading them astray, is now at

work with ten-fold power to entice God's professed people from their simplicity, their sincerity, their earnestness and piety. His devices are all too successful. Worldly things are allowed to attract the attention and absorb the interest. Professed Christians unite with the ungodly, and Christ ceases to be a welcome guest.

The only safety for God's people is to put away the impious ambition to make a league with the world, to imitate her customs and practices. They must seek a closer connection with God, and give diligent heed to his word in counsels, reproofs, and promises.

By their family government, parents are laying the very foundation of the child's character. God has committed to parents a solemn and responsible work. The mother of Moses trained her child for God. So patiently and perseveringly did she plant religious principles in his soul, that although afterward surrounded with great temptations, he was not corrupted. A prospective crown could not entice him from his allegiance to God. What our children may become we cannot tell; the future we cannot read; but God has appointed our work, and bidden us perform it with both worlds in view, that our children may be a blessing to the church and to the world here, and may shine forever in the courts of the Lord hereafter.

Our earthly life, however long, honored, or useful it may be, is but childhood, frail, imperfect, and undeveloped. Manhood, with its full, perfect, glorious development, will come, when, freed from the taint of sin, we stand among the redeemed throng. Then we shall enjoy a life which measures with the life of God, and through everlasting ages we shall go on increasing in wisdom and knowledge.

June 16, 1881

Defeat of Sisera

In the northern part of the land of Canaan, near Lake Merom, lay the possessions of Jabin, king of Hazor, and one of the most powerful and formidable of the enemies of Israel. In the days of Joshua, this monarch united with other kings against Israel, but was utterly defeated and his city was burned.

After some years, however, the Canaanites recovered from their defeat, and rebuilt the city. A new king, Jabin, reigning like his predecessor in Hazor, rose into great power. The commander of his armies, Sisera, was an able and successful general. His forces were well equipped and powerful, including nine hundred chariots of iron.

The Israelites, having again separated themselves from God by idolatry, were grievously oppressed by these enemies. The property and even the lives of the people were in constant danger. Hence the villages and lonely dwellings were deserted, and the people congregated in the walled cities. The high-roads were unoccupied, and the people went from place to place by unfrequented by-ways. At the places for drawing water, many were robbed and even murdered, and to add to their distress, the Israelites were unarmed. Among forty thousand men, not a sword or a spear could be found.

For twenty years, the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the oppressor; then they turned from their idolatry, and with humiliation and repentance cried unto the Lord for deliverance. They did not cry in vain. There was dwelling in Israel, a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver his people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had

sought to her for counsel and justice.

The Lord communicated to Deborah his purpose to destroy the enemies of Israel, and bade her send for a man named Barak, of the tribe of Naphtali, and make known to him the instructions which she had received. She accordingly sent for Barak, and directed him to assemble ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and make war upon the armies of King Jabin.

Barak knew the scattered, disheartened, and unarmed condition of the Hebrews, and the strength and skill of their enemies. Although he had been designated by the Lord himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful. He accepted the message from Deborah as the word of God, but he had little confidence in Israel, and feared that they would not obey his call. He refused to engage in such a doubtful undertaking unless Deborah would accompany him, and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel. Deborah consented, but assured him that because of his lack of faith, the victory gained should not bring honor to him; for Sisera would be betrayed into the hands of a woman.

Barak now marshaled an army of ten thousand men, and marched to Mount Tabor, as the Lord had directed. Sisera immediately assembled an immense and well-equipped force, expecting to surround the Hebrews and make them an easy prey. The Israelites were but poorly prepared for an encounter, and looked with terror upon the vast armies spread out in the plain beneath them, equipped with all the implements of warfare, and provided with the dreaded chariots of iron. These were so constructed as to be terribly destructive. Large, scythe-like knives were fastened to the axles, so that the chariots, being driven through the ranks of the enemy, would cut them down like wheat before the sickle.

The Israelites had established themselves in a strong position in the mountains, to await a favorable opportunity for an attack. Encouraged by Deborah's assurance that the very day had come for signal victory, Barak led his army down into the open plain, and boldly made a charge upon the enemy. The God of battle fought for Israel, and neither skill in warfare, nor superiority of numbers and equipment, could withstand them. The hosts of Sisera were panic-stricken; in their terror they sought only how they might escape. Vast numbers were slain, and the strength of the invading army was utterly destroyed. The Israelites acted with courage and promptness; but God alone could have discomfited the enemy, and the victory could be ascribed to him alone.

When Sisera saw that his army was defeated, he left his chariot, and endeavored to make his escape on foot, as a common soldier. Approaching the tent of Heber, one of the descendants of Jethro, the fugitive was invited to find shelter there. In the absence of Heber, Jael, his wife, courteously offered Sisera a refreshing draught, and opportunity for repose, and the weary general soon fell asleep.

Jael was at first ignorant of the character of her guest, and she resolved to conceal him; but when she afterward learned that he was Sisera, the enemy of God and of his people, her purpose changed. As he lay before her asleep, she overcame her natural reluctance to such an act, and slew him by driving a nail through his temples, pinning him to the earth. As Barak, in pursuit of his enemy, passed that way, he was called in by Jael to behold the vain-glorious captain dead at his feet,--slain by the hand of a woman.

Deborah celebrated the triumph of Israel in a most sublime and impassioned song. She ascribed to God all the glory of their deliverance, and bade the people praise him for his wonderful works. She called upon the kings and princes of surrounding nations to hear what God had wrought for Israel, and to take warning not to do them harm. She showed that honor and

power belong to God, and not to men, or to their idols. She portrayed the awful exhibitions of divine power and majesty displayed at Sinai. She set before Israel their helpless and distressed condition, under the oppression of their enemies, and related in glowing language the history of their deliverance.

The destruction of Sisera and his forces, effectually subdued the Canaanites. After this, the land had peace forty years. But prosperity did not bring Israel nearer to God.

June 23, 1881

Gideon Called

Alas, that in the history of God's chosen people the sorrowful story of apostasy and its punishment must be so oft repeated! Forty years of peace elapsed after the destruction of Sisera and his host, and again "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." Heretofore the hand of the oppressor had fallen but lightly on the tribes dwelling east of the Jordan, but in the present calamities they were the chief sufferers.

The Midianites and Amalekites, who dwelt on the eastern borders of the land and in the deserts beyond, were still the bitter and unrelenting enemies of Israel. These nations had been well-nigh destroyed by the Israelites in the days of Moses, but they had since increased greatly, and had now become a numerous and powerful people. They had thirsted for revenge, and now the opportunity had come.

Because of their sins, the protecting hand of God was withdrawn from Israel, and they were left to the mercies of their enemies. The wild, fierce inhabitants of the desert, "as grasshoppers for a multitude," came swarming into the land, with their flocks and herds, and pitched their tents in plain and valley. They came as soon as the harvests began to ripen, and remained until the last fruits of the earth had been gathered. They stripped the fields of their increase, and robbed and maltreated the inhabitants, and then returned to the deserts. Thus the Israelites had been forced to abandon the open country, and to congregate in the walled towns; and many had even found shelter in caves among the mountains.

For seven years this oppression continued, and then in their distress the

people remembered Him who had so often delivered them; and they cried unto the Lord for help. But while they were very desirous to be relieved from their oppressors, they did not exercise true repentance for their sins.

God could not help them in their state of impiety. But through his prophet he addressed them in words of warning and reproof, and the message was publicly proclaimed from city to city throughout the land. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. But ye have not obeyed my voice."

We might expect the Israelites to harden their hearts against the reproofs of the prophet. We listen to hear them respond, "We do not wish to be continually reminded of our sins. Speak to us words of peace, encouragement, and hope, but do not keep ever before us the dismal relation of our backslidings." How often do the professed people of God at the present day turn away from instruction, and neglect oft-repeated warnings. They dislike to be reminded of their defects of character. They are unwilling to be reproved for their pride and idolatry in turning from the requirements of God to seek the gains, friendship, or pleasures of the world.

Such was the manner in which some of the Israelites received the message of reproof. Had the people been enjoying prosperity, this feeling of rebellion would, no doubt, have been general; but in their distress from the oppression of their enemies, with want and even starvation staring them in the face, they felt their need of help from God. They knew that unless he whom they had so dishonored should manifest his power for their deliverance, they must perish. In deep humility they accepted the message of reproof, confessed their sins, and implored the mercy of the Most High.

Their prayers were heard, and again the Lord sent forth the man of his choice to act as deliverer for Israel. The one thus selected was Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh. The Midianites had swept like a devouring plague over the land. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the Hebrews could secrete sufficient food to save them from actual starvation. Gideon had, however, retained possession of a small quantity of wheat, and fearing to beat it out in the threshing floor, he had taken it to the vineyard, near the wine-press. The time of ripe grapes being far off, the attention of the Midianites would not be directed to that place.

As he thus labored in secrecy and silence, he sadly meditated upon the condition of Israel. He thought of her glorious triumphs in the past, of her present abject condition, and of the still darker prospect for the future, and his spirit was stirred within him. With deep earnestness he considered how the oppressor's yoke might be broken from off his people. To all appearance this was impossible. The Israelites were disheartened and discouraged. They had dishonored God by their idolatry, and they felt little confidence that he would work for them.

Gideon almost despaired of inspiring the people with faith or courage, but he knew that the Lord would work mightily for Israel as he had done in the past. His whole soul cried out after God. He felt that although he might stand alone, yet if he had the assurance that God was with him, he would not fear to strike a blow against the oppressors.

While Gideon's mind was absorbed in meditations like these, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him and addressed him with the words, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

The melancholy nature of Gideon's thoughts is revealed by his answer, "O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and

where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

The messenger of Heaven replied, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?"

With a sense of his own unfitness for so important a work, Gideon exclaimed, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

Then the angel gave him the gracious assurance, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Gideon desired some token that the one now addressing him was the same that spoke to Moses in the burning bush. The angel had veiled the divine glory of his presence, but it was no other than Christ, the Son of God. When a prophet or an angel delivered a divine message, his words were, "The Lord saith, I will do this," but it is stated of the Person who talked with Gideon, "The Lord said unto him, I will be with thee."

Desiring to show special honor to his illustrious visitor, and having obtained the assurance that the Angel would tarry, Gideon hastened to his tent, and out of his scanty store prepared a kid and unleavened cakes, which he brought forth to set before him. Gideon was poor, yet he was ready to use hospitality without grudging.

As the gift was presented, the Angel said, "Take the flesh and unleavened cakes, and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." Gideon did so, and then the Lord gave him the sign which he desired. With the staff in his hand, the Angel touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and a fire rose up out of the rock and consumed the whole as a sacrifice, and not as a

hospitable meal; for he was God, and not man. After this token of his divine character, the Angel disappeared.

When convinced that he had looked upon the Son of God, Gideon was filled with fear, and exclaimed, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face."

Then the Lord graciously appeared to Gideon a second time and said, "Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die." These gracious words were spoken by the same compassionate Saviour who said to the tempted disciples upon the stormy sea, "It is I; be not afraid,"--he who appeared to those sorrowing ones in the upper chamber, and spoke the selfsame words addressed to Gideon, "Peace be unto you." The very same Jesus who walked in humiliation as a man among the children of men, came to his ancient people, to council and direct, to command, to encourage, and reprove them.

The family to which Gideon belonged was grievously infected with idolatry. His father erected at Ophrah, where he dwelt, a large altar to Baal, at which the people of the towns worshiped. Gideon was commanded to destroy this altar, to cut down the groves that surrounded it, and in its stead to erect an altar to Jehovah, over the rock on which the offering had been consumed, and then to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord. Gideon faithfully carried out these directions, performing the work by night, lest he should be compelled to desist if he attempted it by day.

The deliverer of Israel must declare war upon idolatry before he went to battle with the enemies of his people. He must esteem the honor of God above the credit of his father, and regard the divine commands as more obligatory than parental authority.

The offering of sacrifice unto the Lord had been committed to the priests and Levites, and had been restricted to the altar at Shiloh; but He who had

established the Jewish economy, and to whom all its services pointed, had power to change its requirements. In this instance he saw fit to depart from the ritual appointment. It was of great importance that the deliverance of Israel should be preceded by a solemn protest against the worship of Baal, and an acknowledgment of Jehovah as the only true and living God.

When the men of the city, early in the morning, came to pay their devotions to Baal, they were greatly surprised and enraged at what had taken place. Soon it was known that Gideon had done this, and then nothing but his blood could satisfy those deluded idolaters. They at once began to put forth efforts to take his life.

Gideon had told his father, Joash, of the Angel's visit, and the promise that Israel should be delivered. He also related to him the divine command to destroy the altar of Baal. The Spirit of God moved upon the heart of Joash. He saw that the gods whom he had worshiped had no power even to save themselves from utter destruction and hence they could not protect their worshipers. When the idolatrous multitude clamored for the death of Gideon, Joash fearlessly stood in his defense, and endeavored to show the people how powerless and unworthy of trust or adoration were their gods: "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning; if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar."

He reminded them that the penalty of death would justly rest upon themselves instead of Gideon, for they had broken the law of God against idolatry.

The whole transaction, with the stirring appeals of Gideon, produced a powerful effect upon the people of Ophrah. All thoughts of violence were dismissed; and when, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, Gideon sounded the trumpet of war, they were among the first to gather to him. He then sent

messengers throughout his own tribe of Manasseh, and also to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and all cheerfully obeyed the call.

Gideon deeply felt his own insufficiency for the great work before him. He dared not place himself at the head of the army without positive evidence that God had called him to this work, and that he would be with him. He prayed, "If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou has said."

The Lord granted the prayer of his servant. In the morning the fleece was wet, while the ground was dry. But now unbelief suggested that wool naturally absorbs moisture when there is any in the air, and that the test was not decisive. Hence, he asked a renewal of the sign, humbly pleading that unbelief might not move the Lord to anger. His request was granted.

The Lord does not always choose for his work men of the greatest talents, but he selects those whom he can best use. Individuals who might do good service for God, may for a time be left in obscurity, apparently unnoticed and unemployed by their Master. But if they faithfully perform the duties of their humble position, cherishing a willingness to labor and to sacrifice for him, he will in his own time intrust them with greater responsibilities.

Before honor is humility. The Lord can use most effectually those who are most sensible of their own unworthiness and inefficiency. He will teach them to exercise the courage of faith. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to his might, wise by connecting their ignorance with his wisdom.

God will accept the services of all who will work in obedience to his

will, who will not for any consideration bring a stain upon the conscience, who will not permit any influence to lead them from the path of duty. If we choose, we may make the record of our lives such as we shall not be ashamed to own when the secrets of all hearts shall stand revealed, and every man's work shall be weighed in the balances of truth. The Lord employs men as his co-laborers, but let none imagine that they are essential to the work of God, that they cannot be dispensed with.

The teachable and trusting ones, having a right purpose and a pure heart, need not wait for great occasions or for extraordinary abilities before they employ their powers. They should not stand irresolute, questioning, and fearing what the world will say or think of them. We are not to weary ourselves with anxious care, but to go on, quietly performing with faithfulness the work which God assigns us, and leaving the result wholly with him.

If they but preserve their sincerity, their meekness, and humility, the poorest, weakest, and humblest of Christ's followers, working in love, may start waves of blessing that shall go on widening and deepening, to refresh and bless the world. In order that they may do this, Christ must shine forth in their character. Let the daily life be a reflection of the life of Christ, and the testimony thus borne to the world will have a powerful influence. Heaven alone will reveal the fruits of an unselfish, holy life. The great contest of truth against error must be carried forward by men who kindle their taper at the divine altar. Evil may seem for a time to prevail, but in the end righteousness will gain the victory. Every righteous act will be recorded in the book of life, and will be remembered and rewarded of God.

June 23, 1881

Parents in the Sabbath-School

The Sabbath-school affords precious opportunities and privileges for the young. Parents should highly prize these advantages, and show their children that they appreciate them. If they manifest no decided interest in the school themselves, they cannot expect their children to do so. In the Sabbath school, parents may be learners as well as the children. Both parents and children should seek to have a knowledge of the Scriptures. Other books should be secondary to the word of God. Christ has said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." We ought all of us to be better acquainted with the prophecies than we are, and to have a more thorough knowledge of the practical lessons of Christ. If we merely read the Scriptures uninterestedly, we cannot become intelligent in the truths therein contained.

Parents should search the Scriptures with their children. They should become familiar with the lessons themselves, then they can assist their children in learning them. Every day some portion of time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons, not merely in learning to mechanically repeat the words, while the mind does not comprehend the meaning; but to go to the very foundation, and become familiar with what is brought out in the lesson. The indifference of the children, in very many cases, is chargeable to the parents. They are indifferent, and the children catch the same spirit. If parents show that they attach importance to the Sabbath school, by giving it respect and prominence, the children will generally copy their example.

Parents should have a thorough understanding with their family that the sacred hours of the Sabbath are to be spent to God's glory. They should be up

with the sun, and have plenty of time to prepare for Sabbath-school without getting into a rush, and perhaps losing self-control. If the proper preparations have been made the previous day, there will be abundance of time to review the lesson studied during the week; and both parents and children can go to the school with the assurance that they have the lessons well learned.

Jesus was interested in children. He did not step into our world a fully matured man. Had he done this, children would not have had his example to copy. Christ was a child; he had the experience of a child; he felt the disappointments and trials that children feel; he knew the temptations of children and youth. But Christ was in his child life and youthful life an example to all children and youth. In childhood his hands were engaged in useful acts. In youth he worked at the carpenter's trade with his father, and was subject to his parents, thus giving in his life a lesson to all children and young. If Christ had never been a child himself, the youth might now think that he could not sympathize with them. But he lived their example, and all children and youth may find in Jesus one to whom they can carry all their griefs and all their disappointments, and in him they will find a friend who will help them.

Jesus loves little children. When the mothers brought their children to Jesus, the disciples attempted to send them away. But Jesus rebuked them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He then gathered them in his loving arms and blessed them. Those parents and teachers who have no love or patience with children are to be pitied, for they have not the mind of Christ. Those who are seeking to gather the children into the Sabbath-school are doing a good work, the very work the Master would be pleased to have them do. The expanding minds of even small children may comprehend very much in regard to the teachings of Christ, and may be taught to love him with all their ardent affections. Teachers and parents should sow beside all waters, and if faithful they may have a harvest of souls by and by. And when they shall see

the souls for whom they have labored, around the great white throne, with crowns and white robes and harps of gold, they will feel then that their efforts were not lost. The well done, good and faithful servant, will fall upon their ears as sweet music.

June 30, 1881

A Test of Faith

Gideon's courage was greatly strengthened by the tokens of divine favor vouchsafed to him. Without delay, he went out with his forces to give battle to the Midianites. But now another severe trial of faith awaited him. With the immense host of invaders spread out before him--the thirty-two thousand of the Hebrews seeming, in contrast, like a mere handful--the word of the Lord came to him: "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead."

It had been made a law in Israel that before they went to battle, the following proclamation should be sounded throughout the army: "What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." What a striking illustration is this of the tender, pitying love of Christ! He who instituted the relations of life and the ties of kindred, made special provision that these be not too widely broken. He would have none go forth to battle unwillingly. This proclamation also sets forth in a forcible manner the influence which may be exerted by one man who is deficient in faith and

courage, and further shows the effect of our thoughts and feelings upon our own course of action.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The thoughts and feelings cherished give direction to the conduct, and thus determine the character. A strong, well-balanced character is built up by faithfulness in all the smaller as well as the greater acts of life. A man is measured, not by the power put forth in some one great effort, but by the zeal and integrity which he brings to the daily round of cares and responsibilities.

True Christian character is marked by a singleness of purpose, an indomitable determination, which refuses to yield to worldly influences, which will aim at nothing short of the Bible standard. If men will permit themselves to become discouraged in the service of God, the great adversary will present abundant reasons to turn them from the plain path of duty to one of ease and irresponsibility. Those who can be bribed or seduced, discouraged or terrified, will be of no service in the Christian warfare. Those who set their affections on worldly treasures or worldly honors, will not push the battle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

All who would be soldiers of the cross of Christ, must gird on the armor and prepare for conflict. They should not be intimidated by threats; or terrified by dangers. They must be cautious in peril, yet firm and brave in facing the foe and doing battle for God. The consecration of Christ's follower must be complete. Father, mother, wife, children, houses, lands, everything, must be held secondary to the work and cause of God. He must be willing to bear patiently, cheerfully, joyfully, whatever in God's providence he may be called to suffer. His final reward will be to share with Christ the throne of immortal glory.

Because of the weak condition of the armies of Israel, in contrast with

the numbers of the enemy, Gideon had refrained from making the usual proclamation. He was filled with astonishment at the declaration that his force was too large. But the Lord saw the pride and unbelief existing in the hearts of this people. Aroused by the stirring appeals of Gideon, they had readily enlisted; but when they saw the multitudes of the Midianites, their courage failed. Yet, had Israel triumphed, those very men would have ascribed the victory to their own skill and valor, rather than to the mercy and power of Jehovah. As a people, they had little faith in God. Many were suffering the reproaches of a guilty conscience.

Instead of being too many, the Israelites felt that their numbers were too few; but Gideon made the proclamation as the Lord had directed. With sinking heart he saw twenty-two thousand, or more than two-thirds of his entire force, depart for their homes.

Again the word of the Lord came to his servant: "The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go."

The people were led down to the water-side, expecting to make an immediate attack upon the enemy. A few hastily took a little water in the hand and sucked it up as they went on, but nearly all bowed upon their knees, and leisurely drank from the surface of the water. Those who took of the water in their hands, were but three hundred out of the ten thousand; yet these were selected, and the great body of the army were permitted to return to their homes.

Here we see the simple means by which character is often tested. Those who in a time of great peril were intent upon supplying their own wants, were not the men to be trusted in an emergency. The men of God's choice

were the few who would not permit their own wants to hinder them in the discharge of duty. Not only did they possess courage and self-control, but they were men of faith. They had not defiled themselves by idolatry. God could direct them, and through them he could work deliverance for Israel. The Lord designed to show his people that he was their source of strength. By the simplicity of the means employed, he designed to rebuke their pride and self-exaltation.

As with ancient Israel, so it is with the people of God at this age of the world. The Lord can do but little for the children of men, because they are so ready to esteem themselves wiser than their Creator. If blessed with a measure of success, many become elated and self-confident, and forget their dependence upon God. There is too much reliance upon human plans and methods, and too little faith in the mighty God of Jacob; too much machinery, and too little of the life-giving Spirit and power of the Most High.

Christ is the light of the world. All wisdom and all knowledge flow from Him who is the fountain of wisdom. He bids his followers, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." It is when reflected in his disciples, that the divine loveliness of Christ is revealed to the world. Those who depart from the simplicity of the gospel, have gone on in advance of their Leader; but Christ says, "Follow me."

All who indulge pride and self-importance, "vaunting themselves against God," he will separate from his work; and, in their stead, will choose those who will walk in the path of humility and obedience, acknowledging that all their success comes from God.

All the wonders which God has wrought for his people, have been performed by the most simple means. When the people of God are wholly

consecrated to him, then he will employ them to carry forward his work on the earth. But we should remember that whatever success may attend us, the glory and honor belongs to God; for every faculty and every power is a gift from him.

God will test, to the utmost, the faith and courage of those to whom he has intrusted responsibilities in his work. Appearances will often be forbidding. Although God has given repeated assurance of his help, yet faith will almost stagger. "Thus saith the Lord," must be our firm reliance, independent of human reasonings, or apparent impossibilities.

The experience of Gideon and his army, was designed to teach a lesson of simplicity and faith. The leader whom God had chosen occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a Levite, or a priest. He thought himself the least in his father's house. Human wisdom would not have selected him; but God saw in Gideon a man of integrity and moral courage. He was distrustful of self, and willing to listen to the teachings of God, and carry out his purposes. The Lord is not dependent upon men of high position, of great intellect, or extensive knowledge. Such men are frequently proud and self-sufficient. They feel themselves competent to devise and execute plans without counsel from God. They separate themselves from the true Vine, and hence become dry and fruitless, as withered branches.

The Lord would put to shame the vaunting of men. He will give success to the feeblest efforts, the most unpromising methods, when divinely appointed, and entered upon with humility and trust. God will not test our faith beyond endurance. He will give us sufficient evidence, that we may, in our weakness, lean upon the arm of his strength, and trust wholly in his power. Talents, education, and influence, may, under the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, be employed in the service of God; but Satan is more often served by them, than is Jesus Christ.

The Majesty of Heaven walked among the children of men with the dignity of a king; yet he preserved the simplicity of a little child. He was never known to boast of superiority, to exalt his own power, ability, or attainments. Christ was the Creator of the earth; he was the king of glory; yet his life of meekness and humility put to shame the proud boasting of men. He was the embodiment of wisdom, the fountain of knowledge. Let those who would pride themselves upon their superior abilities, learn of the great Teacher. Jesus invites all, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

How does God look upon men who cherish pride, and boast of their superiority, when they are dependent upon him for every breath they draw, for the food they eat, the clothing they wear, and, above all these, for the precious gift of reason,--the power of thought? Let the hand of God be laid upon man, let the mind be clouded, and what then would he have whereof to boast?

Success does not depend upon strength or numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. A large church is not necessarily a strong church. Some of its members may be cherishing selfishness, pride, or unbelief; some may be dishonest, others corrupt in heart and life. All these are a source of weakness to the church. They bring the frown of God upon his people, and the great adversary will work through them to advance his own cause.

Anciently, those whose worldly interests would draw their hearts from the work of God, were bidden to return to their homes. It were better for the cause of truth today, if those whose attention is absorbed with their own private interests, would separate from the work of God, and give themselves to the things in which their hearts delight. Then they would not, by their

wrong example, exert so dangerous an influence upon others.

God is honored, not so much by the great number, as by the character of those who serve him. He appreciates moral worth. He draws the dividing line between those who bear his name by profession, and those whose character shows them to be his children. Those who have the fear of God will listen to his counsels, and obey them. They will not be content with spurious theories, nor build upon false principles to secure the friendship of the world. Yet, at the same time, they will cherish and exemplify those virtues that promote the happiness of the family, the church, and the community.

Many who occupy responsible positions in the church of God, are sacrificing their integrity to secure the favor of the ungodly. A strong current is sweeping downward, and they decide that it is easier to float with the tide than to row against it. Like the children of Israel, they sacrifice the blessings of God by their indolence and spiritual sloth. Many set up idols in their hearts,--idols of selfishness, idols of pride, and love of display. Eternal things lose their value. Withdraw the influences which God has provided to preserve and strengthen our spirituality, and it decays and dies. We must be continually seeking to draw near to God, and to learn his will. We must become more unlike the world, and more like Christ in character.

July 14, 1881

Victory at Last

When Gideon stood at the head of thirty thousand men to make war against the Midianites, he felt that unless God should work for Israel, their cause would be hopeless. At the divine command the Hebrew force had been reduced by successive tests, until there remained with him, only three hundred men to oppose that countless multitude. What wonder that his heart sunk within him as he thought of the conflict of the morrow.

But the Lord did not leave his faithful servant to despair. He spoke to Gideon in the night season, and bade him, with Phurah, his trusty attendant, go down to the camp of the Midianites, intimating that he would there hear matter for his encouragement. He went, and waiting there in darkness and silence, he heard one soldier, just awakened, relate a dream to his companion: "Lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that the tent lay along."

The other answered in words that stirred the heart of that unseen listener, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."

Gideon recognized the voice of God speaking to him through the words of these Midianitish strangers. His faith and courage were greatly strengthened, and he rejoiced that Israel's God could work through the humblest means to abase the pride of men. With confidence and hope, he returned to the few men under his command, saying, "Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

The apparently powerless condition of that little company of Israelites, compared with the vast host of the enemy, was fitly represented by the cake of barley bread. But as that loaf overthrew the tent upon which it fell, so would the handful of Israelites destroy their numerous and powerful enemies. The Lord himself directed Gideon's mind in the adoption of a plan which the latter immediately set out to execute. He divided his three hundred men into three companies. To every man was given a trumpet, and a pitcher containing a lighted lamp. He then stationed his men in such a manner that they surrounded the entire camp of Midian. They had been previously instructed how to proceed, and at midnight, at a signal from Gideon, all the three companies blew their trumpets, uncovered their lamps, and broke the pitchers, at the same time shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The light of three hundred lamps, piercing the midnight darkness, and that mighty shout from three hundred voices, suddenly aroused the sleeping army. Believing themselves at the mercy of an overwhelming force, the Midianites were panic-stricken. A terrible scene of confusion ensued. In their fright they fled in all directions, and mistaking their own companions for enemies they slew one another.

As the news of Israel's victory spread, many who had been sent to their homes returned, and joined in the pursuit of their fleeing enemies. Gideon also sent messengers to the Ephraimites, requesting them to seize the fords of the Jordan that the fugitives might not escape eastward.

In this terrible overthrow, not less than one hundred and twenty thousand of the invaders were slain, and so completely were the Midianites subdued that they were never again able to make war upon Israel. A remnant of fifteen thousand who managed to escape across the river, were pursued by Gideon and his faithful three hundred, and utterly defeated, and Zebah and Zalmunna, two Midianite princes, were slain.

Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge

of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker. While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm his obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion and of crime. God says to one as to the other, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

What lessons of humility and faith may we not learn as we trace the dealings of God with his creatures. The Lord can do but little for the children of men, because they are so full of pride and vain glory. They exalt self, magnifying their own strength, learning, and wisdom. It is necessary for God to disappoint their hopes and frustrate their plans, that they may learn to trust in him alone. All our powers are from God; we can do nothing independent of the strength which he has given us. Where is the man or woman or child that God does not sustain? Where is the desolate place which God does not fill? Where is the want that any but God can supply?

The psalmist represents the presence of the Infinite One as pervading the universe. "If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." We can never find a solitude where God is not. The ever watchful eye of Omniscience is upon all our works, and although he can marshal the armies of Heaven to do his will, he condescends to accept the services of frail, erring mortals.

Because of the pride and ambition of the children of men, God has chosen to perform his mighty works by the most simple and humble means. It is not the men whom the world honors as great, talented, or brilliant, that God selects. He chooses those who will work in meekness and simplicity, acknowledging him as their leader and their source of strength. He would have us make him our protector and our guide in all the duties and affairs of life.

His care for the works of his creation is unwearied and incessant. When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by his Heavenly Father. No tears can be shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that he does not mark. Those to whom he has committed important trusts he regards with vigilance. All their actions and most secret motives must pass his scrutiny. He has bestowed upon them all their talents and abilities, and he will hold them to a strict account for the improvement of these gifts. If they attain success, it is because the God of wisdom has prospered them.

The Majesty of Heaven works by whom he will. His providence sometimes selects the humblest instruments to do the greatest work; for his power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard of reckoning, and by it we pronounce one thing great, and another small; but God estimates not according to the standard of men; he does not graduate his scale by theirs. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, and what is small to us must be small to him.

He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without a fear. He cares for everything and sustains everything throughout the universe that he has created.

If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. With humble prayer and trusting faith, we would seek counsel from God in all our plans and purposes of life. Then all our acts would be governed by discretion, our energies would be rightly directed. Then our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, small or great, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, nor overwhelmed by their weight. We should then

enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers.

July 21, 1881

A Wise Reply

After the overthrow of the Midianites, the tidings spread swiftly far and wide that Israel's God had again fought for his people. No words can describe the terror of the surrounding nations when they learned what simple means had prevailed against all the power and skill of a bold, warlike race.

Wherever the news spread, all felt that the victory must be ascribed to God alone. Thus the Lord's name was glorified, the faith of Israel strengthened, and their enemies were brought to shame and confusion.

It is not safe for God's people to adopt the maxims and customs of the ungodly. The divine principles and modes of working are widely different from those of the world. The history of nations presents no such victories as the conquest of Jericho or the overthrow of the Midianites. No general of heathen armies had ever conducted warfare as Joshua and Gideon had done. These victories teach the great lesson that the only sure ground of success is the help of God, working with human effort. Those who trust to their own wisdom and their own skill will surely be disappointed. The only safe course in all the plans and purposes of life is to preserve the simplicity of faith. Humble trust in God and faithful obedience to his will are as essential to the Christian in waging spiritual warfare as they were to Gideon and his brave associates in fighting the battles of the Lord.

God's commands must be implicitly obeyed, irrespective of the world's opinion. This lesson should not be disregarded by those who occupy positions of responsibility among their fellowmen. Such persons above all others should neglect none of the Lord's ordinances or commands. He who conforms to the customs and practices of the world separates himself from

God. All should earnestly improve every religious privilege, and inquire of God daily to learn his will. The life and words of Christ must be diligently studied, and his instructions cheerfully obeyed. He who will thus gird on the armor of righteousness need not fear the enemies of God. He may be assured of the presence and protection of the Captain of the Lord's host.

It is a sad fact that the simplicity of true faith has, in a great measure, departed from the church of Christ. Many who occupy responsible positions are in constant danger of separating themselves from God by neglect of the means of grace. They do not drink daily at the fountain of wisdom and righteousness, and do not acknowledge God as the right arm of their power.

The Lord is willing to give his people a precious experience. He would lead them to confide in his wisdom, his power, and his love, instead of trusting to themselves. He would teach them to submit their judgment and their will implicitly to him. Then will they see and know that of themselves they can do nothing; that God is all and in all. His love will dwell in their hearts, and his praise will be continually upon their lips. God works for his people by agencies which the proud and worldly-wise will despise; but the grace and power of God are the only hope of sinful men.

After his glorious victory over the Midianites, Gideon was subjected to another test, differing widely from those already given, but unexpected and peculiarly severe. He must now meet unjust accusation and censure. When, at his call, the men of Israel had rallied against the Midianites, the tribe of Ephraim had remained behind. They looked upon the effort as a perilous and doubtful undertaking, and as Gideon sent them no special invitation, they availed themselves of this excuse not to join their brethren. But when the news of Israel's triumph reached them, the Ephraimites were dissatisfied and envious because they had not shared it.

Gideon was not anxious to secure the honor to himself, for he knew that

it belonged to the Lord alone. As soon as the Midianites were routed, Gideon had sent swift messengers, desiring the Ephraimites to seize the fords of the Jordan that the fugitives might not escape. A large number of the enemy were slain, among whom were two of the chief princes of Midian. Thus the men of Ephraim followed up the battle, and helped complete the victory. Nevertheless, they were jealous and angry, as though Gideon were governed by his own will and judgment. They did not discern God's hand in the triumph of Israel, and this very fact proved that they were indeed unworthy to be used as his instruments on that occasion. They would have taken the honor to themselves, instead of ascribing it to God. The wicked spirit manifested toward Gideon shows that they were not men who could be trusted, who would appreciate God's mercy and power in their deliverance.

The wisdom of God, as displayed in the methods and instrumentalities employed to carry forward his work, is foolishness to the boastful and self-confident, because they know not the mystery of godliness. The Lord would teach his people at the present day the lesson of simple dependence upon that mighty arm which can overthrow the strongholds of Satan. The prayer of faith, offered by God's humble, obedient, trusting people, will bring them the victory.

The most complete and perfect system which men have ever devised, apart from the power and wisdom of God, will prove a failure; while the humble means which God sanctions must succeed. The simple act of blowing a blast upon the trumpet, by the army of Joshua around Jericho, and by Gideon's little band about the host of Midian, was made effectual, through the power of God, to overthrow the might of his enemies. Deep are the counsels of God, and the finite mind seeks in vain to comprehend them.

The bullock standing between the altar for sacrifice and the plow in the furrow,--ready for either,--fitly represents the position which God's people should occupy. The Lord has no place in his work for the indolent and self-

indulgent. Like the men of Ephraim, there are many at the present day who are ready to work diligently to secure honor to themselves; but unless they can do this they will not work at all. And not only will they do nothing to themselves, but by their example and influence they will discourage others.

The men of Ephraim, returning from the fords of the Jordan with the trophies of victory, addressed Gideon in terms of angry reproach: "Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?"

Gideon knew that he had acted by the divine command, and though harshly censured by those who should have commended, he restrained all feelings of anger or indignation. How easily the spirit of jealousy and discontent might have been fanned into a quarrel that would have caused division, bloodshed, and ruin! By his self-control, Gideon showed himself a hero. He proved the truth of those words written so long afterward, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." In his reply to the Ephraimites he modestly threw a veil over his own success, but spoke in the highest praise of their achievements: "What have I done now in comparison of you?" Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" He represented the victory gained by himself and his army of three hundred men as little in comparison with their taking the princes of Midian. And he further showed that the glory belonged neither to him nor to them, but to the Lord.

Gideon's modest and prudent answer appeased the anger of the men of Ephraim, and they returned in peace to their homes. How much of the trouble that exists in the world today, springs from the same evil traits that actuated the men of Ephraim, and how many evils might be avoided if all who are unjustly accused or censured would manifest the meek, self-forgetful spirit of Gideon.

July 28, 1881

One Wrong Step

The people of Israel, filled with joy and gratitude at their deliverance from the Midianites, proposed to Gideon that he should become their king, and that the throne should be confirmed to his descendants. His answer shows how true and noble were the motives by which he was actuated. "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you." At the divine command, Gideon had willingly gone forth to battle for Israel; he had not shrunk from duty, nor hesitated in the face of danger; but he nobly refused to accept from the people those honors which the Lord had reserved to himself the right to bestow.

God had manifested special favor to Gideon, in selecting him as the instrument through whom to deliver Israel. While great responsibilities rested upon him in this important crisis, Gideon's course was marked with humility and faithful obedience. God accepted his work, and crowned his efforts with success. But now Gideon was assailed by temptation in a new form. When the reprover of wrong has done his work, in obedience to God's commands, the period of inactivity which succeeds the struggle, is often the most dangerous. This danger Gideon now experienced. A spirit of unrest was upon him. Hitherto he had been content to execute the commands given him of God; but now, instead of calmly waiting for divine instruction, he began to devise and execute plans for himself. He had not learned to wait as well as to labor--to suffer God's will as well as to do it.

Satan is never idle. He is filled with hatred against God, and is constantly enticing men into a wrong course of action. After the armies of the Lord have gained a signal victory, the great adversary is especially busy. He comes disguised as an angel of light, and as such he endeavors to

overthrow the work of God. Thus thoughts and plans were suggested to the mind of Gideon, by which Israel were led astray.

The tribes on the east side of the Jordan were quite a distance from the tabernacle at Shiloh, to which all the men of Israel were required to repair three times a year, to attend the great annual feasts. This of course, required a considerable outlay of time and means. The thought was suggested to Gideon that it would be a great advantage to these tribes to have a place at home, for sacrifice and worship.

Without waiting for the divine sanction, he determined to provide a suitable place and to institute a system of worship similar to that carried on at the tabernacle at Shiloh. He had refused the urgent solicitations to become king of Israel, but he now determined to take advantage of the popular feeling in his favor to carry out the plan he had devised. As his share of the spoil taken from the Midianites, he asked that all the ear-rings of gold might be given him, promising that he would put them to a wise use.

As is natural, even at the present day, the people of Israel were more ready to ascribe the honor of the victory to Gideon than to the Lord. They readily complied with the request, and also collected many other costly materials, together with the richly adorned garments of the princes of Midian.

The total value of the spoil thus contributed was not less than fifteen thousand dollars. From the material thus furnished, Gideon constructed an ephod and a breastplate of judgment in imitation of those worn by the high priest.

Gideon led the people to look upon this ephod and the breastplate as possessing special sacredness in themselves. In this he erred. All that could make them sacred was the fact that they were employed in the solemn

service of God as he had directed. The high priest alone was authorized to wear them when he went in before the Lord.

Because he had been commanded to offer a sacrifice upon the rock where the angel appeared to him, Gideon concluded that he had been divinely appointed to officiate as a priest, and that by instituting a service there, he might save the people the trouble and expense of their journeys to Shiloh.

The Lord was not pleased with this arrangement, for it was contrary to the order which he had established. It was an assumption of authority on the part of Gideon which proved disastrous to himself and to all Israel. God designs that his people shall place a high estimate upon every provision for their salvation. He desires them to appreciate his great mercy and condescension, and to manifest gratitude and zeal proportionate to the value of the great gift of the Son of God. But we are disposed to shun sacrifice and self-denial for our eternal interest, while we readily devote time and strength to seeking temporal advantage. Thus our conduct too often shows that we place a higher estimate upon earthly things than upon the heavenly treasure.

It is the work of God's true people to advance his glory in the earth. Through connection with him, they will be imbued with divine wisdom, which will lead them to place a right estimate upon eternal things. The Lord desired his people to go up to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at the stated seasons, even though it might require considerable sacrifice. That very effort would lead them to place a higher value upon their religious privileges.

In seeking to bring the worship of God nearer home, Gideon was but providing to indulge the people in their indolence. This would have no beneficial influence upon them. All plans based upon human reasoning should be looked upon with a jealous eye, lest Satan insinuate himself into the position which belongs to God alone. The course pursued by Gideon

proved a snare, not only to himself and family, but to all Israel. The irregular and unauthorized worship led the people finally to forsake the Lord altogether, to serve idols. The ephod and the breastplate were regarded with pride, because of their costly material and exquisite workmanship; and after a time were looked upon with superstitious reverence. The services at the place of worship were celebrated with feasting and merriment, and at last became a scene of dissipation and licentiousness. Thus Israel were led away from God by the very man who had once overthrown their idolatry.

If men could foresee the result of their course, if they could realize the influence which they exert upon their own families and upon society, they would move with greater caution, and would maintain a firmer reliance upon God. The misconduct of parents frequently produces the most ruinous effects upon their children and associates, after the actors themselves have been laid in the grave. There is no evil which man should so much dread, as being given up to his own lusts. This was the fate of Israel. After Gideon's death, the people, especially his own house, plunged into the grossest idolatry.

Thus the snare which Gideon had so unwittingly set, entrapped the unwary feet of thousands. A snare,--how many snares are to be found in our path today! There is need that light from above be constantly shed upon our way, that we may see the snares laid for our feet. Oh, that fathers and mothers could realize the dangers that beset their path and the path of their children!

Those who are placed in the highest positions may lead astray, especially if they feel that there is no danger. The wisest err; the strongest grow weary. Excess of caution is often attended with as great danger as excess of confidence. To go forward without stumbling, we must have the assurance that a hand all-powerful will hold us up, and an infinite pity be exercised toward us if we fall. God alone can at all times hear our cry for help.

It is a solemn thought that the removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the failure to fulfill one good resolution, the formation of one wrong habit, may result not only in our own ruin, but in the ruin of those who have put confidence in us. Our only safety is to follow where the steps of the Master lead the way, to trust for protection implicitly to Him who says, "Follow me." Our constant prayer should be, "Hold up my goings in thy path, O Lord, that my footsteps slip not."

The Israelites needed the benefits of assembling for worship and entering into covenant together to serve the Lord. In separating themselves from the place of worship divinely appointed, they lost much. God had servants whose lips he unsealed to speak words of warning, encouragement, and reproof, so that the light received from Heaven by one shone not for himself alone, but to lighten the path of others. God knows best what his people need. His words come down to us, in warning and instruction,--"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

At the present day, as in ancient times, the people of God plead their own ease or convenience as an excuse for neglecting divine service. They will devise means to preserve the Christian name without making any sacrifice of time or means. God requires his people to maintain his worship. And those who are burdened with care and responsibility, should be the last to excuse themselves from religious privileges. They need wisdom from above. They need to be constantly reaching upward to lay hold on the divine arm, lest they stumble and fall. They can walk safely, only as they fear God, and obey his voice. Those whom God has burdened with a place in his work, need not be left to their own judgment, as was Gideon, to lead men away from the right path. The feet that God is guiding will press on in a way which leads straight forward, ever ascending, and ever brightening, until it reaches

the brightness of eternal day.

All wrong-doing is forsaking the path where Jesus leads, turning aside to the crooked ways of darkness. Those who are determined in the strength of Jesus to make the most of their opportunities, seizing every ray of light that Heaven sheds on their pathway, will go straight forward, fulfilling their duty to God and to their fellow-men. They will not fall, nor stumble. A divine Guide goes before the faithful, encouraging them with his voice, aiding them with his hand, and they need never mistake the way.

August 4, 1881

God's Justice Vindicated

The course of Israel, after the death of Gideon, is thus described by the sacred historian: "The children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side. Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel."

When men cast away the fear of God, we need not be surprised to see them departing from the path of honor and integrity. They are following another guide. They hurry on in the journey of life, heedless, presumptuous, yet ever fearful and dissatisfied; for they have left the only one who can give them rest and security. When once started in a wrong path, many press on as if infatuated, although every step leads them farther from the Source of light and the Tower of strength.

The great sin of Israel had ever been that of departing from God, forgetting his matchless love and his mighty power as revealed again and again in their deliverance. An appreciation of the Lord's mercy and goodness will lead to an appreciation of those who, like Gideon, have been employed as instruments to bless his people. The cruel course of Israel toward the house of Gideon was what might be expected from a people who manifested such base ingratitude to God.

The calamities which had constantly threatened them being past, the selfishness of Israel now became apparent. The men so grateful after that glorious victory over Midian, now forgot their offer to place Gideon and his sons upon the throne. They had been filled with wonder and admiration by the noble, unselfish, unambitious spirit which prompted him to refuse the

honor, both for himself and for his sons. But the impression wore away as other influences were brought to bear upon them. Gratitude died out of their hearts, and after Gideon's death, the people treated his sons with the basest neglect and cruelty. The human heart is fickle. It is not to be trusted. All who rely upon the favor or support of men will sooner or later find themselves leaning upon a broken reed.

Yet Gideon himself had sowed the seeds for that baleful harvest, when he performed that one wrong act by which Israel were led away from God. Now they had become blinded by the sophistry of Satan, and they were wandering away from Him who was their light, their strength, and their glory. The Lord withdrew his restraining Spirit from them, and gave them up to their own base passions.

According to the evil custom of those days, Gideon had taken numerous wives, and at his death he left no less than seventy sons. Besides these, there was another, Abimelech, "the son of a strange woman." This person had no right in the inheritance with Gideon's lawful children, and his debased character rendered him still more unworthy to be numbered with the descendants of the illustrious leader. The sons of Gideon had concurred in their father's refusal to accept the throne of Israel, but Abimelech determined to secure the position for himself. Being a native of Shechem, where his mother's relatives dwelt, he induced them to influence the Shechemites in his favor. He endeavored to advance his own interests by basely misrepresenting his brethren. He accused them of designing to seize upon the government and unite in its administration, and he sought to convince the people that it would be much better for them to be ruled by one of their own number than by such a band of tyrants.

Had the Israelites preserved a clear perception of right and wrong, they would have seen the fallacy of Abimelech's reasoning, and the injustice of his claims. They would have seen that he was filled with envy, and actuated

by a base ambition to exalt himself by the ruin of his brethren. Those who are controlled by policy rather than by principle are not to be trusted. They will pervert the truth, conceal facts, and construe the words of others to mean that which was never intended. They will employ flattering words, while the poison of asps is under their tongue. He who does not earnestly seek the divine guidance will be deceived by their smooth words and their artful plans.

There are many who would scorn the appellation of policy men, yet who will stoop to concealment, evasion, and even misrepresentation, to accomplish their purposes. He who, in a matter of right and wrong, remains noncommittal that he may retain the friendship of all; he who seeks to secure by evasion of truth what should be won by courage; he who waits for others to take the lead, when he should go forward himself, and then feels at liberty to censure their course,--all these are in God's sight numbered as deceivers.

Abimelech was successful in his schemes, and was accepted, at first by the Shechemites, and afterward by the people generally, as the ruler of Israel. But while thus exalted to the highest position in the gift of the nation, he was utterly unworthy of the trust. His birth was ignoble, his character vicious. The higher and nobler qualities,--virtue, integrity, and truth,--he had never cherished. He possessed a strong will and indomitable perseverance, and thus, by the most unscrupulous measures, he accomplished his purposes.

The Israelites, blinded by their own sinful course of apostasy, were acting directly contrary to God's express commands, and he left them to reap the results of their own folly. It was not God's will that Israel should have a king. But in case they desired to be thus governed, the Lord, understanding the pride and perversity of the human heart, had reserved to himself the right to appoint a king over them. God had brought Israel out from Egypt to be a peculiar people, especially devoted to himself, and unlike any other people. Israel's great ambition to imitate the idolatrous nations around them was the

result of separation from God.

Pride and ambition similar to that which cursed ancient Israel, exists in the church of God today. They are unwilling to be a peculiar people, distinct and separate from the world. To reach the Bible standard requires self-denial, a crucifixion of the affections and lusts. The unsanctified heart reaches out for forbidden things, but these very objects of desire will prove now, as anciently, a source of weakness and corruption. Christ "gave himself for us, that he might cleanse us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Those who seek the honor which comes from men are ever ready to adopt the customs and practices of the world. They gain their position by the exercise of traits of character which should lie dormant. If only those were exalted who had gained their position by fidelity to God and to man, the standard of morality and religion among the people would be elevated. The sin of which we are guilty in acting contrary to God's expressed will is as much greater than was that of ancient Israel, as our light and privileges have been greater than theirs.

The Shechemites sealed the compact with their new king by presenting him with a sum of money from the treasure which had been dedicated to their god, Baal-berith. By accepting the gift, Abimelech covenanted, at the very commencement of his reign, to use his influence and authority to promote the worship of this god. Thus he publicly pledged himself to counteract, as far as possible, the work which Gideon his father had done in overthrowing idolatry. Such has ever been the history of the world since the fall of man. God will use those who give themselves wholly to his service. And Satan not only marshals his host of evil angels and arrays them against God, but he employs men to execute his plans and to defy the King of Heaven.

Abimelech now proceeded to execute his power as suited his cruel character. With the money he had received, he hired a set of unprincipled

men who were ready for any crime. At the head of this company he marched to Ophrah, where Gideon's family still dwelt, and basely murdered them all, except one brother, Jotham, who escaped. Abimelech well knew that these men were far better qualified than himself to stand at the head of the kingdom; and he felt that while they lived, his throne would not be secure. Hence he conceived and executed this fiendish crime, that he might undisturbed enjoy the coveted honor, being the first who had borne the name of king among the descendants of Jacob. Returning in triumph to Shechem, Abimelech was immediately anointed king.

When Jotham was informed of this, he immediately repaired to Shechem. Burning with a sense of the horrible injustice and cruelty heaped upon his family, he determined at all hazards to present it before the people in its true light. While the multitude were engaged in festivities in honor of their king, celebrating the occasion with hilarious mirth and sensual gratification, Jotham ascended Mount Gerizim to a position where he could be seen and heard by all the people, and addressed them in words of keen reproof.

In a most fitting and beautiful parable, he presented before them the folly and injustice of their course. He represented the trees as seeking to make one of their number king over them. But the olive refused to leave its oil, the fig-tree its fruit, and the vine-tree its wine. The worthless bramble, however, readily appropriated the honor and at once stated the conditions of its acceptance: "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

The unselfish, unambitious conduct of Gideon and his sons was then forcibly portrayed, and also the ingratitude of the Shechemites. Jotham then concluded in words which proved to be a prophecy: "If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice

ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. But if not let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech."

After delivering this speech, Jotham, fled and dwelt in a part of the country beyond the power of Abimelech.

The transaction of making Abimelech their king, shows how low Israel had fallen. What a contrast between their humble, God-fearing leader, Moses, who had felt wholly unworthy to occupy his position, and this upstart king, who had secured the throne by treachery, and established himself by violence and bloodshed. It should send terror to our souls when we reflect to what lengths men may go in crime, when they have rejected the influence of God's Spirit. A despot, a murderer, was placed as commander-in-chief of Israel. Satan was now exultant. He had gained control of the mind of Abimelech, and through him he hoped to rule the people.

Truly what a striking contrast between the self-sacrificing, devoted leader whom God appointed, and the monster of ingratitude and cruelty whom Israel had now placed upon the throne. By the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine, in Jotham's parable, were represented such noble, upright characters as Moses and Joshua, who had been a living illustration of what a leader of Israel should be. Such men claimed no kingly honors. It was their work to bless their fellow-men, and they did not aspire to rank or power.

The worthless bramble, grasping for honor, and destroying that which was better than itself, was a fitting symbol of the vile and cruel Abimelech. Millo was the name of the senate-house, or townhall, and by the house of Millo are meant the chief men of Shechem, who had united in making Abimelech their king, but who, according to Jotham's prophecy, were to destroy Abimelech, and to be destroyed by him.

For three years this wicked man's reign continued, and then the Lord sent trouble among those who had united in an evil course. The very men who had made Abimelech king became disgusted with his demoralizing rule, and his heartless tyranny. By treachery he had gained the throne, and now by treachery they determined to remove him. The words of Jotham were fulfilled. Discord, strife, and hatred prevailed between Abimelech and his subjects. The king's cruelty had not ended with the sons of Gideon. Everyone who opposed his will was summarily put to death. But the time of retribution, both for Abimelech and for the Shechemites who had sustained him, was at hand.

The city of Shechem having rebelled, it was attacked by the king's forces, the inhabitants were slain, the city itself was reduced to ashes, and the ground was sown with salt, as a token of perpetual desolation.

A neighboring city united with Shechem in the insurrection, and Abimelech proceeded next to attack this place also. Having gained possession, he determined to burn the inhabitants with the tower, as he had done at Shechem. But the wicked king had passed the limits of divine forbearance. He had been permitted to execute the vengeance of God upon Israel, and his career of crime was now to be cut short.

As they were about to burn the tower, the king approached too near for his own safety. A piece of millstone hurled by the hand of a woman, struck and fatally wounded him. To avoid the disgrace of dying by a woman's hand, he was, at his own request, immediately slain by his armor-bearer. Thus ended the career of Abimelech. A vile murderer no longer lived to execute his tyranny.

Thus the justice of God punished both Abimelech and the Shechemites. This terrible history should teach us the lesson that sin will never go

unpunished, and it should impress upon our minds the danger of entering upon the path of disobedience.

All true greatness of character, all peace and joy of soul, must come from entire conformity to the will of God. The path of cheerful obedience is the path of safety and happiness. Messages of mercy are sent from Heaven, to teach us the right way. Strength for the conflict of life is ever awaiting us. With the help of God we may gain the victory.

August 11, 1881

A Backsliding People

After the death of Abimelech, the usurper, the Lord raised up Tola to judge Israel. His peaceful reign presented a happy contrast to the stormy scenes through which the nation had been passing. It was not his work to lead armies to battle and to achieve victories over the enemies of Israel, as the former rulers had done; but his influence effected a closer union among the people, and established the government upon a firmer basis. He restored order, law, and justice.

Unlike the proud and envious Abimelech, Tola's great desire was, not to secure position or honor for himself, but to improve the condition of his people. A man of deep humility, he felt that he could accomplish no great work, but he determined to perform with faithfulness his duty to God and to the people. He highly valued the privilege of divine worship, and chose to dwell near the tabernacle, that he might oftener attend upon the services there performed.

Devotion and humility have ever characterized the men with whom God has intrusted important responsibilities in his work. The divine call to Moses in the desert found him distrustful of self. He realized his unfitness for the position to which God had called him; but having accepted the trust, he became a polished instrument in the hand of God to accomplish the greatest work ever committed to mortals.

Had Moses trusted to his own strength and wisdom, and eagerly accepted the great charge, he would have evinced his entire unfitness for such a work. The fact that a man feels his own weakness, is at least some evidence that he realizes the magnitude of the work appointed him, and this

gives room for hope that he will make God his counselor and his strength. Such a person will move no farther nor faster than he knows God is leading him.

A man will gain power and efficiency as he accepts the responsibilities which God places upon him, and with his whole soul seeks to qualify himself to bear them aright. However humble his position or limited his ability, that individual will attain true greatness who cheerfully responds to the call of duty, and, trusting to the divine strength, seeks to perform his work with fidelity. He will feel that he has a sacred commission to battle against wrong, to strengthen the right, to elevate, comfort, and bless his fellow-men. Indolence, selfishness, and love of worldly approbation must yield to this high and holy calling.

Engaged in such a work, the weak man will become strong; the timid, brave; the irresolute, firm and decided. Each sees the importance of his position and his course, inasmuch as Heaven has chosen him to do a special work for the King of kings. Such men will leave the world better for their having lived in it. Their influence is exerted to elevate, to purify, and to ennoble all with whom they come in contact, and thus they help to prepare their fellow-men for the heavenly courts.

Tola governed Israel twenty-three years, and was succeeded by Jair. This ruler also feared the Lord and endeavored to maintain his worship among the people. In conducting the affairs of the government he was assisted by his sons, who acted as magistrates, and went from place to place to administer justice.

To some extent, during the latter part of Jair's reign, and more generally after his death, the Israelites again relapsed into idolatry. The sacred record states, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon,

and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him."

The divine judgments followed close upon the transgressions of Israel. The Ammonites made war upon them in the east, and the Philistines in the west. Other nations, also, united with these in the oppression of Israel, until they seemed again to be shut in by relentless foes. In the days of prosperity, God's people had forsaken him, and now he seemed to have forsaken them, and they knew not which way to turn for help. Thus was again fulfilled the word of the Lord by the mouth of Joshua, that the heathen nations, if not promptly destroyed, would prove to Israel as snares for their feet, and as thorns in their eyes.

When the sins of a nation are punished, the innocent often suffer with the guilty. Among apostate Israel, the Lord still had faithful servants. These labored to show Israel their transgressions, and that all their troubles were but the results of their apostasy. But the words of warning seemed for a time to fall unheeded.

We repeat what has been so often said before, that among the people of God today are dangers similar to those that well-nigh destroyed Israel. The command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," was spoken from Sinai for every soul that should live upon the earth. We can no more free ourselves from the claims of God's law than we can hide from his all-seeing eye. Its precepts reached every case, and its claims rest upon all the children of men to the close of time.

Idolatry has separated the people of God from him; he has not the first place in their thoughts and affections. Professed Christians fail to realize their accountability to God. They forget that he is ever present, to assert his supreme authority, and to take cognizance of all their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

Satan once presented all the attractions of the world to Christ, to allure him from the path of duty. Having failed in this, the arch-deceiver tries the same device with the followers of Jesus, and meets with much better success. Thus Satan receives the devotion which God claims. How many employ all the Creator's gifts merely to glorify themselves. How many set their affections upon their worldly possessions, or seek above all else the applause of men. How many choose the atmosphere of vanity and worldliness, rather than that of sobriety, purity, and godliness. They are so far from God that they cannot discern the true value of eternal things. And there are some who glory in their unbelief, making this an excuse for their defects of character. Unbelief is the idol which they worship. They willfully grope in darkness constantly diffusing mist and fog to shadow their own path and the path of others. But still the voice from Sinai sounds in our ears, addressing this class no less than all others, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Many who profess to be the disciples of Jesus seem as indifferent and careless in their religious life, as though no responsibility rested upon them to deny self and bear the cross. They do not realize their duty, by personal example and earnest effort to help others to follow in the same path. God would be to us the very help we need, if we would make him first, and last, and best, in all the purposes and events of life. Every plan devised should bear the high signet of Heaven, rather than the seal of worldly commendation.

The reason why so many are walking in darkness is that they pursue a path which leads directly away from God. Christ came to give the world an example of a pure and perfect life. He sacrificed himself for the joy of saving the lost. Whoever follows Christ will work the works of Christ. Pride and selfishness will not be cherished, every sinful indulgence will be put away, the soul temple will be cleansed from every idolatrous shrine. Until this shall take place, we cannot claim to be free from Israel's great sin of idolatry.

August 18, 1881

Judgment and Mercy

Exposed to the power of their enemies, the children of Israel at last realized the perils of their situation, and the futility of all their efforts against the oppressor. Then they began to seek help from Him whom they had so forsaken and insulted. They saw in some measure, how far they had separated themselves from the only One who could help them. "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim."

But infinite wisdom saw that they sorrowed because of the consequences of their sin--the suffering which it had brought upon themselves,--rather than because they had offended God. The Lord answered them, through one of his faithful prophets:

"Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more."

Thus the Lord presented before them his goodness, his long suffering, his pity for their distress, and the wonderful deliverances which he had wrought for them again and again. Notwithstanding all his love and care, they had once more forsaken him, and had sinned more grievously than ever before, choosing the service of idols, instead of the worship of the living God. Now, in their distress, he bade them, "Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

But there was hope for Israel as soon as they began sincerely to repent and humbly cry unto God. They had been led to see what would be their

condition, should the Lord leave them to be delivered by the gods in whom they trusted. They would be subdued by the very nations that in God's strength they had once conquered. Had Israel preserved their connection with God, they would have derived honor, dignity, and power from this relationship.

Allied to the King of kings, the Lord of life and glory, the vilest sinner may become a partaker of the divine nature, and an heir of eternal riches. "To them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Oh, what condescension, what amazing love, to make fallen man a member of the royal family, a child of the Heavenly King! How can the world's Redeemer look upon those who stubbornly refuse to receive the gifts of a Saviour's love, or who, having professedly accepted him, cast aside as worthless trifles the honor and dignity offered them as his followers!

Multitudes turn with contempt from the pleadings of divine grace and infinite love, to satisfy their desire for forbidden pleasures which prove as the apples of Sodom, beautiful without, but ashes within. Israel had no love for the holy character of God, and they rejected and despised his friendship. Scorning the Creator, they adored the creature; and when, in their distress, they sought unto the long-insulted Jehovah, he pointed them to the gods of their choice, and bade them cry to these deities for help.

The Israelites well knew that their idols were powerless to save or to destroy. They knew that the heathen worship was contrary to reason and sound judgment. But they had gradually departed from God, and had indulged in sin until their moral perceptions were dulled, and they were led astray by Satan.

As we ponder the solemn words of warning addressed to Israel, we are in imagination brought before the great white throne, where in the presence of the assembled universe, every man will be judged according to the deeds

done in the body. Then will be seen the true value of a Christian life and character. There must they render an account who have devoted their God-given talents of time, of means, or of intellect, to serving the gods of this world. The searching eye of Jehovah will rest upon all; and that voice which amid the thunders of Sinai spake to man, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"--that voice will answer the sinner's imploring cry for pardon, "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

None then to pity the folly of those who have despised and forsaken God. None to relieve their distress. They have forsaken their true and loving Friend, to follow the path of convenience and worldly pleasure. They intended at some time to return to God. But the world, with its follies and deceptions, absorbs the attention. Frivolous amusements, pride of dress, indulgence of appetite, harden the heart and benumb the conscience, so that the voice of truth is not heard. Duty is a despised word. Things of infinite value are lightly esteemed, until the heart loses all desire to sacrifice for Him who has given so much for man. But in the reaping time they must gather the crop sown.

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

God speaks to us today, in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs given to ancient Israel. If we depart from him, our condemnation will be greater than theirs; for we have their experience as a warning, and all the instruction which God has given since their time. Many and varied are the idols which we cherish; idols that engross the mind and harden the heart, so that sacred things are not rightly valued. Oh that the lessons given to ancient Israel might so impress our hearts and affect our lives that we would fully turn from idols, to serve the living God.

We must not trifle with our present privileges and opportunities, and expect that when lost they will be restored whenever we desire. It is impossible to abuse the powers with which our Creator has endowed us, and yet find them clear and vigorous, to call to our aid whenever we wish to devote them to a nobler, better purpose. The chains of habit, like ropes of steel, are not easily broken. Then how careful should we be to cherish only those traits which we would have to form the texture of character.

The children of Israel had forfeited all right to expect help from God, and they had begun to feel this. They knew not where to turn for human help, and God had apparently forsaken them. His words thrilled their guilty souls with the anguish of remorse. They knew that they deserved to suffer the divine judgment, and to this they were willing to submit, if they might hope once more to be forgiven and restored to the favor of God.

"And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

Oh, the long-suffering mercy and condescension of our God! The Lord had been trying his people. When they humbled themselves before him, and repented with sincerity of soul, he heard their prayers, and at once began to

deliver Israel.

September 15, 1881

A Lesson for Mothers

While Israel was sorely harassed by the children of Ammon on the east, and the Philistines on the west, the Lord hearkened to the prayers of his people, and began to work for their deliverance. After eighteen years of oppression, they made war against the Ammonites, and effectually destroyed their power. But a backsliding and idolatrous people soon forgot the lesson which divine wisdom had so often sought to teach them. As they continued to depart from God, he permitted them still to be oppressed by their powerful enemies, the Philistines.

For a period of forty years the children of Israel were constantly harassed, and at times completely subjugated, by this cruel and warlike nation. They had mingled with these idolaters, united with them in commerce, in pleasure, and even in worship, until they seemed to be identified with them in spirit and interest. Then these professed friends of Israel became their bitterest enemies, and sought by every means to accomplish their destruction.

There is still, as with ancient Israel, a constant tendency among the professed people of God to depart from the Lord's instructions, and to imitate the customs and practices of worldlings. The people of the world have given themselves to the service of Satan; and their hearts are opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ. They may profess to acknowledge him as their Redeemer, but they have the same hostility as did the heathen of old, to that religion which calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice. The spirit of the world today is the same that prompted the rejection and crucifixion of the Prince of Life; the same that has consigned his followers to imprisonment, exile, and death. The Christianity which will yield to the influence of the world, and

conform itself to their principles and customs, is looked upon with favor by men who are the enemies of God. But when the necessity for holiness of heart and life is presented, then the world feels that its rights are endangered. When the church rebukes fashionable follies, demoralizing amusements, extravagance, and self-indulgence; when Christianity is spiritual, positive, earnest, and aggressive,--then the opposition of the world will be excited.

Our Saviour plainly taught that there could be no harmony between his followers and the world. "Marvel not that the world hate you. Ye know that it hated me before it hated you." The world will love its own. Those who value the things which it values, will enjoy its friendship. It is the spirit of the world that separates us from God. It is the love of those things which he has condemned that brings his displeasure upon us. As in olden times, the Lord still sends his messengers with words of warning and reproof. He makes it our duty to hear, to understand, and to obey. There are evils among the people of God that call for reform. The light of the present age, the experience of the church in ages past, the teachings of the sacred word for this time,--all bid us go forward.

There were still in Israel true-hearted ones whose souls were filled with anguish because of the condition of their people. Their prayers of confession, penitence, and faith, went up without ceasing before God. He was not indifferent to their cries, but while there was apparently no response, his providence was preparing for them help suited to their condition. There was not to be found in all Israel a man through whom the Lord could work for the deliverance of his people. The erroneous education given to children, indulgence of appetite, and conformity to the practices of heathenism, had greatly lessened both physical and moral power.

Godly fathers and mothers looked with gloomy forebodings to the future. Many a mother had secretly cherished the hope that she might give to God and to Israel a son who should deliver his people from the oppressor's

power. But as parents saw their children coming up with perverted appetites and uncontrolled passions, the inquiry arose, What will the end be? What part will these youth and children act in the great drama of life? In the hearts of many mothers, hope battled against fear; but in other hearts reigned only discouragement and despair. What could the mother do to avert the threatened evils? How could she train her children for God? How banish the nameless terror which oppressed her soul? "Spare us, O God, spare us!" was the oft-repeated prayer. "Let not thy people perish; let us not see our children a prey of the enemy."

At this time the Lord appeared to the wife of Manoah, an Israelite of the tribe of Dan, and informed her that she should have a son; and in view of this, he gave her special instruction concerning her own habits, and also for the treatment of her child. "Now therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink neither wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing." He also directed that no razor should come upon the head of the child, for he was to be consecrated to God as a Nazarite from his birth, and through him the Lord would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

The woman sought her husband, and after describing the heavenly visitant, she repeated the message of the angel. Then, fearful that they should make some mistake in the important work committed to them, the husband prayed earnestly, "Let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born."

In answer to this petition, the angel again appeared, and Manoah's anxious inquiry was, "How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" The previous instruction was repeated,--"Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. All that I command her let her observe."

Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ. They looked upon him as the Lord's messenger, but whether a prophet or an angel, they were at a loss to determine. Wishing to manifest hospitality toward their guest, they entreated him to remain while they should prepare for him a kid. But in their ignorance of his character, they knew not whether to offer it for a burnt-offering or to place it before him as food.

The angel answered, "Although thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." Feeling assured, now, that his visitor was a prophet, Manoah said, "What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honor."

The answer was, "Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret?" Perceiving the divine character of his guest, Manoah "took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord; and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on." Fire came from the rock, and consumed the sacrifice, and as the flame went up toward heaven, "the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground." There could be no further question as to the character of their visitor. They knew that they had looked upon the Holy One, who, veiling his glory in the cloudy pillar, had been the guide and helper of Israel in the desert.

Amazement, awe, and terror filled Manoah's heart, and he could only exclaim, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" But his companion in that solemn hour possessed more faith than he. She reminded him that the Lord had been pleased to accept their sacrifice, and had promised them a son who should begin to deliver Israel. This was an evidence of favor instead of wrath. Had the Lord purposed to destroy them, he would not have wrought this miracle, nor given them a promise which,

were they to perish, must fail of fulfillment.

The words uttered by the angel convey an important truth. Our Creator himself declares that the mother's habits prior to the birth of her child will affect its character and destiny. In speaking to this one mother, the Lord spoke to all the anxious, sorrowing mothers of that time, and to all the mothers of succeeding generations. Yes, every mother may now understand her duty. She may know that the character of her children will depend vastly more upon her own habits before their birth, and her personal efforts after their birth, than upon external advantages or disadvantages.

If the mother would be a fit teacher for her children, she must form habits of self-denial and self-control before their birth. She imparts to them her own qualities of blood, her own strong or weak traits of character. If her ways are established in God, if she heeds the admonitions which he gives, she will do her part to give right character, right temper, and right appetites, to her offspring.

Said the angel, "Let her beware;" that is, be prepared to resist temptation, and stand firmly at her post. Let principle control her appetites and her passions. Of every mother it may be said, "Let her beware." There is something to shun, a necessity of guarding herself if she would seek eminence for the gift of God in her child. If she is unstable, double-minded, unprincipled, she will in most cases cause the future ruin of her child. Her fixed principles of action, her unbending purpose to adhere to right rules, as the wisdom of God dictates, will give these same traits of character to her child. The Lord has spoken, and his words are not to be disregarded.

The divine command was very explicit, prohibiting the use of the fruit of the vine. Every drop of stimulant taken by the mother as a gratification of the appetite, endangers the physical, mental, and moral health of her offspring, and is a direct sin against her Creator. The accumulated misery and

wickedness in our world exists in consequence of disregarding the express commands of God. The restrictions are given by the One who made man, who instituted the laws controlling his physical being, and who knows what is for his good. Dare any regard the lesson with indifference?

September 22, 1881

Temperance in the Family

Our accountability extends beyond our own well-being. Our influence is constantly affecting others, either for good or for evil. In a pre-eminent degree is this true of all parents. Fathers and mothers who gratify inclination and perverted appetite, at the expense of health, are not only working against their own physical life and moral advancement, but they leave their perverted appetite and their enfeebled moral power, to their children.

Liquor drinkers and tobacco devotees transmit their insatiable craving, their irritable nerves, and their inflamed, corrupted blood to their offspring. The licentious hand down their own weakness and wickedness, with a host of vile and loathsome diseases, as an inheritance to their children. Fashionable vices are debilitating and debasing the race. In physical strength, and in moral and intellectual power, every generation falls lower than the preceding. In consequence of the sinful habits of men, the world has become a vast lazarus. Satan exults at the success of his devices. Society is demoralized, the church is cursed, and God is dishonored.

The violation of God's law lies at the foundation of all the misery that flesh is heir to. It is intemperance, transgression of the laws of life and health, that has shortened the years of men, and made these few years full of sorrow and pain. Parents are not only responsible in most cases for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children, but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf and blind and idiotic. Sins of omission and of commission have brought the sure result.

The effect of stimulants and narcotics is to lessen physical strength; and whatever affects the body, will affect the mind. A stimulant may for a time

arouse the energies and produce mental and physical activity; but when the exhilarating influence is gone, both mind and body will be in a worse condition than before. Intoxicating liquors and tobacco have proved a terrible curse to our race, not only weakening the body and confusing the mind, but debasing the morals. As the control of reason is set aside, the animal passions will bear sway. The more freely these poisons are used, the more brutish will become the nature and disposition of men.

Parents who indulge appetite by eating to excess even of wholesome food, place a needless tax upon the system, and their children will be disposed to self-indulgence and gluttony. Such parents transmit their own perverted appetites to their offspring, who have far less moral power to resist temptation than had the parents. Then, instead of seeking to cure the evil which they have wrought, these fathers and mothers, by their own example, educate their children to indulge appetite regardless of reason, and to give loose rein to animal propensities. Many children die before reaching maturity, while many are ruined for time and for eternity, by tempers and appetites transmitted in consequence of the sinful indulgences of the parents.

Unwise, self-indulgent, weak-principled women will urge upon the mother the gratification of every wish and impulse as essential to the well-being of her offspring. But the error of such teaching is clearly seen in the light of facts presented in Bible history. The mother is by the command of God himself placed under the most solemn obligation to restrain perverted appetite. Whose voice will we heed--the teachings of infinite wisdom, or the voice of human ignorance, weakness, and superstition?

The thoughts and feelings of the mother will have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. If she allows her mind to dwell upon her own feelings, if she indulges in selfishness, if she is peevish and exacting, the disposition of her child will testify to the fact. Thus many have received as a birthright almost unconquerable tendencies to evil. The enemy of souls

understands this matter much better than do many parents. He will bring his temptations to bear upon the mother, knowing that if she does not resist him, he can through her affect her child. The mother's only hope is in God. She may flee to him for strength and grace; and she will not seek in vain. Fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility, and they too should seek earnestly for divine grace, that their influence may be such as God can approve.

It is a deplorable fact that there is a widespread neglect of these precepts of the Bible which have a bearing upon life and health. Many make the subject of temperance a matter of jest. They claim that the Lord does not concern himself with such minor matters as our eating and drinking. But if the Lord had no care for these things, he would not have revealed himself to the wife of Manoah, giving her definite instructions, and twice enjoining upon her to beware lest she disregard them. Is not this sufficient evidence that he does care for these things?

The inquiry of fathers and mothers should be, "What shall we do unto the child that shall be born unto us?" We have brought before the reader what God has said concerning the course of the mother before the birth of her children. But this is not all. The angel Gabriel was sent from the heavenly courts to give directions for the care of children after their birth, that parents might fully understand their duty.

About the time of Christ's first advent, the angel Gabriel came to Zacharias with a message similar to that given to Manoah. The aged priest was told that his wife should bear a son, whose name should be called John. "And," said the angel, "thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." This child of promise was to be brought up with strictly temperate habits. An important work of reform was to be committed to him, to prepare

the way for Christ. Intemperance in every form existed among the people. Indulgence in wine and luxurious food was lessening physical strength, and debasing the morals to such an extent that the most revolting crimes did not appear sinful. The voice of John was to sound forth from the wilderness in stern rebuke for the sinful indulgences of the people, and his own abstemious habits were also to be a reproof of the excesses of his time.

The efforts of our temperance workers are not sufficiently far-reaching to banish the curse of intemperance from our land. Habits once formed are hard to overcome. The reform should begin with the mother before the birth of her children, and if God's instructions were faithfully obeyed, intemperance would not exist.

It should be the constant effort of every mother to conform her habits to God's will, that she may work in harmony with him to preserve her children from the health and life destroying vices of the present day. Let mothers place themselves without delay in right relations to their Creator, that they may by his assisting grace build around their children a bulwark against dissipation and intemperance. If mothers would but follow such a course, they might see their children, like the youthful Daniel, reach a high standard in moral and intellectual attainments, becoming a blessing to society and an honor to their Creator.

Had parents for years past studied the Scriptures more and the magazines of fashion less, had they realized that their course might determine the destiny of hundreds, and perhaps of thousands, what a different state of society might now exist. We are responsible for the good we might have done, but failed to perform, because by sinful indulgence we placed ourselves in a condition of physical and mental inefficiency. The cause of reform today is suffering for want of men and women of integrity and moral worth. They are needed to advocate by precept and example the principles of self-denial which will be a safeguard to our youth.

Can we look upon the unbelief, intemperance, and crime that seems to be deluging the earth, without feeling our souls stirred to the very depths? Infidelity is rearing its proud head. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The cry of fathers and mothers and of nations that have forsaken God, and have been forsaken by him, will ere long rend the heavens. What can hinder the crime, what stay the woe that is upon all nations? This evil might have been prevented, had previous generations been trained to fear and love and reverence God. Let us now do what we can individually to bring about these changes. Explicit instructions have been given in the word of God. Let these principles be carried out by the mother, with the co-operation and support of the father, and let children be trained from infancy to habits of self-control. Let them be taught that it is not the object of life to indulge sensual appetites, but to honor God and to bless their fellowmen.

Fathers and mothers, labor earnestly and faithfully, relying on God for grace and wisdom. Be firm and yet mild. In all your commands aim to secure the highest good of your children, and then see that these commands are obeyed. Your energy and decision must be unwavering, yet ever in subjection to the Spirit of Christ. Then indeed may we hope to see "our sons as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

September 29, 1881

The Mother a Missionary

An important missionary field is opened before the mother. The humble round of duties which women have learned to regard as a wearisome task, should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's privilege to bless the world by her influence; and in doing this, she will bring joy to her own heart. She may make straight paths for the feet of her children, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above. Let the mother go often to her Saviour, with the prayer, Teach us, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him? This simple petition, breathed from the heart of the finite, will find its way to the heart of the Infinite. If the mother will but heed with care the instructions already given in the sacred word, she will receive further light and knowledge as she shall have need.

It is only when she seeks in her own life to follow the teachings of Christ that the mother can hope to form the characters of her children after the divine pattern. In every generation there have been corrupting influences to blight and contaminate. Fashion and custom exert a strong power over the young. If the mother fails in her duty to instruct, counsel, and restrain, her children will naturally accept the evil and turn from the good. God would have parents enter upon their work with energy and courage, and prosecute it with fidelity. Whatever he has made it their duty to do, he will give them wisdom and strength to accomplish.

While they should, above all else, train their children for the future life, parents should by no means neglect to prepare them for the present life. The mother should study how she may best train her sons and daughters to become useful and happy members of society. She should remember that every habit formed, every thought or feeling cherished, every act performed,

however unimportant, will either promote or hinder the accomplishment of this object. The Lord desires that we should enjoy the blessings with which he has surrounded us, and that in all the acts of our lives we should express our continual gratitude. We can do this, not by neglecting and abusing his gifts, but by putting them to a wise and noble use, by exerting a right influence over our fellow-men, by reforming wrong customs, instead of following them. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." It is only in pursuing a right course that light and gladness attend our path.

Society is molded by the influence of the mother. She may be wholly occupied within the narrow limits of her home, apparently engaged in life's humblest duties; yet if she does her work as well as she may do it, in the fear of God, she is gaining greater victories than the leader of armed hosts. She may send forth from her home young men and young women strong in right habits and firm principles. The upright deportment and unblemished morals of her children will be a blessing to the church and to society.

God brought the Israelites from Egypt that he might establish them in the land of Canaan, a pure, holy, and happy people. In the accomplishment of this object he subjected them to a course of discipline, both for their own good and for the good of posterity. Had they been willing to deny appetite, in obedience to his wise restrictions, there would have been no feeble ones in all their tribes. Their descendants would have possessed both physical and mental strength. They would have had clear perceptions of truth and duty, keen discrimination, and sound judgment. But the requirements of God were disregarded then as they are disregarded now. The people were dissatisfied with the simple, wholesome food which had been provided by their Creator. Habits of self-indulgence brought the sure result,--degeneracy and decay.

God's commands are never designed to make men unhappy. They are the dictates of infinite wisdom, goodness, and love. While they secure the glory

of God, they also promote the happiness of men. His restrictions are a safeguard against depravity of heart and corruption of life. The appetites and passions, indulged without restraint, enslave and degrade the higher and nobler powers.

Intemperance in eating and drinking leads to the indulgence of the animal passions. And those who, understanding the effect of their course, indulge appetite and passion at the expense of health and usefulness, are preparing the way to disregard all moral obligations. When temptation assails them, they have little power of resistance. This was the cause of Israel's continual backsliding; and it is the reason why there is so much crime and so little true godliness in the world today. The only path of safety is the path of daily restraint and self-denial.

Nothing but the power of God, combined with human effort, can accomplish the work of ennobling and uplifting our race. Had men been willing to learn the lessons which God had given them, successive generations would not have deteriorated so greatly in physical, mental, and moral power. Christ, enshrouded in the cloudy pillar, had spoken again and again to Israel for their good; but they had not heeded his voice. Again he appeared to Manoah and his wife with definite instructions concerning the course she should pursue to insure physical and moral health to her offspring. God had a work for the promised child of Manoah to do,--a work which would require careful thought and vigorous action. It was to secure for him the qualities necessary for this work that all his habits were to be carefully regulated. There are today many statesmen, senators, lawyers, judges, and others in responsible positions, whose physical habits have been, nearly all their life-time, at war with natural laws. At the outset of their career, these men may have possessed rare intellectual powers; but the precious gifts of God have been soiled and dimmed, and in too many cases buried, in the mire of self-indulgence.

He who will observe simplicity in all his habits, restricting the appetite and controlling the passions, may preserve his mental powers strong, active, and vigorous, quick to perceive everything which demands thought or action, keen to discriminate between the holy and the unholy, and ready to engage in every enterprise for the glory of God and the benefit of humanity.

It is the mother's work to train, to educate, and to discipline. While she seeks to store the mind of her child with useful knowledge, let her fortify the young heart with good principles. There is missionary work to be done at home by the fireside. This important field is neglected because of the difficulties to be met; because the work requires labor and self-denial. But will not the result compensate for the sacrifices made, the efforts put forth? Are souls in heathen lands more precious than souls at home? It is indeed a matter which should concern us, that in foreign lands young girls are growing up to wifehood and motherhood knowing nothing of their duties to themselves, to their children, or to God. But should we not at the same time give some thought to the fact that the girls of America are almost wholly destitute of that knowledge and training which would make them useful and honored as wives and mothers? Would that we could lead mothers who are now worshiping at fashion's shrine to become missionaries at home, training their children to become an honor to God and a blessing to humanity. Would not our Maker look upon such a work with approval?

There is a wide field of labor opened before every mother. If her work is wrought faithfully, in the fear of God, it will bring forth fruit unto eternal life. The mother's work should begin at home. This is the fountain-head from which her influence and usefulness should flow. If her duties here are discharged with fidelity, she will see all around her fields where she may work with the best results. And by-and-by those words from her Master will fall as sweetest music upon her ear--"Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

ober 6, 1881

An Unwise Marriage

The divine promise to Manoah was in due time fulfilled in the birth of a son, upon whom the name of Samson was bestowed. By the command of the angel no razor was to come upon the child's head, he being consecrated to God as a Nazarite, from his birth. As the boy grew up, it became evident that he possessed extraordinary physical strength. This was not, however, as Samson and his parents well knew, dependent upon his well-knit sinews, but upon his condition as a Nazarite, of which his unshorn hair was a symbol.

Had Samson as faithfully obeyed the divine command as his parents had done, his would have been a nobler and happier destiny. But he became corrupted by association with idolaters. The inheritance of the tribe of Dan, to which Manoah's family belonged, was adjacent to the country of the Philistines. Indeed, the little town of Zorah, which was Samson's early home, was in close proximity to the dwelling-places of this alien race, and in his youth he came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus intimacies sprung up, whose evil influences darkened his whole life.

A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnah so engaged Samson's affections that he determined to make her his wife. In those days marriages were arranged by the parents. Hence Samson requested his father and mother to secure for him this daughter of the Philistines. Manoah and his wife sought to dissuade the young man from his purpose. They warned him of the danger of forming an alliance with idolaters, and besought him to seek a wife among his own people. But arguments and entreaties were alike in vain. His only answer was, "she pleaseth me well." Seeing his determination, the parents decided that the Lord might design thus to accomplish his purposes; hence they yielded to Samson's wishes, and the marriage was

consummated.

Thus at the time above all others when he should have maintained entire consecration to the will of God, just as he was entering upon the stage of manhood, the period when he must execute his divine mission,--at this critical point in his life history, Samson yielded to the tempter, and by an unwise marriage placed himself in alliance with the enemies of God. This important step was not carefully considered. Samson did not ask himself whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his fancy, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. To all who seek first to honor him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who desire only to please themselves.

The Lord has in his word plainly instructed his people not to unite themselves with those who have not his love and fear before them. Such companions will seldom be satisfied with the love and respect which are justly theirs. They will constantly seek to gain from the God-fearing wife or husband some favor which shall involve a disregard of the divine requirements. To a godly man, and to the church with which he is connected, a worldly wife or a worldly friend is as a spy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray the servant of Christ, and expose him to the enemy's attacks.

Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen his power over the people of God by inducing them to enter into alliance with the hosts of darkness. And to accomplish this he endeavors to arouse unsanctified passions in the heart which is naturally prone to evil. It is not safe for Christians to imitate the example of the ungodly, or to yield to their influence. The wisest counsels of the wicked are not to be relied upon. If accepted, they may bring trouble and sorrow upon the child of God. The Lord would not have his people take ungodly persons into their confidence. The apostle Paul exhorts us "to have

no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." "For what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

At his marriage feast Samson was brought into familiar association with those who despised the God of Israel. Whoever voluntarily enters into such relations will feel it necessary to conform, to some degree, to the habits and customs of his companions. The time thus spent with vain and trifling persons is worse than wasted. Thoughts are entertained, words spoken, that weaken the citadel of the soul.

The wife, to obtain whom Samson had transgressed the command of God, proved treacherous to her husband ere the close of the marriage feast, and at last was put to death by the very class whose threats had caused her perfidy. Samson had already given evidence of his prodigious strength, by slaying, single-handed, a young lion, and by killing thirty of the men of Askelon. Now, moved to anger at the barbarous murder of his wife, he attacked the Philistines, "and smote them with great slaughter." Then, wishing a safe retreat from the Philistines, and fearing to trust his own countrymen, he withdrew to a strong rock called Elam, in the tribe of Judah.

To this place he was pursued by a large body of Philistines, whose presence excited great alarm among the inhabitants of Judah. When they learned that the sole object of the invasion was to take Samson captive, they basely agreed to deliver him up to his enemies. In so doing they hoped to secure the favor of the Philistines, and thus lighten their own oppression. Accordingly three thousand men of Judah went up to take the mighty warrior. But even at such odds they dared to make the attempt only because they felt assured that he would not harm his own people. Samson consented to be bound and delivered to the Philistines, but first exacted from the men of Judah a promise not to fall upon him themselves, and thus compel him to

destroy them. He permitted them to bind with two new ropes, and to take him down to the Philistines.

He was led into the camp of his enemies amid demonstrations of great joy. But while their shouts were waking the echoes of the hills, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson. He burst asunder the strong new cords as if they had been flax burned in the fire. Then seizing the first weapon at hand, which though only the jawbone of an ass, was rendered more effective than sword or spear, he smote the Philistines on every side, until they fled in terror, leaving a thousand of their number dead upon the field.

Had the Israelites been prepared to unite with Samson, and follow up the victory gained, they might at this time have freed themselves from the power of the Philistines. But they had become weak and discouraged. They had basely neglected the work which God had commanded them to perform with diligence, thoroughness, and valor; not only failing to dispossess the heathen, but uniting with them in their degrading practices, tolerating their cruelty, and, so long as it was not directed against themselves, even countenancing their injustice. When at last the tyrant power was triumphant, Israel submitted to the degradation which they might have escaped, had they only obeyed God. Even when the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, they would frequently desert the one chosen to set things in order, and would unite with their bitterest oppressors.

If those who acknowledge God would but obey his voice, how much suffering might be spared them. God's eye is fixed upon every individual, and every one must render an account to him for all they do, and for what they permit themselves to be. Wherever we are, in storehouse and workshop, in all our business, every day in the week, and every hour in the day, his eye scrutinizes all our works, his ear listens to our every word. In the deepest solitude every act and word of our lives has still one witness,--the infinite God. When we are true to the high destiny which he has marked out for us,

we become co-laborers with him. If our responsibility be fully and heartily accepted and faithfully discharged, it will secure for us the joyful commendation by the Majesty of Heaven, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Thousands of Israelites witnessed Samson's defeat of the Philistines, yet no voice was raised in triumph, till the hero, elated at this marvelous success, celebrated his own victory. But he praised himself, instead of ascribing the glory to God. No sooner had he ceased than he was reminded of his weakness by a most intense and painful thirst. He had become exhausted by his prodigious labors, and no means of supplying his need was at hand. He began to feel his utter dependence upon God, and to be convinced that he had not triumphed by his own power, but in the strength of the Omnipotent One.

He then gave God the praise for his deliverance, and offered an earnest prayer for relief from his present suffering. The Lord hearkened to his petition and opened for him a spring of water. In token of his gratitude Samson called the name of the place En-hakkore, or "the well of him that cried."

After this victory the Israelites made Samson judge over them, and he ruled Israel for twenty years.

October 13, 1881

In the Downward Path

One wrong step prepares the way for another. Samson had transgressed the command of God by taking a wife from the daughters of the Philistines, and ere long he ventured again among that people--now his deadly enemies--in the indulgence of his unlawful passions. Trusting confidently to his great strength, which had inspired the Philistines with such terror, he boldly entered Gaza, one of their largest and most powerful cities, and visited a harlot of that place.

The disgraceful fact was soon made known to the inhabitants of the city, who were eager to be avenged upon their dreaded foe. Fearing to attack him, however, they sent for reinforcements, and kept a vigilant watch at the gate of the city, determined by some means to put him to death in the morning.

At midnight Samson was aroused. The accusing voice of conscience filled him with remorse, as he remembered that he had broken his vow as a Nazarite. But despite his sin, God's mercy had not forsaken him. His great strength again served to deliver him. Wrenching the city gate from its place, he took it entire, with its posts and bars, and carried it several miles, to the top of a hill on the way to Hebron; the guards meanwhile, being too much surprised and terrified to intercept or pursue him.

But even this narrow escape did not serve to stay him in his evil course. The third step downward soon followed the second. He did not again venture into the territory of the Philistines, but sought at home those sensuous pleasures that were luring him on to ruin. "He loved a woman in the vale of Serek." Her name was Delilah, which fitly signifies consuming, or wasting. In the society of this enchantress, the judge of Israel squandered precious

hours that should have been sacredly devoted to the welfare of his people. But the blinding passions which make even the strongest weak, had gained control of reason and of conscience. The vale of Serek, a little valley not far from his own birthplace, was celebrated for its vineyards. These also had a temptation for the wavering Nazarite, who had already indulged in the use of wine, thus breaking another tie that bound him to temperance, to purity, and to God.

The Philistines were well acquainted with the divine law, and its condemnation of sensual indulgence. They kept a vigilant watch over all the movements of their enemy, and when he degraded himself by this new attachment, and they saw the bewitching power of the enchantress, they determined, through her, to accomplish his ruin.

Accordingly, a deputation consisting of one leading man from each of the five Philistine States was sent to the vale of Serek. It was not their purpose to seize him while in possession of his great strength, but to learn if possible some means by which that strength might be taken away. Such marvelous power, far exceeding anything which they had ever known before; that of the famed descendants of Anak, who dwelt among them, could not be compared with it, and the Philistine lords decided that it must be supernatural, the result of some condition that might be changed, or some charm that might be broken. They therefore bribed Delilah to discover the secret of his strength, and reveal it to them, offering her eleven hundred shekels of silver from each of their number, aggregating a sum of more than three thousand dollars.

As the betrayer plied Samson with her questions, he deceived her by declaring that the weakness of other men would come upon him if certain processes were tried. When she put the matter to the test, the imposition was discovered. Then she accused him of falsehood, saying, "How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thou hast deceived me and lied to me these three times,

and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth?"

Samson's infatuation seems almost incredible. At first he was not so wholly enthralled as to reveal the secret; but he had deliberately walked into the net of the betrayer of souls, and its meshes were drawing closer about him at every step. Three times he had the clearest evidence that the Philistines had leagued with his charmer to destroy him; but when her purpose failed and his strength returned, she had treated the matter as a jest, and he blindly banished all fear of danger.

Day by day Delilah pressed and urged him, until "his soul was vexed unto death," yet a subtle power kept him by her side. Her heart was set upon the tempting bribe, and she exerted all her blandishments to secure it. Overcome at last by the bewitching spell which he seemed to have no power to break, Samson made known the secret: "There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my birth. If I be shaven then my strength will go from me, and I will become weak and be like any other man."

Eagerly the betrayer listened to his words, fully convinced by his serious and earnest manner that he had told truth; and she determined to profit by it. A messenger was immediately dispatched to the lords of the Philistines, urging them to come once more to her chamber without delay. She next sent for a man who, while the warrior slept with his head upon her knees, shaved off the heavy masses of his hair. Then, as she had done three times before, she called, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" Suddenly awaking, he thought to exert his strength as before, and destroy them all; but his powerless arms refused to do his bidding, and then he knew that the Lord had departed from him.

When he had been shaven, Delilah began to annoy him and cause him pain, thus making a trial of his strength; for the Philistines dared not

approach him till fully convinced that his power was gone. Then they seized him, and having put out both his eyes, they took him to Gaza. Here he was bound with strong fetters of brass, and kept in their prison house as a trophy of their victory, and compelled to drudge in hard labor.

What a change to him that had been the judge and champion of Israel!-- now weak, blind, imprisoned, degraded to the most menial service! Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him, but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, that moment God departed from him. There was no virtue in the length of his hair, in itself, but it was a token of his loyalty to God, and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of lustful passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited. Had Samson's head been shaven without fault on his part, his strength would have remained. But his course had shown contempt for the favor and authority of God as much as if he had in disdain himself severed his locks from his head. Therefore God left him to endure the results of his own folly.

In his sufferings and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson had opportunity for reflection, and he learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before. As his afflictions led him to repentance, his hair began gradually to grow, indicating the return of his extraordinary powers, but his enemies, regarding him only as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no apprehensions.

As the Philistines exulted over their great victory, they ascribed the honor to their gods, praising them as superior to the God of Israel. The contest, instead of being between Samson and the Philistines, was now between Jehovah and Dagon, and thus the Lord was moved to assert his almighty power and his supreme authority. A favorable opportunity for this was soon presented. The Philistines held a feast in honor of their God Dagon. A vast company was assembled, and in the height of their sacrilegious

festivities, they ordered the captive to be produced, that the people might have a new source of amusement. The multitude greeted his appearance with shouts of triumph, and praised their god who had thus subdued the "destroyer of their country." Samson had been made the sport of the people before; But now even the rulers of the nation mocked at his misery.

The immense building was thronged with the brave and the fair. Even the roof was crowded with thousands of spectators. After a time, as if weary, Samson asked permission to rest against the two central pillars which supported the temple roof. Then he breathed the prayer, "O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." With these words he seized the pillars in his mighty arms, and with the cry, "Let me die with the Philistines," he bowed himself and the roof fell, destroying at one dread crash, all that vast company. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

God designed that Samson should accomplish a great work for Israel. Hence the utmost care had been taken at the very outset of life to surround him with the most favorable conditions for physical strength, intellectual vigor, and moral purity. Had he not in after years ventured among the ungodly and the licentious, he would not so basely have yielded to temptation. Physically he was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was the weakest of men. His passions were not held in subjection to reason and the fear of God. The blandishments of beautiful women often have dangerous temptations to the young. Those who do not make God their strength will be overcome by Satan's devices.

The very men whom God purposes to use as his servants, the dread adversary uses his utmost power to lead astray. Yet the sacred word presents for our encouragement noble examples of men who have in the strength of God resisted the fiercest attacks of the powers of darkness. The youthful

Joseph was subjected to a most severe temptation. It came from one in high position, one whose enmity might destroy his worldly prospects. The future of Joseph's life was determined by the decisions made in that trying hour. He calmly looked up to Heaven, and exclaimed, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The fires of unholy passion were not permitted to kindle. God's commands, God's promise were before Joseph. He felt that the all-seeing eye was upon him, extending to all his thoughts, penetrating to the secrets of the heart, to the motives underlying every action.

Samson in his peril had the same source of strength as had Joseph. He could choose the right or the wrong as he pleased. But instead of taking hold of the strength of God, he permitted the wild passions of his nature to have full sway. The reasoning powers were perverted, the morals corrupted. God had called Samson to a position of great responsibility, honor, and usefulness; but he must first learn to govern by first learning to obey the laws of God. Joseph was a free moral agent. Good and evil were before him. He could choose the path of purity, holiness, and honor, or the path of immorality and degradation. He chose the right way, and God approved. Samson, under similar temptations, which he had brought upon himself, gave loose rein to passion. The path which he entered upon he found to end in shame, disaster, and death. What a contrast to the history of Joseph!

The youths of today can bless or blight their future life. God calls young men in the strength and glory of their manhood to do service for him. But many whom God could use refuse to obey. They desire to secure worldly gain and worldly honor. To become a servant of Christ they consider as requiring too great a sacrifice.

The history of Samson conveys a lesson for those whose characters are yet unformed, who have not yet entered upon the stage of active life. The youth who enter our schools and colleges will find there every class of mind. If they desire sport and folly, if they seek to shun the good and unite with the

evil, they have the opportunity. Sin and righteousness are before them, and they are to choose for themselves. But let them remember that "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

October 27, 1881

The Birth of Samuel

The reign of judges in Israel closes with Samuel, than whom few purer or more illustrious characters are presented in the sacred record. There are few, also whose life-history contains lessons of greater value to the thoughtful student. The father of Samuel was Elkanah, a Levite, who dwelt at Ramah, in Mount Ephraim. He was a person of wealth and influence, a kind husband, and a man who feared and revered God. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was a woman of piety and devotion. Humility, conscientiousness, and a firm reliance upon God, were ruling traits in her character. Of Hannah it might truly be said, in the words of the wise man: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."

Elkanah's love for his chosen companion was deep and unchanging; yet a cloud shadowed their domestic happiness. The home was not made joyful by the voice of childhood. At length the strong desire to perpetuate his name led the husband, as it had led many others, to adopt a course which God did not sanction--that of introducing into the family a second wife, to be subordinate to the first. This act was prompted by a lack of faith in God, and was attended with evil results. The peace of the hitherto united and harmonious family was broken. Upon Hannah the blow fell with crushing weight. All happiness seemed forever swept away from her life. She bore her trials uncomplainingly, yet her grief was none the less keen and bitter.

Peninnah, the new wife, was a woman of inferior mind, and of envious and jealous disposition. As years passed on, and sons and daughters were added to the household, she became proud and self-important, and treated her rival with contempt and insolence.

Elkanah faithfully observed the ordinances of God. The worship at Shiloh was still maintained, yet it had become irregular, and in some respects incomplete. Hence, Elkanah had no regular employment at the tabernacle, to whose service, being a Levite, he was to be especially devoted. Notwithstanding this, his zeal in the service of God was unfaltering. With his family he went up to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice at the appointed gatherings.

Yet even amid the sacred festivities connected with the worship of God, the evil spirit that had cursed his home intruded. After the other sacrifices had been made, it was customary for the peace-offering to be presented. A specified portion of this was given to the priest, and then the offerer, after distributing to each member of his family a share of the remainder, united with them in a solemn yet joyous feast. Upon these occasions Elkanah gave the mother of his children a portion for herself and for each of her sons and daughters, and then as a token of regard for Hannah, his first and best-loved wife, he gave her a double portion. This excited the envy and jealousy of the second wife, and she boldly asserted her claims to superiority as one highly favored of God; and she tauntingly pointed to the fact that Hannah had no children, as proof of the Lord's displeasure toward her.

This scene was enacted again and again, not only at the yearly gatherings, but whenever circumstances furnished an opportunity for Peninnah to exalt herself at the expense of her rival. The course of this woman seemed to Hannah, a trial almost beyond endurance. Satan employed her as his agent to harass, and if possible exasperate and destroy one of God's faithful children. At last, as her enemy's taunts were repeated at one of the yearly feasts, Hannah's courage and fortitude gave way. Unable longer to conceal her feelings, she wept without restraint. The expressions of joy on every hand seemed mockery to her. She could not partake of the feast.

Her husband, knowing the cause of her grief, sought to comfort her with

the assurance of his unchanged affection, and gently chides her for yielding thus to sorrow: "Why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?" But it was impossible for Elkanah fully to understand her feelings or to appreciate the cause.

Hannah brought no reproach against her husband for his unwise marriage. The grief which she could share with no earthly friend, she carried to her Heavenly Father, and sought consolation from Him alone who hath said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings.

Hannah's prayer was unheard by mortal ear, but entered the ear of the Lord of hosts. Earnestly she pleaded that God would take away her reproach, and grant her the boon most highly prized by women of that age,--the blessing of motherhood. As she wrestled in prayer, her voice uttered no sound, but her lips moved and her countenance gave evidence of deep emotion. And now another trial awaited the humble suppliant. As the eye of Eli the high priest fell upon her, he hastily decided that she was intoxicated. Feasting revelry had well-nigh supplanted true godliness among the people of Israel. Instances of intemperance, even among women, were of frequent occurrence, and now Eli determined to administer what he considered a deserved rebuke. "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee."

Hannah had been communing with God. She believed that her prayer had been heard, and the peace of Christ filled her heart. Hers was a gentle, sensitive nature, yet she yielded neither to grief nor to indignation at the unjust charge of drunkenness in the house of God. With due reverence for the anointed of the Lord, she calmly repelled the accusation and stated the

cause of her emotion. "No my Lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." Convinced that his reproof had been unjust, Eli replied, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him."

In her prayer, Hannah had made a vow that if her request were granted, she would dedicate her child to the service of God. This vow she made known to her husband, and he confirmed it in a solemn act of worship, before leaving Shiloh.

Hannah's prayer was answered, and she received the gift for which she had so earnestly entreated. As she looked upon the pledge of divine favor she called the child Samuel--Asked of God.

As soon as the little one was old enough to be separated from its mother, she fulfilled her solemn vow. She loved her child with all the devotion of a mother's heart; day by day her affections entwined about him more closely as she watched his expanding powers, and listened to the childish prattle; He was her only son, the especial gift of Heaven; but she had received him as a treasure consecrated to God, and she would not withhold from the Giver his own. Faith strengthened the mother's heart, and she yielded not to the pleadings of natural affection.

Once more Hannah journeyed with her husband to Shiloh, taking the child to present him unto the Lord, and bearing also gifts for sacrifice and thank-offering. Reaching the tabernacle, she sought the presence of the high priest. He did not recognize her. There was indeed a striking contrast between the pallid, grief-stricken suppliant and the grateful, happy mother. Hannah related the circumstances of her previous interview, and then presented to the priest, in the name of God, her precious gift, saying: "For

this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord." Eli was surprised and deeply impressed by the faith and devotion of this woman of Israel. Himself an over-indulgent father, he was awed and humbled as he beheld this mother's great sacrifice in parting with her first and only child, that she might devote him to the service of God. He felt reproved for his own selfish love, and in humiliation and reverence he bowed before the Lord and worshiped.

God had granted Hannah the desire of her heart; she had been highly favored of Heaven, and she felt that she could do no less in token of her gratitude than to make a public acknowledgment of the divine mercy and loving-kindness. The spirit of inspiration came upon her, and although a retiring and timid woman, her voice was now heard in the assembly of the people, sounding forth the praise of God:

"My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in thy salvation." The horn is in some animals the weapon of attack and defense; by the use of this figure, Hannah would acknowledge that her deliverance had come from God. In her exultation, there is no vain triumph of self. She rejoices not in Samuel, not in her own prosperity, but in the Lord. The song continues: "There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any rock like our God." She extols the perfection of Deity. In the character of God, are wisdom, purity, truth, goodness, and mercy combined, immutable and complete. All human holiness is mingled with imperfection. All idols of the nations are vain and worthless. God is our only refuge and support; and those who trust in him will never be confounded.

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." While here referring to Peninnah's boastful and insolent conduct,

Hannah seems also to speak to all the enemies of true godliness, who glory in themselves, and insult and despise the children of faith. Pride and boasting cannot deceive God. He is acquainted with the hearts and the lives of all. By him actions are weighed. He distinguishes men's characters, and weighs their motives in the balance. When he sees that it will be for the good of man and for his own glory, he will interpose in behalf of his people. In due time he will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased. How often, even in this life, do we see the ungodly brought to shame and confusion. Do they aspire to distinction and worldly honor? Are they proud of their valor and military skill? Their bows are broken, and they themselves overcome by a weak and despised company; for God hath girded the stumbling ones with strength. Do they trust in their riches, and indulge in luxury and extravagance while trampling upon the rights of the poor? They may themselves meet with reverses, and be reduced to the necessity of toiling for bread to satisfy their hunger, while many who have endured hardship and privation are blessed with plenty.

"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory, for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

Hannah's words were prophetic, both of David, who should reign as king

of Israel, and of Christ, the Messiah, the Lord's anointed. Thus in a sublime and sacred song, referring first to the proud boastings of an insolent and contentious woman, were ultimately set forth, the humiliation of the proud and exaltation of the humble, the destruction of the enemies of God, and the complete and final triumph of his faithful servants.

Having given utterance to this triumphant burst of praise, Hannah quietly returned to her home at Ramah, leaving the child Samuel to minister in the house of God, under the care and instruction of Eli, the high priest.

November 3, 1881

Early Life of Samuel

The fulfillment of Hannah's vow to dedicate her child to the Lord, was not deferred until he could be presented at the tabernacle. From the earliest dawn of intellect she trained his infant mind to love and reverence God, and to regard himself as the Lord's. By every familiar object surrounding him she sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator.

When separated from her child, the faithful mother's solicitude did not cease. He was the subject of her prayers. Every year she made him a little coat, and when she came with her husband to the yearly sacrifice, she presented it to the child as a token of her love. With every stitch of that coat she had breathed a prayer that he might be pure, noble, and true. She did not ask that he might be great, but earnestly pleaded that he might be good. Her faith and devotion were rewarded. She saw her son, in the simplicity of childhood, walking in the love and fear of God. She saw him growing up to manhood in favor with God and man, humble, reverent, prompt in duty, and earnest in the service of his divine Master. And while the Lord accepted the precious offering from that mother's hand, he did not forget to repay the sacrifice. Hannah was blessed with other children, to educate and train for Heaven.

Samuel's youth was passed in the tabernacle solemnly devoted to the worship of God; yet even here he was not free from evil influences or sinful example. The sons of Eli are described in the sacred word as "sons of Belial." They feared not God, nor honored their father; but Samuel did not seek their company nor follow their evil ways. It was his constant effort to make himself what God would have him to become. This is the privilege of every youth. God is pleased when even little children devote themselves to

his service; they should not be discouraged in their efforts to become Christians.

The youth will not become weak-minded or inefficient by consecrating themselves to the service of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The youngest child that loves and fears God, is greater in his sight than the most talented and learned man who neglects the great salvation. The youth who consecrate their hearts and lives to God, have in so doing, placed themselves in connection with the Fountain of all wisdom and excellence.

Early brought to minister in the tabernacle, Samuel had even then minor duties to perform in the service of God, according to his capacity. These were at first very humble, and not always pleasant, but they were performed to the best of his ability, and with a willing heart. His religion was carried into all the business of life. He regarded himself as God's servant, and his work as God's work. His efforts were accepted, because they were prompted by love to God and a sincere desire to do his will. Thus Samuel became a co-worker with the Lord of Heaven and earth. And God through him accomplished a great work for Israel.

If children were taught to regard the humble round of every-day duties as the course marked out for them by the Lord, as a school in which they were to be trained to render faithful and efficient service, how much more pleasant and honorable would their work appear. To perform every duty as unto the Lord, throws a charm around the humblest employment, and links the workers on earth with the holy beings who do God's will in Heaven. And in our appointed place we should discharge our duties with as much faithfulness as do the angels in their higher sphere. Those who feel that they are God's servants will be men who can be trusted anywhere. Citizens of Heaven will make the best citizens of earth. A correct view of our duty to God leads to clear perceptions of our duty to our fellow men.

Parents should bring up their children in the love and fear of God, remembering that they are younger members of the Lord's great family entrusted to the parents to be educated and trained for Heaven, and to be required again at their hands. Let children be taught that every act of life is important. It is strengthening habit and forming character. If all the daily duties are performed in the fear of God, they will be done with fidelity, and the life-record will be such as can pass the test of the Judgment.

Would that every mother could realize how great are her duties and her responsibilities, and how great will be the reward of faithfulness. The mother's daily influence upon her children is preparing them for everlasting life or eternal death. She exercises in her home a power more decisive than the minister in the desk, or even the king upon his throne. The day of God will reveal how much the world owes to godly mothers for men who have been unflinching advocates of truth and reform,--men who have been bold to do and dare, who have stood unshaken amid trials and temptations; men who chose the high and holy interests of truth and the glory of God, before worldly honor or life itself.

When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened; when the "well done" of the great Judge is pronounced, and the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the brow of the victor, many will raise their crowns in sight of the assembled universe, and pointing to their mother say, "She made me all I am through the grace of God. Her instruction, her prayers, have been blessed to my eternal salvation."

Samuel became a great man in the fullest sense, as God estimates character. Many whom the world calls great, fall far below the divine standard. They lack the very elements of true and noble manhood. Men of giant intellect and brilliant genius, men before whom the world bows in willing homage, have prostituted these precious gifts of God to the service of the arch-deceiver. The name of Byron stands high in the literary world. God

gave him great natural abilities; had his powers been rightly directed, he might have been a blessing to society. But his talents were not consecrated to God. The purity of Heaven did not permeate his life or breathe forth in his literary productions. Many of his works lead to immorality and irreligion. They reveal the true character of the man--corrupt in taste, depraved in heart. He rejected the service of God, and chose to ally himself to Satan.

Gibbon, the renowned historian, was not a great man according to God's standard. He was endowed with great intellectual powers, that he might make known to his fellow-men the knowledge of God. But Satan prepared his snares for this man, and he became entangled in the meshes of skepticism. His works breathe insinuations against God and against the world's Redeemer. He improved every opportunity to destroy confidence in the Bible and the Christian religion. Eternity alone can reveal the amount of harm wrought by his writings. The world pronounces Gibbon a literary success. God pronounces him a failure.

A beneficent Creator endows men with intellectual powers, that, consecrated to his service, they may become co-workers with Christ and angels in the work of human redemption. Yet how many, like Byron and Gibbon, employ their talents to pervert the simplicity of truth, and bring contempt upon the Christian religion, as unworthy the attention of intelligent men. Those who are engaged in this work little know what they are doing. But in the day of Judgment how fearful will be their accountability.

Intellectual power, when opposed to the principles of true religion, becomes a minister of vice. Its influence tends to deface the image of God in man, and to bring him down to the level of the brute creation. Whatever, tends to banish thoughts of God from the mind becomes a curse, not only to the possessor but to all within the sphere of his influence. Better would it be for the gifted skeptic, better for the world, to be deprived of the brilliant talents that are devoted to the service of Satan. The greater the gift perverted

and abused, the greater will be the evil wrought and the greater the condemnation in the day of final reckoning.

Despite the many sovereigns to whom men profess allegiance, all mankind are serving one of two masters--the Prince of light or the Prince of darkness. Samuel served the former, the sons of Eli the latter. The characters of these persons, standing out in such striking contrast, represent the two great parties into which the world has been divided since the fall of Adam--the servants of Christ and the servants of Satan. God has ordained that with families and nations or with individuals, virtue is the basis of happiness, vice the foundation of woe and misery. In all the history of nations, wherever righteousness has been cherished, union, peace, and prosperity result; where greed, selfishness, and irreligion reign, weakness, degeneracy, and corruption follow.

A constant warfare is still waged between vice and virtue. Wherever we turn, the battle goes on unceasingly. Infidelity is rearing its head in vaunted triumph, and crime of all grades is crowding in on every side. Multitudes of the youth are swept away by the overwhelming tide of evil. In every earnest Christian heart the question rises, "Why, oh, why, in a land of Bibles and Christian teaching, can the adversary of souls exert over our youth a power so mighty, so unrestrained?" The reason is apparent. Parents are neglecting their solemn responsibility. They are not earnest, persevering, and faithful in the work of training their children for God, restraining their evil desires and enforcing obedience to parental authority, even in infancy.

Young men should be trained to stand firm for the right amid the prevailing iniquity, to do all in their power to arrest the progress of vice, and to promote virtue, purity, and true manliness. The impressions made upon the mind and character in early life are deep and abiding. Injudicious training or evil associations will often exert upon the young mind an influence for evil that all after-effort is powerless to efface. The character of Napoleon

Bonaparte was greatly influenced by his training in childhood. Unwise instructors inspired him with a love for conquest, forming mimic armies and placing him at their head as commander. Here was laid the foundation for his career of strife and bloodshed. Had the same care and effort been directed to making him a good man, imbuing his young heart with the spirit of the gospel, how widely different might have been his history.

It is said that Hume the skeptic was in early life a conscientious believer in the word of God. Being connected with a debating society, he was appointed to present the arguments in favor of infidelity. He studied with earnestness and perseverance, and his keen and active mind became imbued with the sophistry of skepticism. Ere long he came to believe its delusive teachings, and his whole after-life bore the dark impress of infidelity.

When Voltaire was five years old, he committed to memory an infidel poem, and the pernicious influence was never effaced from his mind. He became one of Satan's most successful agents to lead men away from God. Thousands will rise up in the Judgment, and charge the ruin of their souls upon the infidel Voltaire.

By the thoughts and feelings cherished in early years, every youth is determining his own life history. Correct, virtuous, manly habits formed in youth will become a part of the character, and will usually mark the course of the individual through life. The youth may become vicious or virtuous, as they choose. They may as well be distinguished for true and noble deeds as for great crime and wickedness.

Young men of today may become as precious in the sight of the Lord as was Samuel. They may have their names enrolled in the book of life, to be looked upon with pleasure by the Monarch of the universe and the angelic host. By faithfully maintaining their Christian integrity, the young may, like the noble Luther, exert a mighty influence in the work of reform. Such men

are needed at this time. God has a position and a work for every one of them.

If the young men in our cities would unite their efforts to discountenance ungodliness and crime, their influence would greatly advance the cause of reform. It is the privilege and the duty of every youth, as an angel of mercy, to minister to the wants and woes of mankind. There is no class that can achieve greater results for God and humanity than the young.

Let none entertain the thought that the religion of the Bible is weak and unmanly, the effect of fanatical zeal or superstitious fear. Many of the young refrain from entering the service of Christ because they are unwilling to confess themselves Christians before the world. They are ashamed of Jesus, ashamed to acknowledge and obey his authority. Such persons view religion from the worldling's stand-point. On this rock thousands have been wrecked.

God is the sovereign of the universe, and should we be ashamed to acknowledge our allegiance to him? The holy angels are engaged night and day in his service. The highest order of beings in all the universe bow before the throne of God with songs of grateful, joyous praise. Is there aught in such service that can detract from man's true dignity? Saith the Lord, "Them that honor me I will honor." The service of God is the highest, noblest work that can engage the powers of men or of angels.

November 10, 1881

The Father's Duty

The history of Samuel, the pure, noble-hearted prophet, and of Moses, the holiest of men, the most illustrious of leaders, shows how great is the mother's power to mold the character of her child, even in its earliest years. During this period her influence is paramount to all other. Even the infant in her arms will catch her spirit, and copy her deportment. It is important that mothers understand their duty, and that they seek wisdom and grace from God to perform their sacred work to his acceptance.

But great as is the work of the mother, it should never be forgotten that the father also has a part to act in the education and training of his children, and that he is under the most solemn obligation to perform that work with fidelity. Especially as the children advance in years is the father's influence needed, in union with that of the mother, to restrain, control, and guide. Parents little realize the harm done by withholding from their children needed and wholesome restraint, and allowing them to grow up with uncontrolled passions, and selfish, debasing habits.

The course of Eli--his sinful indulgence as a father, and his criminal neglect as a priest of God--presents a striking and painful contrast to the firmness and self-denial of the faithful Hannah. Eli was acquainted with the divine will. He knew what characters God could accept, and what he would condemn. Yet he suffered his children to grow up with unbridled passions, perverted appetites, and corrupt morals.

Eli had instructed his children in the law of God, and had given them a good example in his own life; but this was not his whole duty. God required him, both as a father and as a priest, to restrain them from following their

own perverse will. This he had failed to do. His sons were impatient of control, and he weakly resigned the reins to them, and suffered them to pursue their evil ways at pleasure. The fond father overlooked the faults and sins of their childhood, flattering himself that after a time they would outgrow these evil tendencies. He did not regard his children as a sacred trust which God had committed to his care, to be returned with interest; but he looked upon them as his own. Hence, instead of seeking guidance and help from God, and following the instructions given in his word, Eli chose his own way of management, that most agreeable to his ease-loving disposition. Had he taught his sons to obey their father, they would have learned to obey God; but by permitting them to disregard his commands, he taught them to disregard the commands of their heavenly Father. Thus their evil habits strengthened with their years, and when they reached manhood, they were ready to defy all authority, both human and divine.

God requires every parent not only to give his children right instruction and a good example, but with promptness and decision to restrain their inclination to do evil. The fact that Eli stood in holy office, cause his lax discipline, and the selfish, irreverent, licentious course of his wicked sons, to exert a corrupting influence upon the whole nation. All parents should strive to make their families patterns of good works, perfect Christian households. But in a pre-eminent degree is this the duty of those who minister in sacred things, and to whom the people look for instruction and guidance. The ministers of Christ are to be examples to the flock. He who fails to direct wisely his own household, is not qualified to guide the church of God.

Christian parents, if you desire to work for the Lord, begin with your little ones at home. If you manifest tact and wisdom and the fear of God in the management of your children, you may be intrusted with greater responsibilities. True Christian effort will begin at home, and go out from the center to embrace wider fields. A soul saved in your own family circle or in your own neighborhood, by your patient, painstaking labor, will bring as

much honor to the name of Christ, and will shine as brightly in your crown as if you had found that soul in China or India.

The Lord will not pass unpunished the neglect of parents to train their children for his service. By kind and judicious management, fathers as well as mothers should bind their children to them by the strong ties of reverence, gratitude, and love, and should kindle in their young hearts an earnest longing for righteousness and truth. While the mother seeks to implant good principles, the father should see that the precious seed is not choked by the growth of evil. His sterner discipline is needed that his children may learn firmness and self-control amid the allurements to sin which must be on every hand.

Let parents beware how they undervalue or neglect their work. Great is the reward of fidelity, terrible the penalty of unfaithfulness. One child wisely educated--trained to love and practice the right because it is right, may impart to thousands the blessings which he has received. Through his influence and example, the lessons of uprightness, purity, and devotion that shaped his own character, are permitted to shed their precious light far and wide.

How many faithful and honored workers for God and humanity have been given to the world as the fruit of a godly training in childhood. It was said of Timothy, the beloved co-laborer with Paul, that he knew the holy Scriptures from a child, and that the faith which dwelt in his mother and grandmother, was revealed also in him. The influence of faithful Christian parents can never lose its power. A young man when about to be ordained as a Christian minister, stated that at one time he had been well-nigh led to adopt the principles of infidelity. "But," he added, "there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never forget, and that was the consistent conduct of my own father. Through that I was at length won to the Saviour."

By neglect of duty, parents exert a far-reaching influence for evil. One ungodly, disobedient son, may lead many souls in the path of iniquity. Each of these will corrupt others; the evil traits cherished will be transmitted to posterity; and thus iniquity is constantly increasing and multiplying, and all because parents choose the way which is easiest at the moment, the way of gratification and indulgence, and look not to the misery in store for themselves, their children, and their children's children.

The solemn warnings contained in the word of God, the judgments visited upon the indulgent father, and his rebellious sons, should arouse parents from their stupor, and lead them to see and feel their duty to give to their children, by right education and discipline, correct habits and sound principles. Christian father, labor kindly, patiently, for the welfare of your children. Seek to turn their hearts to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Teach them by precept and example, that the spirit of Christ is the spirit of doing good.

To every father and mother is committed a little plot of ground before their own door. It is their work to clear it from noxious weeds, and to mellow the soil that the precious seed may take root and flourish there. To do their work faithfully will be far more pleasing to God than to go on a mission to some foreign land, leaving the home field neglected. The work of Christian ministers and parents, should begin with their own children. Present to the church and to the world a well-disciplined family, and you present one of the strongest arguments in favor of Christianity.

If parents who are following Eli's example of neglect could see the result of the education they are giving their children, they would feel that the curse which fell on Eli would assuredly fall on them. The sin of rebellion against parental authority, lies at the very foundation of the misery and crime in the world today. In his holy law God himself speaks to children: "Honor thy

father and thy mother." Again, by the pen of an apostle he commands them, "Children, obey your parents." The Old and the New Testament alike teach respect and obedience to parents, and also admonish all to reverence and honor the aged, to tenderly protect and cherish those whose heads are white, and whose steps are feeble. If children were trained according to the teachings of God's word, they would manifest a deference for superiors, a propriety of deportment, and a beauty of character that would make them beloved by their associates, and beloved of God.

There is a cause for the spirit of insubordination that exists in the family and the State, and that threatens to overthrow the very foundations of government. It is to be found in the growing disregard for the law of God. In ancient times parents were commanded to diligently teach its sacred precepts to their children, that they might thus become acquainted with the character of God, and his claims upon them. But men have become wiser, in their own conceit, than their Maker. Many have set aside the law of God, and have followed their own judgment in preference to his revealed will. How terrible have been the results of this teaching upon the youth! Self-indulgence, dissipation, profanity, and even greater crimes prevail to an extent that is frightful to contemplate.

The Lord holds parents and guardians responsible for the children under their care. He has not left us in uncertainty concerning the characters that he will accept. Nothing less than purity in thought, word, and deed, will meet the divine standard. The word of God sets forth in unmistakable language the duties of parents. If they will faithfully perform these duties, his Spirit will crown their efforts with success. Those words of holy writ are as true now as when first uttered by the wise man, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

November 24, 1881

God's Word the Parent's Guide

Our great enemy is constantly seeking to make men believe themselves wiser than their Creator. Like Eve, many follow the dictates of human wisdom, in preference to the commands of the Omniscient One. Such was the sin of Eli; and terrible indeed were its results,--disaster and death to himself, ruin to his wicked sons, and ruin to thousands in Israel.

Yet there are many today, standing like Eli in holy office, who are making the same mistake. They read his mournful history, but fail to profit by the warning. In their self-confidence they think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given us in his word. The earnest, anxious prayer does not ascend from their hearts, "Teach us, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?" With all their learning and intelligence, the results of their training show the vaunted wisdom of these persons to be but folly. Fond, indulgent parents, they allow their children to grow up from babyhood without restraint; and thus their forward, selfish, disagreeable ways become confirmed habits, rendering them unloving and unlovable.

God himself established the family relations. His word is the only safe guide in the management of children. Human philosophy has not discovered more than God knows, or devised a wiser plan of dealing with children than that given by our Lord. Who can better understand all the needs of children than their Creator? Who can feel a deeper interest in their welfare than He who bought them with his own blood? If the word of God were carefully studied and faithfully obeyed, there would be less soul-anguish over the perverse conduct of wicked children.

Eli was quick to see and rebuke the sins and errors of the people, sometimes, as in the case of Hannah, even administering unjust reproof; but the sins of his own sons seemed to him less offensive than the sins of others. In his undue affection he was ever ready to find excuses for their perverse course. All this was dishonoring God and misleading the people. To just such an extent as he permitted or excused sin in his children, did he become a partaker in their guilt. As sons of the high priest, they were connected with the work of God, and thus the evil and the sin were greatly heightened.

It is very natural for parents to be partial to their own children. Especially if these parents feel that they themselves possess superior ability, they will regard their children as superior to other children. Hence much that would be severely censured in others is passed over in their own children as smart and witty. While this partiality is natural, it is unjust and unchristian. A great wrong is done our children when we permit their faults to go uncorrected. Many foster wrong traits of character in their children, urging as an excuse, "They are too young to be punished. Wait until they become older, and can be reasoned with. They will outgrow many of these evil tendencies." Thus their wrong habits are left to grow and strengthen until they become second nature. Sometimes the father and mother are united in this error. Sometimes one would gladly pursue a wiser course; but when that one attempts to enforce obedience, the other takes the part of the child, and will not allow it to be brought into submission. The sad results of such a course can be fully seen only in eternity. They can never be estimated in this life.

But great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under any circumstances, they are tenfold greater when they exist in the family of those who stand in Christ's stead, to instruct the people. Ministers of the gospel, who fail to control their own households, are, by their wrong example, misleading many. They sanction the growth of evil, instead of repressing it. Many who consider themselves excellent judges of what other children

should be and what they should do, are blind to the defects of their own sons and daughters. Such a lack of divine wisdom in those who profess to teach the word of God, is working untold evil. It tends to efface from the minds of the people the distinction between right and wrong, purity and vice.

When ministers and people will exchange their natural pride of heart and independence for a child-like, teachable spirit; when, instead of trusting to their own understanding, and conforming to the maxims and customs of the world, they will sit at the feet of Jesus, and earnestly inquire, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" then his wisdom will direct them, his Spirit work with their efforts, and we shall see the youth who now drift into the ranks of Satan, serving under the banner of the Prince of Life.

Oh that the Elises of today, who are everywhere to be found pleading excuses for the waywardness of their children, would promptly assert their own God-given authority to restrain and correct them. Let parents and guardians, who overlook and excuse sin in those under their care, remember that they thus become accessory to these wrongs. If, instead of unlimited indulgence, the chastening rod were oftener used, not in passion, but with love and prayer, we would see happier families and a better state of society.

We have no sympathy with that discipline which would discourage children by hard censure, or irritate them by passionate correction, and then, as the impulse changes, smother them with kisses, or harm them by injurious gratification. Excessive indulgence and undue severity are alike to be avoided. While vigilance and firmness are indispensable, so also are sympathy and tenderness. Parents, remember that you deal with children who are struggling with temptation, and that to them these evil promptings are as hard to resist as are those that assail persons of mature years. Children who really desire to do right may fail again and again, and as often need encouragement to energy and perseverance. Watch the workings of these young minds with prayerful solicitude. Strengthen every good impulse,

encourage every noble action. The Lord, through an apostle, admonishes parents, "Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." The word of God is your guide, Christian parents. Depart not from it to gratify any impulse of passion or of affection.

If parents desire to teach their children self-control, they must first form the habit themselves. The scolding and fault-finding of parents, encourages a hasty, passionate temper in their children. Love and justice should stand side by side in the government of the household. Let prompt obedience to parental authority be invariably enforced. God has given parents their work, to form the characters of their children after the Divine Pattern. By his grace, they can accomplish the task; but it will require patient, painstaking effort, no less than firmness and decision, to guide the will and restrain the passions. A field left to itself produces only thorns and briers. He who would secure a harvest for usefulness or beauty must first prepare the soil and sow the seed, then dig about the young shoots, removing the weeds and softening the earth, and the precious plants will flourish and richly repay his care and labor.

The work of parents is continuous. It should not be laid hold of vigorously for one day, and neglected the next. Many are ready to begin the work, but are not willing to persevere in it. They are eager to do some great thing, to make some great sacrifice; but they shrink from the unceasing care and effort in the little things of every-day life, the hourly pruning and training of the wayward tendencies, the work of giving instruction, reproof, or encouragement, little by little, as it is needed. They wish to see children correct their faults and form right characters at once, reaching the mountain-top at a bound, and not by successive steps; and because their hopes are not immediately realized, they become disheartened. Let all such persons take courage as they remember the words of the apostle, "Be not weary in well doing; for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

Satan has prepared his snares for parents, tempting them to extravagance in dress, to an unnecessary outlay of time and money in the preparation of food, and to needless indulgence in many other forms. The demands of fashion so fully engross the time and attention that little room is left for communion with God, self-discipline, or the training of children. Thus too many parents let slip from their shoulders the responsibility of family government. It requires earnest heart-work to repress evil tendencies, strengthen weak principles, develop good and lovely traits of character, and direct all the powers of mind and body in the right channel. Fathers and mothers, will you not lay hold of your work with energy, perseverance, and love? Sow the precious seed daily, with earnest prayer that God will water it with the dews of grace, and grant you an abundant harvest. The Son of God died to redeem a sinful, rebellious race. Shall we shrink from any toil or sacrifice to save our own dear children?

By precept and example, let the young be taught reverence for God and for his word. Many of our youth are becoming infidels at heart, because of the lack of devotion in their parents. The law of God should be the law of the household. Let fathers and mothers kindly and patiently instruct their children, both from the inspired word and from the book of nature, leading them to understand the character of God. Let them show in their own lives that they are continually seeking to know and to do his will. To secure the approval of their Heavenly Father is the great motive to be ever kept before the minds of children. The service of God should be presented, not as an irksome task, but as a precious privilege, by which they may enjoy an honored, useful, and happy life here, and infinitely greater honor, usefulness, and joy in the life hereafter.

God has permitted light from his throne to shine all along the path of life. A pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, is moving before us as before ancient Israel. It is the privilege of Christian parents today, as it was the privilege of God's people of old, to bring their children with them to the

promised land.

December 1, 1881

The Sons of Eli

As the sons of Eli advanced to manhood, and entered upon the duties of the priesthood, the evil effects of their early training became more apparent. Though engaged in so important and sacred a work, they were "sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." From childhood they had been familiar with the solemn, impressive services of the sanctuary. They had been faithfully instructed in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. Intellectually, they had a knowledge of God; but their hearts had never yielded to the influence of divine grace. They loved not God's character or his requirements.

Had these youth improved the privileges granted them, they might have become men of both intellectual and moral power. A faithful obedience to God's requirements will have a surprising influence to elevate, develop, and strengthen all man's faculties. Those who have in youth devoted themselves to the service of God, are found to be the men of sound judgment and keen discrimination. And why should it not be so? Communion with the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, strengthens the understanding, illuminates the mind, and purifies the heart--elevates, refines, and ennoble the whole man. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

Among the youth who profess godliness, there is a large class who may seem to contradict this statement. They make no advancement in knowledge or in spirituality. Their powers are dwarfing, rather than developing. But the psalmist's words are true of the genuine Christian. It is not, indeed, the bare letter of God's word that gives light and understanding; it is the word opened and applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. When a man is truly converted,

he becomes a son of God, a partaker of the divine nature. Not only is the heart renewed, but the intellect is strengthened and invigorated. There have been many instances of persons who before conversion were thought to possess ordinary and even inferior ability, but who after conversion seemed entirely transformed. They then manifested remarkable power to comprehend the truths of God's word, and to present these truths to others. Men of high intellectual standing have considered it a privilege to hold intercourse with these men. The Sun of Righteousness, shedding its bright beams into their minds, quickened every power into more vigorous action.

God will do a great work for the youth, if they will by the aid of the Holy Spirit, receive his word into the heart, and obey it in the life. He is constantly seeking to attract them to himself, the Source of all wisdom, the Fountain of goodness, purity, and truth. The mind which is occupied with exalted themes, becomes itself ennobled. Those who profess to serve God, and yet make no advancement in knowledge and piety, are Christians only in name. The soul-temple is filled with desecrated shrines. Frivolous reading, trifling conversation, and worldly pleasure, occupy the mind so completely that there is no room left for the entrance of God's word. Worldliness, frivolity, and pride take the place which Christ should occupy in the soul.

To fix the heart's best affections upon any finite object, any earthly good, degrades the soul and weakens the intellect. God alone is worthy of man's supreme devotion. The individual whose heart is placed on worldly gain becomes covetous, selfish, and even cruel, in his efforts to amass wealth. Living for himself, he becomes narrow-minded. All his thoughts and feelings are absorbed in promoting his own interests. Mind and heart are dwarfed to meet his low standard of excellence.

Those who seek as their chief good the indulgence of appetite and passion, are never good or truly great men. However high they may stand in the opinion of the world, they are low, vile, and corrupt in God's estimation.

Heaven has ordered that the mark of their depravity shall be written upon their very countenance. Their thoughts are of the earth, earthly. Their words reveal the low level of the mind. They have filled the heart with vileness, and well-nigh effaced therefrom the image of God. The voice of reason is drowned, and judgment is perverted. Oh, how is man's entire nature debased by sensual indulgence! When the will is surrendered to Satan, to what depths of vice and folly will not men descend! In vain does truth appeal to the intellect; for the heart is opposed to its pure principles.

Eli's sons chose the false, the sensual, the debased, instead of the true, the pure, and the holy. Thus they became sons of Belial,--children of Satan. Standing, as they did, in sacred office, the chosen exponents of the divine will, mediators between a holy God and repentant sinners, the course of these wicked men brought temptation upon all Israel. Again the faith and devotion of the people were tested. Those who had cherished iniquity in their hearts, were inclined to unite with these vile men; and many excused their own sins, because those in high position led the way in transgression.

The typical service was the connecting link between God and Israel. The sacrificial offerings were designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, and thus to preserve in the hearts of the people an unwavering faith in the Redeemer to come. Hence, in order that the Lord might accept their sacrifices, and continue his presence with them, and, on the other hand, that the people might have a correct knowledge of the plan of salvation, and a right understanding of their duty, it was of the utmost importance that holiness of heart and purity of life, reverence for God, and strict obedience to his requirements, should be maintained by all connected with the sanctuary.

The Lord had, through Moses, given the most explicit directions concerning the sacrificial offerings. But selfish, avaricious priests, to serve their own interests, had departed from these instructions. The sacrifice of the peace-offerings especially, which were made as an expression of

thanksgiving to God, and were presented in great numbers when the people assembled at the annual feasts, afforded a favorable opportunity for unscrupulous priests to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. The Lord had directed that the fat of the peace-offering should be burned upon the altar as a type of the great Sacrifice; a specified portion, the breast and the right shoulder, with some minor parts, were given to the priest as his perquisite; the remainder was to be eaten by those who brought the offering.

Infinite wisdom had foreseen that the clamors of appetite, and a covetous desire for gain, might lead the priest to appropriate to himself the sacrifices solemnly devoted to the Lord. That there might be no room for confusion or misunderstanding, the most exact and minute directions had been given.

Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, disregarded the laws of the sanctuary more boldly than had any of their predecessors. While they arrayed themselves in the sacerdotal garments and ministered before the Lord, they cared only for the gratification of their own debased appetites and passions. The priests not being content with their rightful share of the peace-offerings, it had become customary for one of their servants to come while the offerers were cooking their portion in some apartment adjacent to the sanctuary, and to carry away whatever could be taken up with the flesh-hook. The great numbers of sacrifices offered, made this a considerable addition to the priest's perquisite.

But even this departure from the Lord's commands failed to satisfy Hophni and Phinehas. They desired the fat, which the Lord had expressly stated should never be eaten, but burned on the altar as an offering to himself. As they had learned to despise the authority of their father, they now despised the authority of God, and sent their servants to demand the flesh of the peace-offerings before the fat had been separated from it. When the offerer remonstrated, "Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then

take as much as thy soul desireth," the answer was, "Nay, but thou shalt give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force." The people stood in awe of the priests, and submitted to their unlawful claims, robbing themselves of their rightful share of the offering. Thus, appetite, selfishness, and avarice triumphed, exerting their evil influence upon the people at the very time when every heart should have been directed in penitence and faith to the great Sacrifice which was to take away the sins of the world. These things had a telling influence upon the people, and they were fast losing all sense of the sacredness of the sacrificial offerings, and of the importance of attending upon the services of the sanctuary.

The recreant priests added licentiousness to the dark catalogue of their crimes; yet they still polluted by their presence the tabernacle of the Lord, and, laden with sin, dared to come into the presence of a holy God. As the men of Israel witnessed the corrupt course of the priests, they thought it safer for their families not to come up to the appointed place of worship. Many went from Shiloh with their peace disturbed, their indignation aroused, until they at last determined to offer their sacrifices themselves, concluding that this would be fully as acceptable to God, as to sanction in any manner the abominations practiced in the sanctuary.

The worship which Jehovah himself had ordained was despised and neglected because associated with the sins of wicked men. This was a critical time for the people of God. Ungodliness, profligacy, and even idolatry prevailed to a fearful extent among them. And where now was the priest and judge of Israel? Eli was not ignorant of the course pursued by his sons. Faithful men, who mourned over the corruption of the priesthood, presented the matter in its true character before him. The indignation of the people had been aroused, and complaints were coming to him from every side. He had passed over these transgressions till he dared remain silent no longer. But the aged father still manifested the same partiality which he had ever shown his wayward sons. He took no decisive measures to bring them to justice, but

mildly remonstrated with them, as with persons of tender conscience, who had for once fallen under temptation:

"And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear; ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?

Eli had long known that his sons were not what God would have them. He knew that they did not give to Israel an example worthy of imitation. But he was growing old, and the burden of official care rested heavily upon him. Some one must assist him in bearing this responsibility. Should he deal justly with his sons, they would be speedily rejected from the priestly office, and punished with death. He dreaded thus to bring public disgrace and condemnation upon them. By passing over their crimes again and again without punishment, his own abhorrence of sin was lessened, and in his efforts to shield them, he became accessory to their guilt.

God held Eli, as priest and judge of Israel, accountable for the moral and religious standing of his people, and in a special sense for the character of his sons. The most severe punishment should have been meted out to them, as due the insulted honor of God, and as needful to counteract the influence of their daring sacrilege and gross immorality. Well had it been for Eli and for all Israel, had the high priest manifested such zeal for the honor of God, and such a desire to avert his wrath, as had been shown by the tribe of Levi in slaying the worshipers of the golden calf. On that occasion the priests at God's command executed justice upon the leaders in transgression, without regard to rank or kindred. Those who faithfully performed this painful duty, were approved and honored of the Lord.

Had not Eli's love for his wicked sons surpassed his zeal for the honor of

God, he would have pursued a similar course. He should have exercised his authority to repress crime and uphold righteousness, thus saying to all Israel, "Sin is sin, even if found in the sons of the high priest; and although a most painful duty devolves upon me as a father, God shall not be dishonored by my sons before the people. Holiness and iniquity shall not be confounded in the minds of Israel, because men in high position dare to sin." But the aged priest loved ease and peace, and rather than endure the pain and strife of meeting and resisting wrong, he remained silent, and suffered the work on iniquity to go on and the clouds of divine wrath to gather above a guilty nation.

December 8, 1881

God's Judgment Upon Sin

Unmerited mercy, no less than strict justice, were strikingly displayed in the Lord's dealings with the house of Eli. Notwithstanding the Heaven-daring crimes of the ungodly sons, and the sinful neglect of the indulgent father, the Lord waited long for them to turn from their evil ways. Then he sent a prophet to denounce their sins and to warn them of impending judgment. Without fear or favor, this chosen messenger of God set forth the high honors which the Most High had conferred upon them, and their base ingratitude in so degrading their holy office:

"Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Except in his neglect to restrain and control his sons, Eli had faithfully performed the duties of his office. But his failure to maintain the honor of God by repressing sin with an impartial hand, gave rise to a long train of evils, bringing crime and anguish upon a whole nation. In the history of Eli and his sons is a solemn warning for all the ministers of Christ--an admonition to guard their own hearts with diligence, to keep holy all God's

requirements, that his blessing may rest upon the workmen, and that the work may bear the signet of Heaven. It should also impress upon them their duty to rebuke sin in the members of the church, be they high or low, rich or poor. Even our dearest friends are not to come between us and our allegiance to God. We need not expect to receive the divine blessing until all that has been left for man to do is done to correct error and repress sin. To neglect this duty, or to be slothful and careless in its performance, is to disobey God, to sanction sin, and to bring his wrath upon his people.

The example of ministers should be such as to impress the people with reverence for God, and with fear to offend him. They should honor the Lord at all times, ever acknowledging that of themselves they can do nothing, that their strength and wisdom must come from God, and that all the glory belongs to him. Those who occupy responsible positions, where if connected with God they might do much good, yet who abuse these privileges by the gratification of appetite or unlawful passion, will be visited with the wrath of God according to the gifts which they have perverted.

It is plainly written on the unrenewed heart and on a fallen world, All seek their own. Selfishness is the great law of our degenerate nature. Selfishness occupies that place in the soul where Christ should sit enthroned. Never does Satan more effectually accomplish his work than in controlling the minds and hearts of those who minister in sacred things. Transforming himself into an angel of light, his true character is not discerned. Alas, how many of the agents of the great deceiver are to be found in the holy office of the ministry! They may possess intellectual ability, they study, preach, and pray, and are looked upon as pious men because engaged in a sacred work. Then, taking advantage of the confidence reposed in them, they lead souls to ruin and to death. There are men in holy office today who are similar in character to Hophni and Phinehas. They give loose rein to passion, and disguise their depravity under a cloak of religion. When at last their true character is detected and exposed, the faith of the people receives a shock

that often destroys their confidence in religion. Imperceptibly there is left upon the mind a distrust of all who profess to teach the word of God. The message of the true servant of Christ is doubtfully received. The question constantly comes up, "Will not this man prove to be like the one we thought so holy and found so corrupt?" Thus the word of God loses its power upon the souls of men. These false shepherds are of the class who in the day of God will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" It is to such men that our Lord will declare, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Said the great apostle, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." We live in an age when the spurious abounds; but, thank God, there is a true, or there would be no counterfeit. Let all who would be numbered with the faithful few, seek to follow the example of the self-denying apostle.

The words of reproof to Eli are also a reproof to all parents who pursue a similar course. Indulgence of the wayward inclinations of the youth is registered in the books of Heaven as a sin. If a minister of the gospel neglect his duty as a parent, his guilt is as much greater than that of others as his position is more responsible. He is showing contempt for the authority of God. While teaching his word to others, he disregards it himself. That parent can have no true sense of the worth of souls, who permits his children to grow up without restraint, going out from his hearth with their hearts at enmity with God and his law, to infuse that enmity into the hearts of others.

The very beginnings of evil, the first manifestations of insubordination, should be resolutely checked. The indulgence of appetite and passion should be restrained with earnestness and decision. When parents neglect this work, they permit thorns and briers to occupy the heart-gardens which God has

commanded them to sow with precious seed, and to till with care, that a harvest 5/be brought forth unto eternal life. God will surely visit the transgressors with judgment. Both parents and children must reap the harvest sown.

In the sons of Eli, we may see the sons of many professedly Christian parents. None are more stubborn and perverse, none less susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit, than are many of these victims of parental indulgence. There is no class that will exert a more pernicious influence than such ungodly youth. By their inconsistent course, they furnish the enemies of God with arguments against Christianity. There are skeptics and even atheists who are at times troubled, and almost persuaded to believe in the existence of God and the truth of the Scriptures. Satan fears to lose them from his ranks, and he calls their attention to the perverse and immoral children of professed Christians, as the fruit of belief in God and the Bible. The careless find in their course an excuse for not giving themselves to Christ, and many who really desire to become Christians, are discouraged. These wayward youth are successful agents of Satan. Ungodliness and immorality follow in their path, and the crime of perverting and polluting many souls rests upon them, and upon the parents whose neglect of duty made them what they are.

Professed Christians have by their inconsistent course done greater harm to the cause of Christ than can be done by open opposers. The world at large judge of Christianity by the course of its advocates. If this be evil, the system itself is rejected. When a missionary once urged an Indian chief to be a Christian, "the plumed savage drew himself up in the consciousness of superior rectitude, and with indignation quivering on his lip and flashing in his eagle eye, replied, 'Christian lie; Christian cheat; Christian steal, drink, murder; Christian rob me of my lands, and slay my tribe;' adding as he turned haughtily on his heel, 'I will be no Christian.'" Alas that this incident truly represents the course of some who are looked upon by the world as the

representatives of Christ!

Eli knew that the wickedness of his sons and the iniquity which by their influence had spread through all Israel, must call down upon his family and upon the nation the judgments of God. He remembered how promptly similar offenders had been punished in the past. In the days of Joshua, one man's sin brought disaster and defeat upon the whole nation. When, contrary to the command of God, Achan took of the spoils of their enemies, and concealed the coveted treasure in his tent, the divine presence was withdrawn from Israel, until the crime had been put away by the death of the offender. The Lord gave Joshua to understand that the sin of even one man would bring the divine wrath upon the whole congregation.

There was work for both magistrate and people, to keep the camp free from iniquity. They must have vigilant care, not only for themselves, but for one another, lest sin should prevail, and the Lord's name be dishonored.

God's character changes not. He was the same in Eli's time as in the days of Joshua. The iniquity signally punished in the early history of Israel could not be tolerated in later years. The crimes of Eli's sons were far greater than the sin of Achan. And their guilt was heightened by the greater light which they had received; they were acquainted with the history of his sin and its terrible punishment, and they had enjoyed superior advantages for religious education and training. Notwithstanding the Lord's forbearance toward them, they had stubbornly gone on in sin, and now the prophet of the Lord pronounced their fate:

"And this shall be a sign unto thee that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever."

Man may be deceived by the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh upon the heart. Those who steal the livery of Heaven that they may allure souls to death, will as surely receive retributive justice as did Achan, Hophni, and Phinehas. Every man is sowing seed which will produce a harvest for him to reap by and by. We are all treasuring up stores for eternity. The righteous are laying up eternal riches; the wicked treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. While acquiring property on earth, the sinner is by his transgression of God's law gathering for himself anguish and bitterness. He may be honored of men, but, saith the Lord, "Them that honor me, I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The record of every act of injustice, of cruelty, or licentiousness, is passing up to Heaven to be registered in the book of God's remembrance. Today the treasure of wrath is greater than it was yesterday; and tomorrow the sinner will add to the amount. Every soul whom his influence has helped to lead astray increases the treasure he has laid up, the vengeance of God, accumulating, deepening, darkening.

In Eli's reproof to his sons are words of solemn and fearful import,-- words which all who minister in sacred things would do well to ponder. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" Had their crimes injured only their fellow-men, the judge might have made reconciliation by appointing a penalty, and requiring restitution; and thus the offenders might have been pardoned. Or had they sinned ignorantly, the priest might have presented a sin-offering for them, and secured their pardon. But their sins were so interwoven with their ministration as priests of the Most High, in offering sacrifice for sin; the work of God was so profaned and dishonored before the people, that no expiation could be accepted for them. Their own father, though himself high priest, dared not make intercession for them; he could not shield them from the wrath of a holy God. Let those whose hearts are given to the service of sin and Satan, beware how they pollute the sacred

office of the ministry. Let them beware how, while at heart agents of Satan, they dare to stand before the people as ambassadors for Christ. In the day of Judgment the doom of Hophni and Phinehas will be theirs.

December 15, 1881

God's Message to Samuel

While Eli's heart was filled with anxiety and remorse by the evil course of his sons, he found relief and comfort in the integrity and devotion of the youthful Samuel. His ready helpfulness and unvarying fidelity lightened the burdens of the careworn priest. Eli loved Samuel; for he saw that the grace and love of God rested upon him. It was not customary for the Levites to enter upon their peculiar services until they were twenty-five years of age. But Samuel had been an exception to this rule. Every year saw more important trusts committed to him, and, while yet a child, a linen ephod was placed upon him, as a token of his consecration to the work of the sanctuary.

As Samuel grew older, the anxiety of his parents in his behalf became more intense. Many were the petitions offered that he might not be contaminated by the wickedness reported concerning the sons of Eli. "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men."

When but twelve years old, the son of Hannah received his special commission from the Most High. The circumstances of that call are best related in the simple and touchingly beautiful language of the sacred writer: "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel." Supposing the voice to be that of Eli, the child hastened to the bedside of the aged priest, saying, "Here am I, for thou calledst me." The answer was, "I called not, my son, lie down again." Three times Samuel was called, and thrice he responded in like

manner; and then Eli was convinced that the mysterious call was the voice of God. What feelings must have stirred the heart of the high priest at that hour! God had passed by his chosen servant, the man of hoary hairs, to commune with a child. This in itself was a bitter yet deserved rebuke to Eli and his house.

No spirit of envy or jealousy was awakened in Eli's heart. He humbly submitted to the will of God, and directed Samuel to answer, if again called, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Once more the child heard the mysterious voice, and answered, "Speak, for thy servant heareth." So awed was he at the thought that the great God should speak to him, that he could not remember the exact words which Eli bade him say.

"And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever."

The Scriptures state that before receiving this message from God, "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." He was not destitute of a knowledge of God, nor he was a stranger to the influence of divine grace; but he was not acquainted with such direct manifestations of his presence, as were granted to the prophets. It was the Lord's purpose, however, to reveal himself in an unexpected manner, that Eli might hear of it through the surprise and inquiry of the youth.

Samuel had not been ignorant of the wicked course pursued by the sons of Eli, but he was filled with fear and amazement that the Lord should

commit to him so terrible a message. He arose in the morning and went about his duties as usual, but with a heavy burden on his young heart. How earnestly did he long for the sympathy and counsel of his parents in that trying hour! The Lord had not commanded him to reveal the fearful denunciation to the priest or to his sons; hence he remained silent, avoiding as far as possible the presence of Eli. He trembled, lest some question would compel him to declare the divine judgments against one whom he so loved and revered.

Eli was confident that the message concerned himself. He felt that some great calamity was about to fall upon him and his house. He called Samuel, and solemnly charged him to faithfully relate what the Lord had revealed. The youth obeyed, and when the venerable man heard the appalling sentence, he bowed in meek submission:

"It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." Eli's faith in the wisdom and justice of God was unshaken. He confessed his own guilt and the guilt of his sons; and as he looked forward to the dread result, acknowledged that he deserved it all: "It is the Lord; who shall rise up in judgment against him? I have ever found him merciful, long-suffering, holy, and just. Let him do what seemeth him good."

Year after year the Lord for Eli's sake delayed his threatened judgments. How much might have been done in those years, to redeem the failures of the past! But the aged priest took no effective measures to avert the doom that hung over himself and his house. The forbearance of God caused Hophni and Phinehas to harden their hearts, and to become still bolder and more defiant in transgression. But steadily and surely the day of retribution was approaching. Every warning slighted, every day of probation squandered, made their punishment greater, their doom more certain.

God bears long with the perversity and stubbornness of men. By

warnings and reproofs he shows them their true condition. Again and again he calls them to repentance. Though the multitudes wax bold in sin, trampling upon his mercy and defying his justice, still he pours his blessings upon them. Oh, how infinitely beyond human comprehension are the Lord's mercy and forbearance toward the children of men! Yet there is a limit, beyond which men may not go on in sin. When the fullness of iniquity is reached,--as with the Amorites, and the children of Israel who fell in the wilderness,--then the wrath of God is visited upon the transgressors of his law.

There are many who teach that man may violate God's law with impunity. These men seek to conceal the hideous character of sin, by clothing it with garments of righteousness. They may observe all the forms of religion, but their hearts are at enmity with God. They look upon his law as a yoke of bondage, because it forbids them to indulge their sinful desires. "Thou shalt not," placed at every avenue of sin, is the restriction of the just and holy One. Those who, like Hophni and Phinehas, disregard the commandments of God, and lead others to transgress, are Satan's agents to destroy souls. They say to the sinner, "It shall be well with thee," when God says, "I will punish the transgressor with my wrath, I will take him away in my hot displeasure."

God may bear long with the sins of men, but in his own time he will vindicate his authority. Although the wicked may say, "My way is hid from the Lord," yet when his interposition is needed, he will show that he beholds all the works of the children of men. In the days of Noah, the wickedness of man became so great that it was necessary for God to assert his authority and punish the transgressors of his law. A crisis had come, and the Lord declared the limits of his forbearance toward that guilty race. He sent his faithful servant with a message of warning, giving them one hundred and twenty years in which to turn from their sins. They rejected and despised God's love, and when the measure of their iniquity was full; when the boundaries of

divine mercy were passed, the Lord swept that wicked race from the earth by the waters of the flood.

As men again increased, they departed from the Lord, and then Abraham was made the depositary of God's law. When the Israelites, through their long bondage in Egypt, had to a great degree lost the knowledge of that law, the Lord himself proclaimed it from Sinai, in the hearing of all the people. The nations of the earth were given to idolatry; it was to preserve the children of men from total apostasy, that the Lord manifested his mighty power in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, and establishing them in the land of Canaan.

When God's authority had been set aside, and his worship neglected and despised, it became necessary for him to interpose, that the honor of his name might be maintained in the earth. Such a necessity existed in the days of Eli. None but a divine power could free the worship and ordinances of God from the corruption and disorder produced by the course of Hophni and Phinehas. The hand of God must be distinctly recognized; the agents of Israel's apostasy must be destroyed, yet the nation must not become extinct. The service of God must be purged from sin and sinners, and the worship itself honored and exalted.

God's people had been crying to him with humiliation and fasting, that the wickedness of the wicked might come to an end. And while he manifested his power as an avenger to the wicked, he would also appear as the protector of the righteous. Though their prayers might long have seemed unheard, yet in God's own time they saw that he had given ear to their supplications, and answered them by terrible things in righteousness.

In every age, God's judgments have been visited upon the earth because men transgressed his law. What, then, have we to expect as we behold the wickedness which prevails at the present day? An ungrateful people,

forgetful of God's care, his long forbearance, and his unnumbered blessings, are showing contempt for his holy law. Many of the acknowledged leaders in the church and in the nation, break, and teach others to break that law, as sacred to God as his own throne and name. It is time for the Lord himself to assert his authority in the earth. And he is doing this, by fires, by floods, by tempests. He removes his protecting, providential care, and visits his judgments upon the children of men.

In these days of peril shall we show less devotion to the truth of God, and less fervent attachment to his law, than in former years? The very condition of things exists which Christ declared would be, prior to his second coming in power and glory. The prevailing ungodliness tends to paralyze and even to destroy true faith and piety. But this is the very time when the gold of Christian integrity will shine brightest, in contrast to the dross of hypocrisy and corruption. Now is the time for Christ's chosen to show their devotion to his service,--the time for all his followers to bear the noblest testimony for their Master by standing firm against the prevailing current of evil.

As we see the results which have followed a disregard of God's law,--dishonesty, theft, licentiousness, drunkenness, and murder--we are prepared to say with the psalmist, "I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold;" "in keeping of them, there is great reward." When the divine law is set aside, the greatest misery will result, both to families and to society. Our only hope of better things is to be found in a faithful adherence to the precepts of Jehovah. Infidel France once tried the experiment of rejecting the authority of God. What scenes of horror followed! Men cast aside the divine law as a yoke of bondage, and in their boasted liberty they placed themselves under the rule of the veriest tyrant. Anarchy and bloodshed ruled that terrible day. It was then demonstrated to the world that the surest way to undermine the foundation of order and government, is to set at naught the law of God.

Let us remember that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." The commandments of God convict the sinner of his guilt; but that perfect law has been obeyed by Christ in our stead, and through faith in him we are released from our great debt, and are placed where, in his strength, we can render obedience to God. Instead of feeling that we are now in the slightest degree excusable in further transgression, we shall realize as never before the justice of God's claims upon us, and the sacred character of his law, since Christ must die to maintain its authority.

Ere long the obedient will see the blessed results that follow the keeping of all God's commandments and the transgressors of his law will reap the reward of their doings. The Judge of all the earth will vindicate his insulted authority. Already we see his judgments in the land. And the end is not yet. He will work until sin and sinners are destroyed from the earth.

December 22, 1881

The Glory Departed from Israel

"Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." From one extreme of the land to the other, Samuel's claims to the prophetic office were established, and he received further revelations of God's will in the tabernacle at Shiloh.

The messages of warning and reproof to the house of Eli were made known by him to the whole nation. By so doing he hoped to counteract, in some measure, the evil influence of his past neglect. But these warnings were disregarded by the people, as they had been by the priests. The surrounding nations also, who were not ignorant of the iniquities openly practiced in Israel, became still bolder and more determined in their own course of idolatry and crime. They felt no sense of guilt for their sins, as they would have felt had the Israelites preserved their integrity.

Again the Philistines gathered their forces for war. And Israel, without asking counsel from the Lord, without the concurrence of Eli or Samuel, rashly went out to battle. But the hand of God was not with them, and in the first engagement they were defeated, with a loss of four thousand of their number. When the people returned disheartened to their tents, the elders of Israel said, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines?" The nation was ripe for the judgments of God, yet so blinded by their unbelief and rebellion that they could not see in their disaster a token of the Lord's displeasure.

Instead of confessing and forsaking the sins that had brought defeat

upon them, they now set about devising some other means by which to obtain the victory. Then they thought of the ark of God. What wonders had been wrought when the priests bore it before the people into Jordan! How its waters parted, leaving a safe path for that vast company! They remembered also how it was borne about the city of Jericho seven days in solemn silence, and then as the trumpets pealed, and the people gave a great shout, the massive walls fell flat upon the earth.

The recollection of these glorious triumphs inspired all Israel with fresh hope and courage, and they immediately sent to Shiloh for the ark, "that when it cometh among us," said they, "it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." They did not consider that it was the law of God which alone gave to the ark its sacredness, and that its presence would bring them prosperity only as they obeyed that law. While they talked of the "ark of the covenant of the Lord," they ignored the real significance of the title. A covenant is an agreement between parties, based upon conditions. If Israel would obey the divine law and thus fulfill the conditions of their covenant with God, he would verify his promises to them. But what presumption for them to expect a blessing while they were violating the conditions upon which alone it could be bestowed!

Yet we see a similar blindness and inattention on the part of many at the present day. Having a knowledge of God's law, they are confident and boastful, as though especially favored of Heaven, while they are not from the heart obeying its precepts. God has given to modern Israel warnings, counsel, and reproof, to bring them to repentance and reformation of life. But too often these produce but a momentary impression. The persons warned soon return to their own ways. They flatter themselves that because they have a form of godliness they will be accepted of the Lord, and they go on presumptuously devising and executing plans in accordance with their own finite judgment, and giving little heed to the special manifestations of divine providence. It is one thing to acknowledge the claims of God's law, and quite

another thing to render faithful and willing obedience to all its requirements. And let it be remembered that to the obedient alone will the promises of blessing, support, and guidance be fulfilled.

The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, eagerly acceded to the proposal to bear the ark into the camp. Without the consent of the high priest, they ventured presumptuously into the holy of holies, and took from thence the ark of God. Filled with pride, and elated with the expectation of speedy victory, they bore it to the camp. And the people, beholding, as they thought the token of Jehovah's presence, "shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again."

They overlooked the distinction between the divine presence vouchsafed to an obedient and believing people, and the ark, which was but a symbol of that presence. Hence they confidently looked to the ark for those blessings which God alone could bestow. They saw not the wide contrast between the condition of Israel when the Lord wrought so mightily in their behalf, and their present state.

They were then walking in obedience to God. The ark was borne by holy men in accordance with his express command, and the Captain of the Lord's host went before the repository of his law. Then his arm brought deliverance for them. But they were now following their own plans, in opposition to the divine counsel and authority. The ark was borne by sons of Belial who were doomed to destruction. Yet the people were so infatuated by Satan as to imagine they could induce God to fight for them, when the law under the mercy-seat condemned them to defeat, disaster, and death!

The Philistines looked upon the ark as the god of the Hebrews. All the mighty works which Jehovah had wrought for Israel, were attributed to its power. As they heard the shouts of joy and triumph at its approach, they said, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?"

"And they understand that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness."

The Philistines feared for their nation; yet still they trusted to the power of Dagon their god, and sought to strengthen the courage of the people: "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight." They well knew how bitter was the servitude which Israel had endured when in their power, and the thought of themselves becoming slaves to endure like oppression nerved them with the courage of desperation.

A fierce assault upon Israel resulted in their defeat with great slaughter. Thirty thousand men lay dead upon the field, and the ark of God was taken, the two sons of Eli having fallen while fighting to defend it.

The Lord sorely chastised his people Israel, revealing their hypocrisy and rebuking their presumption, and thus left upon the pages of history the testimony for all future ages, that the iniquities of his professed people will not go unpunished. The greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it. God is not dependent upon men to cause his name to be feared and honored in the earth. He accepts the labors of those who walk in faithfulness and humility before him, but he will reject all who profess to serve him, and yet follow in the course of the unrighteous. God can carry forward his work in the earth without the co-operation of those who would pervert or disgrace it.

While the army of Israel went out to battle, Eli, blind and old, remained at Shiloh. Seating himself at the gate of the tabernacle he anxiously waited for tidings from the field of conflict, "for his heart trembled for the ark of

God." Days of agonizing suspense followed. At last there fell upon his ears a sound of lamentation from the town. Soon a messenger drew near, his clothing rent and dust upon his head, and repeated to the high priest his sad tidings:

"Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." Eli could endure all this, terrible as it was, for he had expected it. But when the messenger added, "And the ark of God is taken," a look of unutterable anguish passed over his countenance. The thought that his sin had thus dishonored God and caused him to withdraw his presence from Israel, was more than he could bear; his strength was gone, he reeled upon his seat and fell, "and his neck brake, and he died."

The wife of Phinehas, notwithstanding the impiety of her husband, was a woman who feared the Lord. The death of her father-in-law and her husband, and above all the terrible tidings that the ark of God was in captivity, caused her death. She felt that now the last hope of Israel was gone, and she named the child, born in this hour of adversity, Ichabod, or inglorious; with her dying breath mournfully repeating the words, "The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken."

January 5, 1882

A Happy New Year

Another year of life is now in the past. A new year is opening before us. What will be its record? What will we each inscribe upon its spotless pages? The manner in which we spend each passing day will decide this question. Fathers and mothers, while you wish your children a Happy New Year, will you strive in the fear of God to make it a happy year? Will you seek to lead your dear ones to the true source of peace and joy? Will you consecrate your own hearts to God, that you may exert a sanctifying influence upon your children? Will you separate them from sin and sinners, and by living faith connect them with God?

It should be the work of every parent to cultivate all that is good, and true, and noble, in his children. It is his duty to correct their faults, to restrain their waywardness, even as the Lord required Eli to restrain his sons. Fathers and mothers, make the word of God your guide in the education of your children, ever considering what will be for their future good, rather than what is for your present convenience. The mother may bestow upon her daughters an education that will be invaluable, by training them to bear their share of the family burdens. The father may give his sons a capital of more worth than gold or lands, by teaching them to love useful employment, instead of seeking happiness in idle amusements or dissipation. Parents, now is the time to form in your children habits of industry, self-reliance, and self-control; to cultivate economy and business tact. Now is the time to teach them courtesy and benevolence toward their fellow-men, and reverence and love for God.

You may make a happy new year for your children, if you faithfully discharge your duty. Home should be the most sunny and attractive spot on earth; and it may be made such by pleasant words and kind acts, and,

underlying all, a steadfast adherence to the right.

By their neglect to exercise proper restraint, many parents are creating great unhappiness for their children. The youth who are left to constantly seek for pleasure in amusement or selfish gratification are not happy, and never can be happy while following this course. Fathers and mothers, teach your children that the only way to be truly happy is to love and fear God; and enforce the lesson by your example. Let them see that the peace of Christ is ruling in your heart, and that his love pervades your life. Practical religion is the need of the present hour. You cannot teach this to your children unless you possess it yourselves.

Let us enter upon the new year with our hearts cleansed from the defilement of selfishness and pride. Let us put away every sinful indulgence, and seek to become faithful, diligent learners in the school of Christ. A new year opens its unsullied pages before us. What shall we write upon them?

Children, you greet your father and mother with a "Happy New Year," but will you make it a happy year to them? It is in your power to do this. Your conduct, more than everything besides, will make a happy or an unhappy year for your parents. You may cause their hearts to throb with joy or pain. Whatever dishonors your Saviour, whatever causes a stain upon your character, brings anxiety and distress to the heart of godly parents. You cannot give them a happy new year if you live only for self-gratification.

Seek to begin this year with right purposes and pure motives, as beings who are accountable to God. Ever bear in mind that your acts are daily passing into history by the pen of the recording angel. You must meet them again when the Judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened.

How often your lips utter the kindly greeting, "I wish you a happy new year," and then in a few moments speak impatient, fretful words. How many

children are ever ready to dispute about trifles, unwilling to make the smallest sacrifice for others. To such the new year will bring no real happiness. They may indulge in boisterous mirth, but their hearts know no peace nor joy. Will you not come with penitence and humility to Jesus, that he may cleanse you from the impurity of sin, and fit you for his heavenly kingdom? All who do this will have the happiest new year that they ever experienced. It will bring joy in Heaven and joy on earth.

Many have been seeking some rare gift to bestow upon their friends. Will you not, children, bring to Jesus the gift which he prizes above all others--the gift of your heart? While others at the holiday season adorn themselves to please the eye of their friends, will you not seek the adorning which Heaven values--the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? If we bring to God the first gift, the value of every other is enhanced; for love makes it not merely a passing compliment, but a precious offering. From the softened heart in which the peace of Christ abides, will flow forth sincere wishes, kindly words and deeds, and worthy, appropriate offerings.

Many are the gifts and greetings that have been exchanged on New Year's day, by parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances. When it is over, many feel a sense of relief. They have discharged their duty in bestowing presents, and smiles, and compliments for the occasion, and there the matter is supposed to end. The next day, and the next, and onward to the end of the year, bring fretful, passionate words, faultfinding, recrimination, and careless neglect of the dear ones of the household. Oh, such a new year is one that angels will be grieved and ashamed to register. It is anything but happy. Friends and relatives bestow a gift of sorrow, a burden of unkindness, that crushes out hope, and makes the grave look desirable.

Do we truly wish our loved ones a happy new year? Then let us make it such to them by kindness, by sympathy, by cheerfulness, by unselfish

devotion. If we connect with God, the source of peace, and light, and truth, his Spirit will flow through us as a channel, to refresh and bless all around us. This may be the last year of life to us. Shall we not enter upon it with thoughtful consideration? Shall not sincerity, respect, benevolence, mark our deportment toward all?

Let us withhold nothing from Him who gave his precious life for us. Fathers and mothers, bring to him your children, in the freshness and bloom of youth, and devote them to his service. Let us all consecrate to God the property he has intrusted to us. Above all, let us give him ourselves, a free-will offering. Let us do his will, live for his glory, and he will give us a Happy New Year.

January 12, 1882

The Ark in Philistia

The loss of the ark was the heaviest blow which had fallen upon Israel since their establishment as a nation. Unfaithful to God as they had been, they still regarded this sacred symbol with awe and reverence, not unmingled with pride, as they recalled the glorious triumphs of the past. The tidings that it had been taken by the Philistines sent a thrill of terror through every heart, followed by the mute calmness of despair. Military power, could they command it, would not avail them now; and the strength of their men of war seemed paralyzed.

But the Lord had not wholly cast aside his chosen, nor would he long suffer the exultation of the heathen. He had used the Philistines as the instrument to punish Israel, and he would now employ the ark to punish the Philistines. In time past the divine presence had attended it to be the strength, salvation, and glory of his obedient people. That invisible presence would still attend it to bring terror and destruction to the bold transgressors of God's holy law.

The Philistines removed the ark in triumph to Ashdod, one of their five principal cities, and placed it in the house of their god, Dagon. They felt that now they had nothing to fear from Israel. In their superstitious ignorance they imagined that the mighty power which had hitherto attended the ark would be theirs, and this, united with the power of Dagon, would render them invincible. Attributing their success wholly to the favor of their god, they sought to show their gratitude by the most extravagant demonstrations of reverence and praise.

Their rejoicing was of short duration. Upon entering the temple on the

following day, they beheld a sight which filled them with consternation. Dagon their god had fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of Jehovah. Reverently the priests lifted the idol and restored him to his place. But the next morning they found him, strangely mutilated, again lying upon the earth before the ark. The upper part of this idol was like that of a man, and the lower part was in the likeness of a fish. Now every part that resembled the human form had been cut off, and only the uncouth body of the fish remained.

Priests and people were horror-struck as they beheld their cherished deity thus mutilated and dishonored. They looked upon this mysterious event as an evil omen foreboding destruction to themselves and their idols before the God of the Hebrews. They now removed the ark from their temple, and placed it in a building by itself.

The living God whom the Philistines had insulted and defied, had arisen to assert his authority and manifest his power. The divine judgments rested heavily upon Ashdod, and the inhabitants were smitten with a distressing and fatal disease. Remembering the plagues which were visited upon Egypt by the God of Israel, the people attributed their afflictions to the presence of the ark among them. Accordingly they assembled their leading men to consider what to do with the ark, declaring that it should no longer abide with them. It was decided to convey it to Gath. But the plague followed close upon its removal, and the men of that city sent it to Ekron.

Here the people received it with terror, crying, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." They sought to their gods for protection, as the people of Gath and Ashdod had done. But the work of the destroyer went on, until, in their distress, "the cry of the city went up to heaven." Fearing longer to retain the ark among the homes of men, the people next placed it in the open fields. There followed a plague of mice, which infested the land, destroying the products of the soil,

both in the storehouse and in the field. Utter destruction, by disease or famine, now threatened the nation, and gloomy forebodings for the future added to the heavy burden of the present.

In his dealings with the Philistines, God had shown how easily at his appointed time he can overthrow the stronghold of superstition, and sweep away the refuge of lies. The Lord often employs his bitterest enemies to punish the unfaithfulness of his professed people. The wicked may triumph for a time as they see Israel suffering chastisement; but let them be assured that the wrath of God will ere long fall with crushing weight upon themselves. However the sinner may now rejoice in the rewards of unrighteousness, the blind eyes will yet see, the hard heart one day fell, that a life of rebellion against God has been a terrible mistake.

For seven long months the ark remained in Philistia. During all this time the Israelites made no attempt to recover the symbol of Jehovah's presence. But the Philistines were now as anxious to free themselves from its power as they had been to obtain it. Instead of being a source of strength to them, it was a great burden and a heavy curse. Yet they knew not what course to pursue; for wherever it went, the judgments of God followed. The people called for the princes of the nation, with the priests and diviners, and eagerly inquired, "What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place." They were advised to return it with a costly trespass-offering, that the wrath of God might be appeased. "Then," said the priests, "ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you."

In India at the present day, when a pilgrim comes to a pagoda or temple to be cured of any disease, he invariably brings with him a figure of the member or part affected, in gold, silver, or copper, according to his means, and presents it as an offering to his god. A similar custom was in vogue among the Philistines; and in accordance with the prevailing superstition, the

lords directed the people to make representations of the plagues by which they had been afflicted,--"five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; for," said they, "one plague was on you all, and on your lords."

These wise men acknowledged a mysterious power accompanying the ark; a power which they had no wisdom to meet. Yet they did not counsel the people to turn from their idolatry to serve the Lord. They still hated the God of Israel though compelled by overwhelming judgments to submit to his authority. Thus sinners may still be convinced by the judgments of God that it is in vain to contend against him. They may be compelled to submit to his power, while at heart they rebel against his control. Such submission may honor God, but it can have no power to save the transgressor. The heart must be yielded to God and subdued by divine grace before man's repentance can be accepted.

We are filled with wonder as we contemplate the long-suffering of God toward the wicked. The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of his providence. Rain and sunshine, objects of beauty, gifts for sustenance,--the music of birds, the fragrance and loveliness of flowers, fruits without number, pleasant to the sight and good for food, golden harvests to clothe the plain and cattle upon the hills--all came to them from God. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to his love. The forbearance of God was very great toward the children of men; but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, he removed from them his protecting hand. They refused to listen to the voice of God in his created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of his word, and he spoke to them through judgments. They rejected mercy, and the great I Am caused them to feel his power.

How many there are today, who, like the Philistines, will present

offerings to God, but refuse to give him their hearts, and cast away their idols. How many with idolatrous delight set their affections on sparkling vanities, that must ere long be consumed, turning away from the only treasure worth possessing.

God still bears long with the wicked. He still surrounds them with temporal blessings. It is his hand that provides the bounties upon their tables. He gives them raiment and dwellings. There are rich fields for the harvest; there are flocks and herds, gold and silver, friends and health. Let God but remove his providential care, and what want, desolation, and inexpressible wretchedness would result! A blight would come upon the fields, every creature that ministers to our comfort would perish, and man himself would be swept from the earth as by a devouring plague. And yet men enjoy God's blessings, and, like the soulless beasts, return to him no grateful acknowledgment. They feel secure in their possessions, when a word, a breath, the slightest accident, might deprive them of their earthly all. No bounty or blessing can men claim as their own. All are committed to us as a trust, which, if not wisely improved, God will remove.

The Philistines hoped by their offerings to appease the wrath of God, but they were ignorant of the one great sacrifice which alone can secure to sinful men the divine favor. Those gifts were powerless to atone for sin; for the offerers did not through them express faith in Christ. Not a ray of hope, no proffer of mercy, no token of God's favor, could have been ours, but for the cross of Calvary. Justice must have cut men off forever from temporal and spiritual blessings, separating us from God both here and hereafter, closing the door to all the joys of earth, and forever shutting out the brightness of Heaven. For us, Jesus trod the wine-press of God's wrath. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Let every son and daughter of Adam unite to exalt the name of Christ, as our King and our Redeemer. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men,

whereby we must be saved."

January 12, 1882

The Missionary

Among the Churches

Petaluma

November 25, I left Oakland for Petaluma, and found a pleasant home with the family of Bro. Chapman, where I have ever been heartily welcomed. On the Sabbath I spoke with freedom to the little company who reverence God's holy day and assemble for his worship. A social meeting followed, in which sixteen testimonies were borne. We realized that the Lord's presence is not confined to large assemblies, but that where two or three are gathered in his name, he meets with them. All seemed strengthened and encouraged. I felt the sweet peace of Christ, the consolation of his Spirit. I was in feeble health, but the precious evidence of the favor of God, more than repaid me for the effort made.

Would that our smaller churches could be more often visited. The faithful ones, who stand firmly in defense of the truth, would be cheered and strengthened by the testimony of their brethren. The few standard bearers at Petaluma have had much to contend with; unruly, rebellious spirits have done their utmost to discourage all who would maintain the truth in righteousness. But these discordant elements have separated from the church. They went out from us, because they were not of us. Those who now meet from Sabbath to Sabbath are at peace with one another, and in harmony with the work of God.

Our gracious Redeemer looked down the stream of time, and beheld the perils that would in the last days surround his chosen. For our

encouragement he declares, in the words of the prophet Malachi: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

If the members of the church labor faithfully to build up the cause of truth, they will not escape the tongue of gossip, falsehood, and slander. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Their consistent, unwavering course is a constant rebuke of the unbelief, pride, and selfishness of the hypocritical professor.

Their prayers and admonitions disturb his worldly ambition, and he endeavors to cast reproach upon the faithful followers of Jesus. He will garble, distort, and misrepresent facts, in the same spirit that actuated the Pharisees in their opposition to Christ.

Jesus does not lose sight of his people who have so many discouragements to encounter. It requires little effort to float with the popular current, but those who would gain the immortal shores must struggle against wind and tide. There is a form of Christianity--a spurious article--which has no reformative energy. Its possessors delight to oppose and decry the faith of others. Their religion is not seen in the marketplace, in the family, or in the workshop. Their religious experience runs in the corrupt channel of the world.

The true follower of Christ should not be dismayed at receiving reproach from this class. Said the beloved apostle, "Marvel not, my brethren, that the world hate you." And our Saviour reminds his disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." Those who are faithful to God will not be harmed by reproach or opposition. Nay, rather, virtues will

thus be developed that will not flourish in the sunshine of prosperity. Faith, patience, meekness, and love will bud and blossom amid clouds and darkness.

The members of the church should individually keep the light of God's love brightly burning in their own souls, that it may also shine forth to others. We have too much at stake to allow spiritual lethargy to creep over us. Let us beware of indulging a disrelish for religious services and religious duties. Let us resolutely battle against that sluggishness of soul which is so fatal to the growth and even the life of the Christian.

That church will be healthy and prosperous whose members are putting forth active, personal effort to do good to others, to save souls. This will be a constant incentive to every good work. Such Christians will labor with greater earnestness to secure their own salvation. The dormant energies will be aroused, the whole soul inspired with an unconquerable determination to win the Saviour's plaudit of "Well done," and to wear the victor's crown.

I would encourage those who assemble in little companies to worship God. Brethren and sisters, be not disheartened because you are so few in number. The tree that stands alone upon the plain, strikes its roots deeper into the earth, spreads out its branches farther on every side, and grows stronger and more symmetrical while wrestling singly with the tempest or rejoicing in the sunshine. So the Christian, cut off from earthly dependence, may learn to rely wholly upon God, and may gain strength and courage from every conflict.

May the Lord bless the scattered and lonely ones, and make them efficient workers for him. The Christian should not be content to be merely an active man of business. He should not be so absorbed in worldly affairs as to have scarcely a spare moment or a thought for recreation or friendship, for the good of others, for the culture of the mind, or the welfare of the soul.

Energy and diligence in business are commendable, but these should not lead us to neglect that love for God and man which the Bible enjoins.

Would that we all could remember that worldlings feel at liberty to watch and criticise the professed followers of Christ. Our course in temporal matters, our conduct toward one another, is commented upon with keenness and severity. What we say in the church is not of so great consequence as our deportment in the home circle and among our neighbors. The kindly word, the thoughtful act, true politeness and hospitality, will constantly exert an influence in favor of the Christian religion. Let not the testimony be borne concerning any of us, "Religion has made them no better. They are as self-indulgent, as worldly, as sharp in trade, as ever." All who bear such fruit scatter from Christ, instead of gathering with him. They place obstacles in the way of those whom they might by a consistent course have won to Jesus. It is our duty as Christians to give to the world unmistakable evidence that we are obeying the great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which is the same as our Saviour's golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

God bless the church at Petaluma. Brethren, do not forget the wants of these small and isolated companies. Christ will be found a guest at their little gatherings.

January 19, 1882

The Ark Restored

When it was proposed among the Philistines to return the ark to its own land, there were some who stood ready to oppose the plan. Such an acknowledgment of the power of Israel's God would be deeply humiliating to the pride of Philistia; some way to evade it was eagerly sought. Many urged that none would dare risk their lives in removing that which had brought such destruction upon the land. Still others denied that their calamities had been caused by the ark, and protested against surrendering so famed a trophy.

The "priests and diviners," whose counsel had been sought on this occasion, admonished the people not to imitate the stubbornness of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and thus bring upon themselves still greater afflictions. A plan in which all concurred, was now proposed, and immediately put in execution. The ark, with the golden trespass-offering, was placed upon a new cart, thus precluding all danger of defilement; to this cart, or car, were attached two kine, upon whose necks a yoke had never before been placed. Then, their calves having been tied up at home, the cows were left free to go wherever they pleased. If the ark should thus be returned to the Israelites by the way of Beth-shemesh, the nearest city of the Levites, "then," said the Philistines, "the God of Israel hath done unto us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us."

No sooner were the kine set free than they turned from their young, and, lowing as they went, took the straight road to Beth-shemesh. Guided by no human hand, the patient animals kept on their way. The Divine Presence accompanied the ark, and it passed safely on to the very place designated.

It was now the time of wheat harvest, and the men of Beth-shemesh were reaping in the valley. With great joy they beheld the ark approaching; and when the kine of their own accord stopped near a great stone, some of the Levites present offered them up as a sacrifice to the Lord, the cart itself being used as fuel for the burnt-offering.

The lords of the Philistines, who had followed the ark to the border of Beth-shemesh, and had witnessed its reception, now returned to Ekron. The plague had ceased, and they were convinced that their calamities had been a judgment from the God of Israel.

The men of Beth-shemesh quickly spread the glad tidings that the ark was in their possession, and the people from all the surrounding country flocked to welcome its return. The ark had been placed upon the stone which first served for an altar, and before it additional sacrifices were offered unto the Lord. Had the worshipers, with penitence and humiliation, put away their sins, the divine blessing would have attended them. But they were not faithfully obeying the law of God; hence, while they rejoiced at the return of the ark as a harbinger of good, they could have no true sense of its sacredness as the repository of that law. Instead of preparing a suitable place for the reception of the ark, they permitted it to remain in the harvest-field. As they continued to gaze upon the sacred chest, and to talk of the wonderful manner in which it had been restored, they began to conjecture wherein lay its peculiar power. At last, overcome by curiosity, they removed the coverings and ventured to open it. Their joy was quickly changed to mourning.

All Israel had been taught to regard the ark with awe and reverence. When required to remove it from place to place, the Levites were not to so much as look upon it. Only once a year was the high priest permitted to behold the ark of God. The heathen Philistines had not dared even to remove

its coverings. Angels of Heaven, unseen, ever attended it in all its journeyings. The irreverent daring of the people at Beth-shemesh aroused the anger of the Lord, and a great number were instantly destroyed.

The terror of the survivors was equaled only by their former presumption. Yet they were not led by this judgment to repent of their sin, but only to regard the ark with superstitious fear. Eager to be freed from its presence, yet not daring to remove it, the Bethshemites sent a message to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, inviting them to take it away. They consented, and the ark was accordingly removed.

The spirit of irreverent curiosity still exists among the children of men. Many are eager to investigate those mysteries which infinite wisdom has seen fit to leave unrevealed. Having no reliable evidence from which to reason, they base their theories on conjecture. The Lord has wrought for his servants and for the upbuilding of his cause at the present day as verily as he wrought in behalf of ancient Israel; but vain philosophy, "science falsely so called," has sought to destroy faith in the direct interposition of Providence, attributing all such manifestations to natural causes. This is the sophistry of Satan. He is asserting his authority by mighty signs and wonders in the earth. Those who ignore or deny the special evidences of God's power, are preparing the way for the arch-deceiver to exalt himself before the people as superior to the God of Israel.

Many accept the reasoning of these would-be wise men as truth, when in fact it undermines the very foundations which God has laid. Such teachers are the ones described by inspiration, who must become fools in their own estimation, that they may be wise. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. By those who are guided only by human wisdom, the simplicity of his mighty workings is called foolishness. They think themselves wiser than their Creator, when in fact they are victims of finite ignorance and childish conceit. It is this that holds them in the darkness

of unbelief, so that they do not discern the power of God, and tremble before him.

Though the ark had brought judgments both upon the inhabitants of Philistia and of Beth-shemesh, yet the men of Kirjath-jearim welcomed it with joy. They knew that while it was a precursor of wrath to the transgressor of God's law, it was the pledge of divine favor to the obedient and faithful. With solemn gladness they brought it to their city, and placed it in the house of Abinadab, a Levite. This man appointed his son Eleazar to take charge of it, to see that it was kept from injury or pollution. Thus it remained for many years.

The Israelites as a nation still continued in a state of irreligion and idolatry, and as a punishment they remained in subjection to the Philistines. During this time Samuel, who was already recognized as a prophet, visited cities and villages throughout the land, seeking to turn the hearts of the people to the God of their fathers. He faithfully set before them the claims of the divine law and their sin in transgressing its precepts, the long-suffering and mercy of God, and his assurance of favor to those who confess and forsake their sins.

These efforts were not without good results. The hearts of the faithful were encouraged, and apostates were led to return to the Lord. The mirror of God's law, held up before the sinner, gives him a correct view of his own character. The greater the reverence felt for that law, the keener will be the sense of condemnation on account of sin. Every willful transgression is an act of rebellion against its Author. Every one who assumes this attitude, is by his practice saying to the people, "The requirements of God are exacting and severe, a yoke of bondage. Let us break this yoke from off our necks, and be at liberty."

The law of God was not given to the Jews alone. It is of world-wide and

perpetual obligation. "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." Its ten precepts are like a chain of ten links. If one link is broken, the chain becomes worthless. Not a single precept can be revoked or changed to save the transgressor. While families and nations exist; while property, life, and character must be guarded; while good and evil are antagonistic, and a blessing or a curse must follow the acts of men--so long must the divine law control us. When God no longer requires men to love him supremely, to reverence his name, and to keep holy the Sabbath; when he permits them to disregard the rights of their fellow-men, to hate and injure one another--then and not till then, will the moral law lose its force.

January 19, 1882

The Missionary

Among the Churches

Healdsburg

After leaving Petaluma, I visited the church at Healdsburg. Accompanied by Sr. Rogers, I made the journey with my own horse and carriage, hoping thus to receive benefit healthwise. After a ride of thirty-three miles, we were warmly welcomed to the home of Bro. and Sr. Harmon. These friends furnished me a convenient room, where I could write or rest undisturbed, and did all in their power for my health and happiness.

I was far from well, yet felt a duty to write upon important matters that would not admit of delay. Being unable to sleep more than a few hours at night, I would rise at three A.M. and write by lamplight. Such a strain upon mind and body could not be long endured. Intense pain in my eyes soon compelled me to lay aside my writing.

This was a severe trial. My thoughts seemed consuming me. I felt an unceasing anxiety for the cause of God, especially for the institutions which his own hand has established. There is a great lack of spiritual life among us. Religious declension is seen and felt everywhere. As the faithful standard-bearers fall at their post, who will come up to fill their place, and to work with unselfish interest in the cause of God? As I thought of these things, my soul was troubled day and night. I felt the need of my husband's help. The future looked dark and lonely. Weighed down by disease and by a heavier burden of care, anxiety, and sorrow, I knew that unless the Lord should come to my help, and the balm of Gilead should be applied to soul and body, I

could no longer labor.

Yet the thought of becoming useless was too terrible to be entertained for a moment. It seemed to me that death would be preferable. Satan was determined that my testimony of warning, encouragement, and reproof, should not reach the people. I felt urged to go forward, but seemed powerless. Night after night I dreamed that my husband and myself were laboring together to bring souls to Christ, and awoke to find that I was alone, wrestling with the powers of darkness. Oh, how I longed for rest in Christ! I thought how he once hushed the tempest-tossed waves of Galilee, and I prayed that his voice might speak peace to my soul. I humbled myself before God, and earnestly presented my petitions at the throne of grace. My faith was tried to the utmost. I received no direct evidence that my prayers were answered, but I decided to go to work as though I had received the help so greatly needed.

On the Sabbath I attended meeting, trusting in God for support. In speaking to the church, I was comforted and refreshed. The Lord gave me peace and rest in him. I felt burdened for the youth, and my words were addressed especially to them. They listened attentively, with serious faces and tearful eyes. At the close of my remarks I requested all who wished to become Christians to come forward. Thirteen responded. These were all children and youth, from eight to fifteen years of age, who thus manifested their determination to begin a new life. Such a sight was enough to soften the hardest heart. The brethren and sisters, especially the parents of the children, seemed to feel deeply. Christ has told us that there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Angels were looking with gladness upon this scene. Nearly all who came forward spoke in a few words of their hope and determination. Such testimonies ascend like incense to the throne of God. All hearts felt that this was a precious season. The presence of God was with us.

I sought to impress upon fathers and mothers their duty to lead these

inexperienced youth into the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. They now need special care and tenderness and earnest prayer. In the Christian life they have everything to learn, and they should daily have patient, faithful instruction. The young cannot be gained to the service of Christ by faultfinding or compulsion. They must be won by love. This requires time and effort. Parents must arouse from their carnal security. They cannot afford to waste precious hours in dress and gossip. They must close their ears to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. They must begin in earnest to work for Christ--begin to be missionaries at home, themselves closely following in the Saviour's footsteps, that they may give a right example to their children.

Fathers and mothers, will you not make this effort to save the souls of your loved ones? Have you not a sufficient incentive? Is not this work of infinitely greater consequence than your temporal affairs? To gain the whole world would be no compensation for the loss of a soul. You need daily the spirit which moved our Saviour to come to earth to suffer and to die for us. He wept and agonized and prayed, that lost man might be redeemed. What will you do to save your own souls and the souls of your dear children?

There is need of earnestness and zeal in this work. The juvenile depravity which is everywhere so painfully apparent, spurning restraint and defying law, should arouse every parent to decided, effectual action. The corrupting influences in our great cities should alarm us. And yet fathers and mothers are asleep. How many move from the country to these cities, which are hot-beds of vice, in order to educate their children! Like Lot, they choose that which seems most agreeable, irrespective of moral influence. Like him they see too late the sin and folly of their course. They place their children where the temptations to dissipation and crime are almost irresistible, where they daily associate with youth of dissolute habits and corrupt morals, and then are not careful to give them proper instruction and wholesome restraint. If balanced by religious principle, the youth might pass the ordeal in safety;

but unless they have learned to look daily to God for strength, they will be overcome. The work of ruin is gradual. The children's feet are set in a path which diverges from the way of purity, integrity, and holiness, and the parents, blinded by pride and the customs of the world, do not discern the danger till a great gulf yawns between them; and then it is too late.

We should bring our children early to Christ, and teach them that he alone can keep them from the tempter's power. I know that parents are not doing what they might do in this work. Unceasing watchfulness and prayer are the weapons by which we must overcome the foe. Parents, do not permit Satan to take the children from your hands. He will often urge, "You must indulge children, in order to keep them with you;" but, on the contrary, it is this unwise indulgence that separates your children from you, and leads them into the ranks of the great deceiver.

I look back with interest to the Sabbath spent at Healdsburg. May the Lord bless all who that day had moral courage to lift the cross. Temptations will assail them as surely as Satan lives. They must seek strength from Christ to resist the power of evil. We fear that the older members of the church were not all prepared to guide these youth in the path to Heaven. It is difficult for those who have cherished a self-righteous, Pharisaical spirit, to come down to the simplicity of humble, experimental religion. They need to have their own hearts softened and subdued by the Holy Spirit, and then they will be able to win the children to Christ.

We should seek to enter into the feelings of the youth, to sympathize with them in their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories. Jesus did not remain in Heaven, away from the sorrowing and sinful, but he came down to this world that he might become acquainted with the weakness, the suffering, and temptations of the fallen race. He reached us where we were, that he might lift us up. Such should be our work. We must come to the youth where they are, and make their case our own, if we would benefit

them. If these youthful disciples are overcome by temptation, I hope that you who are older in experience, who have yourselves shown but little strength to resist the tempter's power, will not deal with them harshly, or regard their efforts with indifference. I entreat you to be as patient with these lambs of the flock as you wish others to be with you. God has so constituted us that even the strongest desire sympathy. How much more then do children need it. Even a look of compassion will often soothe and strengthen the tried and tempted child.

Jesus calls to every wanderer, "My son, give me thine heart;" "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, and will heal all your backslidings." The youth cannot be happy without the love of Jesus. He is waiting with pitying tenderness to hear the confessions of the wayward, and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. The great God teaches us to call him Father. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly his heart yearns over us in all our trials and temptations. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him." The mother might sooner forget her child than God forget one soul that trusts in him.

The young should be constantly growing in grace, and in a knowledge of the truth. The Creator of all things, with whom are all the treasures of wisdom, has promised to be the guide of their youth. He who has conquered in their behalf all the powers of evil asks for their homage. There can be no higher knowledge than the knowledge of Him whom to know aright is life and peace; no purer, deeper affection than the love of our Saviour.

Many parents have through mistaken fondness permitted their children to grow up with habits of selfish gratification, perhaps have indulged them because this required less effort than the exercise of proper restraint. They should now labor earnestly and prayerfully to undo their own past work, and

to form aright the character of their children. These fathers and mothers enter the field to engage in a hand to hand combat with Satan and his angels. There are temptations on every hand to ensnare the feet of the unwary. Ungodly, corrupt youth exert a strong influence to lead others into forbidden paths. These are among the most successful agents of Satan. If parents would detect and successfully resist the advances of the wily foe, their own perceptive and reasoning powers must be quickened and strengthened by the Spirit of God. Every member of the church is pledged to stand as a faithful sentinel. The lovers of the world will often approach under a garb of friendship, and attempt to introduce its customs and practices. Let every true soldier stand ready to resist these allurements.

When the youth attempt to break away from Satan's control, he will redouble his temptations. Taking advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, he attempts to obscure the distinction between right and wrong. He transforms himself into an angel of light, and beguiles by promises of pleasure in a forbidden path. If the youth have formed the habit of following inclination rather than duty, they will find it hard to resist temptation. They do not see the danger in indulging even once in forbidden pleasures.

The suggestions of Satan will stir every lingering element of depravity in the heart. The eager desires which the parents have not guided in the right channel, wrong habits which have been indulged until they have become second nature, will arouse as an armed man to second his temptations. Too often reason and conscience remonstrate in vain. Oh, then will there be fathers and mothers in Israel, to rescue these youth from Satan's snare? Will there be wisdom to out-general the enemy, and guide the wandering feet into the narrow path of holiness?

The older members of the church should give the youth an example of Christian firmness and self-control, of patient, cheerful submission to the divine will. God forbid that the fathers and mothers of children whose help

we need so much should themselves be overcome by Satan. There are many professed Christians who are as fitful and moody as the weather of a California winter. There may be a few sunshiny days, but you may look oftener for fogs and rain. Children are critical observers. They mark the caprice, the petulance, the sullenness. They cannot desire a religion which bears such fruit.

There is no excuse for a man, with a man's reasoning powers and a man's experience, to yield to his feelings and cast a gloom on all around him. Says Christ, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." Satan attacks us at our weak points; but we need not be overcome. The assault may be severe and protracted, but God has promised help for us, and in his strength we may conquer. I entreat my brethren to become established, rooted and grounded, in the truth. Study the Bible diligently and prayerfully. The precepts and promises of God's word will arm you with divine power to resist the enemy. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Satan will be baffled and defeated when he finds the heart preoccupied with the truth of God. We need also to be often found at the throne of grace. Earnest, persevering prayer, uniting our human weakness to Omnipotence, will give us the victory.

The Lord would have the church at Healdsburg become strong in him. They may be thus if they will hide self behind the cross of Christ. Those who cherish self-love and a desire for self-exaltation open the soul to temptations that set aside reason and weaken judgment. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt us in due time. There is work to be done for our Master. There are souls who may by our influence be led to Christ. Who is ready to engage in this work with all the heart?

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

"Thine is the seed-time; God alone Beholds the end of what is sown;
Beyond our vision, weak and dim, The harvest time is hid with him; Yet
unforgotten where it lies, The seed of generous sacrifice, Though seeming on
the desert cast, Shall rise with bloom and fruit at last."

January 26, 1882

The Victory at Ebenezer

After suffering the oppression of their enemies for twenty years, the Israelites "mourned after the Lord." They repented of the sins which had alienated them from him, and sought to return again to their allegiance. Samuel counseled them, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroath, from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." "Return unto the Lord with all your hearts;" "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only"--here we see that practical piety, heart religion, was taught in the days of Samuel, as taught by Christ when he was upon the earth. The teacher is virtually the same in both dispensations. God's claims are the same. Without the grace of Christ, the outward forms of religion were valueless to ancient Israel. They are the same to modern Israel. All the pleas of self-righteousness are unavailing; all hope is groundless except that based upon the sacrifice and victory of our Saviour. Obedience to God, required in the days of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, was enforced by the world's Redeemer.

Samuel endeavored to impress upon Israel the fact that they themselves had something to do to secure the divine favor. They must repent of their sins, and put away their idols. The prophet had succeeded in arousing the people from the lethargy of sin, and he greatly desired that this awakening might result in a general and permanent reformation. With the co-operation of the heads of the tribes, a large assembly was convened at Mizpeh. Here a solemn fast was held. With deep humiliation the people confessed their sins, and poured out water before the Lord as a symbol of their supplications poured out for the divine favor, their tears of sorrow for sin, and of gratitude that the Lord was still gracious and merciful. As an evidence of their

determination to obey the instructions they had heard, they invested Samuel with the authority of judge.

Remembering how the prayers of Moses had formerly prevailed with God for Israel, the people entreated Samuel to intercede for them. Again the prophet exhorted them to renounce their idolatry and turn from their backslidings, and then as the servant of God he prayed for a blessing upon them.

The Philistines interpreted this gathering of Israel to be a council of war, and with a strong force set out to attack and disperse them before their plans could be matured. The tidings that these powerful foes were approaching caused great terror among the Israelites. Unarmed and defenseless, they felt that their only hope was in God. If he went forth with their armies, they would be victorious; if he refused to help them, defeat was certain. Hence they entreated Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."

With great earnestness the prophet pleaded for divine help, and the people also sought the Lord. While Samuel was in the act of presenting a lamb as a burnt-offering, the Philistines appeared in the distance, ready for battle, and expecting to make an easy prey of the people whom they had so long oppressed.

Then the Mighty One who had descended upon Sinai amid fire and smoke and thunder; who had parted the Red Sea, and made a way through Jordan for the Hebrew host,--the God of Israel, again manifested his power. Vivid lightning flashes and terrific peals of thunder struck terror to the advancing host. When the blinding glare had passed away, the earth was strewn with the dead bodies of armed warriors. Against such a foe, military skill was powerless. Paralyzed with fear, the Philistines looked only for utter destruction.

During the raging of the elements, the Israelites stood in silent awe, trembling with hope and fear. When they beheld the slaughter of their enemies, they knew that God had accepted their repentance, and that he had wrought in their behalf. Though wholly unprepared for battle, they seized the weapons of the slaughtered Philistines, and fell upon the force they had so lately dreaded, and pursued the fleeing hosts to Beth-car.

This signal victory was gained upon the very field where, twenty years previous, Israel was smitten before the Philistines, the priests slain, and the ark of God taken. Thus was again repeated the great lesson, that for nations as well as for individuals the path of obedience to God is the path of safety and happiness, while that of transgression leads only to disaster and defeat.

It was the Lord's purpose so to manifest his power in delivering Israel, that they might not take the glory to themselves. He permitted them, when unarmed and defenseless, to be challenged by their enemies, and then the Captain of the Lord's host marshalled the army of Heaven to destroy the foes of his people. Humility of heart and obedience to the divine law are more acceptable to God than the most costly sacrifices from a heart filled with pride and hypocrisy. God will not defend those who are living in transgression of his law.

All Israel recognized the hand of God in their deliverance, and gratefully acknowledged his great mercy. That the occasion might never be forgotten, Samuel set up, between Mizpeh and Shen, a great stone as a memorial. He called the name of it Ebenezer, "the stone of help," saying to the people, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" This stone was to stand as a witness to all future generations, to testify of God's care for his people, and to strengthen faith in him as their deliverer.

The Philistines were so completely subdued by this defeat, that they

surrendered the cities which had been taken from Israel, and refrained from all acts of hostility for many years. Other nations followed the example of this powerful and warlike people, and the Israelites enjoyed peace during the whole period of Samuel's sole administration.

The condition of God's people at the present day is similar to that of idolatrous Israel. Many who bear the name of Christians are serving other gods besides the Lord. Our Creator demands our supreme devotion, our first allegiance. Anything which tends to abate our love for God, or to interfere with the service due him, becomes thereby an idol. With some their lands, their houses, their merchandize, are the idols. Business enterprises are prosecuted with zeal and energy, while the service of God is made a secondary consideration. Family worship is neglected, secret prayer forgotten. Many claim to deal justly with their fellow-men, and seem to feel that in so doing they discharge their whole duty. But it is not enough to keep the last six commandments of the decalogue. We are to love the Lord our God with all the heart. Nothing short of obedience to every precept-nothing less than supreme love to God as well as equal love to our fellow-men-can satisfy the claims of the divine law.

There are many whose hearts have been so hardened by prosperity that they forget God, and forget the wants of their fellow-men. Professed Christians adorn themselves with jewelry, laces, costly apparel, while the Lord's poor suffer for the necessities of life. Men and women who claim redemption through a Saviour's blood will squander the means intrusted to them for the saving of other souls, and then grudging dole out their offerings for religion, giving liberally only when it will bring honor to themselves. These are idolaters.

Church-members expend their Lord's money in various forms of self-indulgence, and when means are needed to sustain the church, a fair, a theatrical entertainment, or a grand supper is given. Thus professed

Christians unite with worldlings in mirth and frivolity, feasting and display--sometimes, far worse, in practices which in a slightly different form are denounced as crimes by the laws of the land. And all this to obtain means from those who have no interest in religion, and who are actuated only by a desire for sensual gratification! Is not this base idolatry?

The history of our Saviour's life of humiliation, self-denial, and sacrifice, is looked upon as an old story, which has become distasteful to the refined imagination. It does not possess sufficient interest to stir the heart, to lead to self-denial for Christ's sake, or for the sake of souls for whom he died. A large proportion of the Christian world are saying by their practice, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." Their religion has no elevating, ennobling influence upon themselves or upon society. Though all they have is the gift of God, they do not acknowledge it as such.

Oh, how great is the mercy of our God; to bear thus with the perversity of his creatures! Every spring the earth is clothed with verdure, that its freshness and beauty may bring to our minds thoughts of the Creator. The fields of grain waving in the sunshine of summer, or the autumn breeze, tell us of Him who giveth to his children their daily bread. The trees bending under their burden of rich fruit, proclaim his mercy and benevolence. But men, blinded by selfishness and mammon, can discern only the amount of gain which shall fill their coffers.

The cattle upon a thousand hills, could they but speak, would acknowledge the care of the Great Shepherd. The birds of the forest sing with sweetest strains the praise of God. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. The things of nature--earth itself, teeming with bounties and blessings--would call the mind away from self to honor and adore the Lord God, our Creator. And yet men feel no duty to return thanks to the Giver of all good. They appropriate the gifts of providence, and then too often hold themselves aloof from their fellow-men,

as though worldly possessions had given them special importance. They will yet learn that it is goodness of heart, integrity of character, not the riches of the world, which make a man worthy of honor.

God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. No other worship will he accept. There is need today of such a revival of true heart-religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. We need, like them, to bring forth fruit meet for repentance,--to put away our sins, cleansing the defiled temple of the heart that Jesus may reign within. There is need of prayer--earnest, prevailing prayer. Our Saviour has left precious promises for the truly penitent petitioner. Such shall not seek his face in vain. He has also by his own example taught us the necessity of prayer. Himself the Majesty of Heaven, he often spent all night in communion with his Father. If the world's Redeemer was not too pure, too wise, or too holy to seek help from God, surely weak, erring mortals have every need of that divine assistance. With penitence and faith, every true Christian will often seek "the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Repentance is the first step which must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for us. We must individually humble our souls before God, and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us his salvation.

And when the light of Heaven dispels our darkness, let us, like Samuel, evince our gratitude by making a memorial to God. We often lose great blessings by neglecting to praise the Giver. Let us make melody to him in our hearts and with our voices. The soul may ascend nearer Heaven, on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above. And as we thus express our gratitude, we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth God." Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator "with thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

January 26, 1882

Among the Churches--St. Helena

It was almost with regret that we left our comfortable home at Bro. Harmon's to visit St. Helena. Bro. and Sr. H. thought it unsafe for Sister Rogers and myself to make the journey alone at this season of the year. Hence they accompanied us, their team leading the way, while ours followed. When we left Healdsburg, the fog was so dense that we could see but a short distance before us, but in a few hours the mists dispersed, and we enjoyed beautiful sunshine.

The road through Knight's Canyon, always perilous to the inexperienced traveler, is often impassable in the rainy season. We were very thankful for a pilot in this part of our journey. I dared not look either to the right or left to view the scenery, but, holding the lines firmly, and guiding my horse in the narrow passage, I followed our leader. Carelessness here would have been fatal. Had our horse turned out of the right path, we should have plunged down a steep precipice, into the ravine below. As we rode along in almost breathless silence, I could but think how forcibly this dangerous ride illustrates the Christian's experience. We are making life's journey amid the perils of the last days. We need to watch carefully every step, and to be sure that we are following our great Leader. Skepticism, infidelity, dissipation, and crime are on every hand. It would be an easy matter to let go the reins of self-control, and plunge over the precipice to sure destruction. How great the mercy that surrounds and preserves us every moment!

Infinite Love has cast up a pathway upon which the ransomed of the Lord may pass from earth to Heaven. That path is the Son of God. Angel guides are sent to direct our erring feet. Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon

a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin. Our Heavenly Father's voice is calling us, Come up hither. The tokens of his love are as numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore. The humble, trusting ones are guided and protected in the way of peace. But He who is infinite in wisdom compels none to accept Heaven's most precious gift--compels none to walk in the path which has been cast up at such a cost. Every one is permitted to choose for himself the narrow, shining steep that leads to Heaven, or that broader and easier way which ends in death.

In this one day's ride I have seen the greatness, the majesty, and the power of God in his created works. Mountain and valley, field and forest, rocks and streams; also villages and cultivated farms were spread out before me. Wherever I turn, are the sublime, the grand, or the beautiful; and my heart goes out in praise and gratitude to God for these evidences of his love. All the varied and lovely scenes of nature are so many pictures spread out before our senses to help us grasp the unseen glories of that land where the beauty fades not, and the living never die. Sin has made our world the abode of sorrow and misery, and we long for the sinless country. But we should not cease to value and enjoy all that brightens our earthly path, as the faint semblance of that which is richer and purer and more beautiful in our heavenly home.

As we passed Calistoga, about ten miles from our destination, we rode from sunshine into shadow. The fog came in upon us, and again shut us in like a thick cloud. We were glad to reach St. Helena, and find ourselves once more in the pleasant parlor of the Crystal Springs Health Retreat, where we were kindly welcomed by Bro. and Sister Atwood. A wood fire was burning on the hearth, and its warm, bright blaze was a pleasant contrast to the damp and darkness without. It is, however, but justice to state, as I was assured by residents here, that fog is rarely seen in this locality.

On the Sabbath it was rainy, yet we rode three miles to the church at St.

Helena. Here I again engaged in labor for the young. After prayer for those who came forward, a social meeting was held, in which nearly all took part. Union and harmony exist among the members of this church, yet many need the transforming influence of the Spirit of God, ere they will be prepared to shed light upon others. If all who profess the faith would bring forth corresponding works; if they would in humility work for Jesus, willing to bear burdens in the church, and glad to do anything to benefit their fellow-men and to save souls, how much more might be accomplished in the cause of God!

Every member of our little churches may become strong in Christ. All should constantly feel that they are not their own; that Christ has a right to use them, to the fullest extent of their capabilities, for his own honor and glory. Although there is a cross to be borne, let us cheerfully follow in the path where Jesus leads the way. All who have been ransomed by the blood of Christ, have a work to do for their Redeemer. The salvation of our souls cost an infinite price. In return we are required to sacrifice for the good of others. If every member of the church would seek to maintain in its purity the faith once delivered to the saints; if all would live for God and the great hereafter, what a power would attend their labors. It is the privilege of every child of God to gather light from the exhaustless fountain, and to shed it forth upon others. When I think of this, I long to urge upon every one who bears the name "Christian," the importance of representing Jesus, and not self.

In order to bless others by our influence, we must have a living connection with Heaven, and must be willing to deny self, to labor, and sacrifice. The careless and ease-loving seek to shun anxiety and effort, while the few earnest and faithful ones are left to bear all the burdens. May God help these self-denying laborers. Let them go forward with hope and courage. The prize is before them. It is those who run the race who will win the crown of immortal glory. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

February 2, 1882

The Sons of Samuel

Samuel continued to judge Israel all the days of his life. For many years he made an annual circuit to Mizpeh, Gilgal, and Ramah, for the administration of justice; at other times performing the duties of his office at his home in Ramah. With unremitting zeal and devotion he labored for the welfare of his people, and the nation prospered under his wise control. But with advancing years it became necessary to share with others the burden of judicial care. Hence while he continued to judge the people at Ramah, he appointed his sons to act for him at Bethel and Beersheba.

These young men had received faithful instructions from their father, both by precept and example. They were not ignorant of the warnings given to Eli, and the divine judgments visited upon him and his house. They were apparently men of sterling virtue and integrity, as well as of intellectual promise. It was with the full assent of the people that Samuel shared with his sons the responsibilities of office. But the characters of these young men were yet to be tested. Separated from their father's influence, it would be seen whether they were true to the principles which he had taught them. The result showed that Samuel had been painfully deceived in his sons. Like many young men of today who have been blessed with good abilities, they perverted their God-given powers. The honor bestowed upon them rendered them proud and self-sufficient. They did not make the glory of God their aim, nor did they seek earnestly to him for strength and wisdom. Yielding to the power of temptation, they became avaricious, selfish, and unjust. God's word declares that "they walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."

In all this they were disregarding the will of their Divine Sovereign. The

Lord had through Moses given special directions to his people that the rulers of Israel should judge righteously, deal justly with the widow and fatherless, and receive no bribes. It were well for the nations of the earth today, if these instructions were obeyed by the rulers and judges of the people. How important that all who are entrusted with the responsibility of government should be men who fear God, and labor unselfishly for the welfare of the human brotherhood. It is their work to judge with equity, maintaining the right of the stranger, relieving the oppressed, spurning every bribe to clear the guilty or punish the innocent. The well-being of society calls for men of moral integrity in legislative halls and courts of justice. Our churches are in need of those to minister in holy office who shall be men of honor, of piety, of purity; who shall be sanctified by the Spirit and by the word.

A corrupting power stands in prominent places. How often are we painfully startled at the announcement that men of talent, men in positions of usefulness and honor, have betrayed their trust, and appropriated to themselves the public money, or worse still, the treasured pittance of the widow and fatherless. Had these men made the word of God their guide, they would not thus have fallen. That word contains plain, definite instruction, adapted to every possible complication of social and public interests. Every plan and purpose of life should be subjected to this unerring test. The word of inspiration is the wisdom of God applied to human affairs. However advantageous a certain course may appear to finite judgment, if denounced by that word it will be only evil in its results.

It may be a difficult matter for men in high positions to pursue the path of undeviating integrity whether they shall receive praise or censure. Yet this is the only safe course. All the rewards which they might gain by selling their honor would be only as the breath from polluted lips, as dross to be consumed in the fire. Those who have moral courage to stand in opposition to the vices and errors of their fellow-men--it may be of those whom the world honor--will receive hatred, insult, and abusive falsehood. They may be

thrust down from their high position, because they would not be bought or sold, because they could not be induced by bribes or threats to stain their hands with iniquity. Everything on earth may seem to conspire against them; but God has set his seal upon his own work. They may be regarded by their fellow-men as weak, unmanly, unfit to hold office; but how differently does the Most High regard them. Those who despise them are the really ignorant. While the storms of calumny and reviling may pursue the man of integrity through life, and beat upon his grave, God has the "well done" prepared for him. Folly and iniquity will at best yield only a life of unrest and discontent, and at its close a thorny dying pillow. And how many, as they view their course of action and its results, are led to end with their own hands their disgraceful career. And beyond all this waits the Judgment, and the final, irrevocable doom, Depart!

Samuel had labored earnestly to correct the erroneous customs introduced by the sons of Eli, and especially to counteract the spirit of greed and selfishness fostered by their course. The sons of the prophet should have employed their authority to carry forward the reforms instituted by their father. Instead of this, their own example greatly hindered the work of reform. Their promotion to office was the cause of their ruin. The love of gain controlled them. Bribes perverted their judgment, and smothered their protests against sin. How many, like these judges of Israel, enter upon their work with good purposes, but failing to make God's word their guide, they are flattered by worldlings, weakened by prosperity, until their moral power as reformers is gone, their hands nerveless to set things in order.

The Son of God has set an example for all his followers. They are not to court the praise of men, not to seek for themselves ease or wealth, but to emulate his life of purity and self-denial at whatever cost. While preserving the meekness of Christ, they are to wage war with iniquity, and to push the triumphs of the cross. Selfishness will not dwell in the Christian's heart. He will not manifest a disregard for the rights of others. God's law commands us

to love our neighbor as ourselves, to suffer no evil to be instituted against him which we can hinder. But the rule which Christ has given extends still further. Said the world's Redeemer, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Nothing short of this can reach the standard of Christianity.

February 2, 1882

Among the Mountains

The Health Retreat at St. Helena is situated upon a mountain side commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. During my stay here, the sublime and beautiful scenery spread out before me, was a source of increasing interest and delight. In the valley are dwellings and cultivated lands. Beyond are the mountains, rising peak above peak until they seem to touch the blue ether of the heavens. There from age to age they have stood, like silent sentinels, directing our eyes upward, and telling us of the unchanging power and glory of the infinite God. His word of promise is more immutable than the everlasting hills. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but his kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of peace be removed from those that put their trust in him." Oh that we could ever cast fear and anxiety from our hearts, and find secure, satisfying rest in Jesus! And we can do this, if we will look upward to God with constancy and faith, as the mountain heights forever look to the clouds and the sky.

The morning sun pours its new glories upon these mountains of God, while in the valley, mists and clouds are rolling like the billows of the sea. In the distance they appear white as the drifted snow in the noonday sun. Soon they roll swiftly up the mountain steeps, until they reach the summit, and shut out from us the bright rays of the sun. A few moments, and all is clear again, and the sunlight rests on the bald mountain tops. There is enough to feast the imagination in the scenes of nature. Surely, no one who loves the sublime and the beautiful could be lonely among these grand old mountains.

The mountain heights and rocky fastnesses have ever been the friendly refuge of God's people when oppressed and hunted by their enemies. For

hundreds of years the Waldenses worshiped God amid the mountain solitudes, and there defied the armies of kings and emperors. On their rocky heights, in sight of their enemies, they sang the praise of Him who made the hills; and no opposing power could silence their hymns of lofty cheer:

"For the strength of the hills we bless thee, Our God, our fathers' God!
Thou hast made thy children mighty By the touch of the mountain sod.

"Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee, Our God, our fathers' God!"

Among the blessings of the lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses enumerated "the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills." In his last prophetic words to the tribes of Israel, he dwelt with peculiar earnestness upon the precious things of the hills. While the chosen people were wandering in the desert, he encouraged them by describing their promised inheritance as a land of hills and valleys; a land that drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest for good throughout the year. To those who have lived in a level country, there is something peculiarly inspiring in the sight of the mountains. And all who have dwelt amid their wild and romantic scenery must ever long for the high places of the earth. I have never enjoyed the privilege of gazing upon the hills of Palestine, but I can look upon the mountains of our own land, and behold the wisdom and love of the Creator.

As I stood among the hills, I thought how centuries ago our Saviour came to the groves and mountains to worship God. The most costly and beautiful structure which man can devise is not to be compared with the solemn grandeur of these mountain sanctuaries. To such retreats Jesus often led his disciples. With the beautiful scenes of nature, he associated lessons of divine truth. Afar from the bustle and strife of the haunts of men, he strove to turn the hearts of rich and poor from the perishable treasures of earth to the

unfading glories of the world to come.

The hills and forests furnish a blessed retreat for those who, weary of the din and confusion of city life, desire to enjoy communion with nature. And the invigorating air and sunshine bring new life to the over-tasked and weary. In all my journeyings, east and west, north and south, I have seen no place which offered so many and so great advantages as are offered at St. Helena. Here the hills pour forth their treasures in streams and fountains of the purest water. The atmosphere is mild and balmy, the surrounding heights seeming to modify the temperature, shutting off storms and chilling currents. While in many parts of our country the trees are in winter stripped of their foliage, and the bare, skeleton-like frames speak of death and decay, the trees here are green throughout the year. The bright sunbeams, pouring their glory on the living verdure of the madrona, the manzanita, the fir, the pine, and the California laurel, delight the senses, and fill the heart with gratitude to God.

Many have gladly availed themselves of the advantages for rest and recreation afforded by the mountain home at this place. We found here one family, eight in number, comprising three generations, mother, daughters, and granddaughters. For five months they have here enjoyed freedom from the claims of society and the restrictions of fashionable life. All were indisposed when they left Oakland, some suffering from continual colds, and others from general debility; but during their stay in the mountains they have greatly improved in health. In the city they thought it a task to walk even a short distance; but as they enjoyed the fresh, mountain air, the pure water, and the restful quiet of this home, they were soon able to climb the steep ascents, and daily to walk miles without inconvenience.

I could but think of the large sums paid annually in doctors' bills, or in the purchase of hurtful or poisonous drugs. If the means thus often worse than wasted could be spent in visiting such a resort as is afforded in this delightful place, how many might be benefited physically and mentally. Our

people should purchase this establishment, and make of it a Hygienic Institute, as was the original intention of its founders. New buildings ought to be erected, and all needed facilities added to make it in all respects a first-class institution. It should be opened in the spring for the reception of patients.

"The groves were God's first temples;" and still he speaks to us in the fields, the forests, and the mountains, as verily as in the house of prayer. The prophets and poets of the Bible were keenly susceptible to the beauty of the leafy woods. The psalmist calls upon the trees to praise the Lord; and the prophet Isaiah declares that all the trees of the field shall clap their hands in that day when the word of the Lord shall have accomplished its work of salvation among men.

When Israel marched out of Egypt, they made their first encampment under the shelter of green boughs at Succoth. And for more than fifteen hundred years the Hebrew nation by the command of God left their houses, and dwelt one whole week in tabernacles of green boughs, to commemorate the encampment of their fathers under the palm branches of Succoth. These seasons of sacred recreation were fraught with both physical and spiritual blessings to Israel. God's people still need seasons of quiet and reflection--seasons in which the soul may undisturbed commune with its Maker. The great work which has been committed to our hands cannot be best carried forward in excitement and confusion. That calm deliberation so essential to sound judgment can often be best secured in some quiet retreat where the thoughtful mind and pure heart can be prompted by the still, small voice. These forest and mountain homes have great blessings for those who are wearied physically or mentally. Wisely has an American poet counseled:

"If thou art worn and hard beset With trials that thou wouldst forget. Go to the fields and hills; no tears Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

February 9, 1882

Among the Churches

Napa

Journeying southward from St. Helena, I next visited Napa. Here Eld. Van Horn had been holding a series of meetings, with some good results. On the Sabbath I spoke to the church on the duty of parents to educate, discipline, and restrain their children. There is a sad neglect of this work among those who profess the truth in Napa. I felt deeply the need of a work of reformation in this church, and invited all to come forward who desired that day to become for the first time children of God, and also all who had departed from him and now wished to return. About twenty responded. Earnest prayer was offered in their behalf. Those in Napa who believe in present truth will receive but little favor from members of other churches who trample under their feet the law of God. Only those who make it an individual work to secure eternal life will remain steadfast to the faith.

On Sunday I spoke in the Methodist Church, upon the subject of temperance. After the discourse the minister expressed his gratification at what he had heard, and said that some of the ideas advanced were new to him. He thought we had found the right starting-point in commencing the work of temperance at home, and that mothers should be aroused to see and feel their responsibility. Many expressed a desire that I would address them again Sunday evening; but fearing that the effort would overtax my strength, I spoke instead Monday evening, on the duty of parents.

On this occasion I dwelt particularly upon the evils resulting from parental neglect. Notwithstanding our boasted advancement in education, the training of children is sadly defective. For this state of things, must not

mothers to some extent be held responsible? Are they not generally the willing servants of worldliness and fashion? Are not even those who profess to have renounced the vanities of the world, influenced to a great degree by its customs? It is too true that mothers are not standing at their post of duty, faithful to their motherhood. God requires of us nothing that we cannot in his strength perform; nothing that is not for our own good and the good of our children. He does not call woman to engage in any work that will lead her to neglect the physical, mental, and moral training of her own children. She may not shift this responsibility upon others, and leave them to do her work.

Before individuals take upon themselves the great responsibility of parents, they should consider whether they are fitted to properly train and educate children. Those who fill their houses with children, whom they have neither patience to instruct nor wisdom to control, are thereby not only bringing a burden upon society, but are committing a sin against their offspring and against God. The Lord would have parents obey the dictates of reason, rather than the clamors of impulse and blind passion. They should learn to control themselves, and then they are prepared to control their sons and daughters.

Children require patient, faithful care. It is not enough for the mother to feed and clothe her little ones. She must also seek to develop their mental powers, and to imbue their hearts with right principles. They should be taught that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Christ should be associated with all the lessons given to children. But how sadly is the highest education neglected! Beauty of character, loveliness of temper, are lost sight of in the eager interest in dress and outward appearance.

The mother should not be governed by the world's opinion, nor labor to reach its standard. She should decide for herself what is the great end and aim of life, and then bend all her efforts to attain that end. She may, for want of time, neglect many things about her house, with no serious evil results;

but she cannot with impunity neglect the proper discipline of her children. Their defective characters will publish her unfaithfulness. The evils which she permits to pass uncorrected, the coarse, rough manners, the disrespect and disobedience, the habits of idleness and inattention, will reflect dishonor upon her, and embitter her life. Mothers, the destiny of your children rests to a great extent in your hands. If you fail in duty, you may place them in Satan's ranks, and make them his agents to ruin other souls. Or your faithful discipline and godly example may lead them to Christ, and they in turn will influence others, and thus many souls may be saved through your instrumentality.

I have heard mothers say that they have not the ability to govern which others have; that it is a peculiar talent which they do not possess. Those who realize their deficiency in a matter which concerns the happiness and usefulness of future generations, should make the subject of family government their most diligent study. As an objection to this, many point to the children of ministers, teachers, and other men of high repute for learning and piety, and urge that if these men, with their superior advantages, fail in family government, those who are less favorably situated need not hope to succeed. The question to be settled is, Have these men given to their children that which is their right--a good example, faithful instruction, and proper restraint? It is by a neglect of these essentials that such parents give to society children who are unbalanced in mind, impatient of restraint, and ignorant of the duties of practical life. In this they are doing the world an injury which outweighs all the good that their labors accomplish. Those children transmit their own perversity of character as an inheritance to their offspring, and at the same time their evil example and influence corrupt society and make havoc in the church. We cannot think that any man, however great his ability and usefulness, is best serving God or the world while his time is given to other pursuits, to the neglect of his own children. Parents, when you have faithfully done your duty, to the extent of your ability, you may then in faith ask the Lord to do that for your children which

you cannot do. But if you attempt to govern without exercising self-control, without system, thought, and prayer, you will most assuredly reap the bitter consequence.

The study of books will be of little benefit, unless the ideas gained can be carried out in practical life. And yet the most valuable suggestions of others should not be adopted without thought and discrimination. They may not be equally adapted to the circumstances of every mother, or to the peculiar disposition or temperament of each child in the family. Let the mother study with care the experience of others, note the difference between their methods and her own, and carefully test those that appear to be of real value. If one mode of discipline does not produce the desired results, let another plan be tried, the effects being carefully noted. Mothers, above all others, should accustom themselves to thought and investigation if they would increase in wisdom and efficiency. Those who persevere in this course, will soon perceive that they are acquiring the faculty in which they thought themselves deficient; they are learning to form aright the characters of their children. The result of the labor and thought given to this work will be seen in their obedience, their simplicity, their modesty and purity. This result will richly repay all the effort made.

God would have mothers seek constantly to improve both the mind and the heart. They should feel that they have a work to do for him in the education and training of their children, and the more perfectly they can improve their own powers, the more efficient will they become in their work as parents.

Wherever I go, I am pained by the neglect of proper home discipline and restraint. Little children are allowed to answer back, to manifest disrespect and impertinence, using language that no child should ever be permitted to address to its superiors. Parents who permit the use of unbecoming language are more worthy of blame than their children. Impertinence should not be

tolerated in a child even once. But fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts and grandparents laugh at the exhibition of passion in the little creature of a year old. Its imperfect utterance of disrespect, its childish stubbornness, are thought cunning. Thus wrong habits are confirmed, and the child grows up to be an object of dislike to all around him.

As children advance in years, and go out from the parental roof to choose their own associates, they often become careless of home rules and family discipline. They come to their father's house when they choose, but by their disrespect they dishonor their parents at home and abroad. These youth have so long been permitted to say what they please, and go and come when they like, that they have little respect for man, or reverence for God. Human rights are disregarded, and the divine law set aside at pleasure. Parents who tolerate the sin of disrespect in their children are themselves dishonoring God by such a course. Obligations are mutual. It is the duty of fathers and mothers to care for their children, but when the latter refuse to respect parental authority and to observe the rules of the family, they should be left to bear their own burdens in life. Parents cannot enjoy the favor of God while they permit their children to trample upon his law. Angels will not abide in the house where strife exists, where God's name is blasphemed, and his authority defied.

Parents, you should early begin to teach your children respect, obedience, and self-control. Every exhibition of passion that is not firmly and decidedly checked is a lesson of evil to your children. Your neglect of proper restraint opens the door to Satan, and invites him to control them. This he will not be slow to do.

Let mothers be careful not to make unnecessary requirements to exhibit their own authority before others. Give few commands, but see that these are obeyed. Give children but little notice. Let them learn to amuse themselves. Do not put them on exhibition before visitors as prodigies of wit or wisdom,

but leave them as far as possible to the simplicity of their childhood. One great reason why so many children are forward, bold, and impertinent, is they are noticed and praised too much, and their smart, sharp sayings repeated in their hearing. Endeavor not to censure unduly, nor to overwhelm with praise and flattery. Satan will all too soon sow evil seed in their young hearts, and you should not aid him in his work.

Children must have constant care, but you need not let them see that you are ever guarding them. Learn the disposition of each as revealed in their association with one another, and then seek to correct their faults by encouraging opposite traits. Children should be taught that the development of both the mental and the physical powers rests with themselves; it is the result of effort. They should early learn that happiness is not found in selfish gratification; it follows only in the wake of duty. At the same time the mother should seek to make her children happy. She should give them the time and attention which they really need. Let not visitors be permitted to engross the precious hours that belong to her own dear ones.

Unsteadiness in family government is productive of great harm; in fact is nearly as bad as no government at all. The question is often asked, Why are the children of religious parents so often headstrong, defiant, and rebellious? The reason is to be found in the home training. Too often the parents are not united in their family government. The father, who is with his children but little, and has little knowledge of their peculiarities of disposition and temperament, is harsh and severe. He does not control his own temper. He corrects in passion, and with a revengeful, vindictive spirit. The child knows this, and the punishment given fills him with anger. He is not subdued. He comes to feel neither love nor respect for his father. Thus are sown seeds of evil that spring up and bear fruit. The mother often allows misdemeanors to pass uncorrected which at another time, when she is more attentive, she will severely punish. The children never know just what to expect, and are tempted by Satan to see how far they can transgress with

impunity. The father and mother should be united in their government. They should study with care the disposition of their children, and together seek wisdom and strength from God to deal with them aright.

Great harm is done by a lack of firmness and decision. I have known parents to say, You cannot have this or that, and then relent, thinking they may be too strict, and give the child the very thing they at first refused. A life-long injury is thus inflicted. It is an important law of the mind--one which should not be overlooked--that when a desired object is so firmly denied as to remove all hope, the mind will soon cease to long for it, and will be occupied in other pursuits. But as long as there is any hope of gaining the desired object, an effort will be made to obtain it, and a denial will arouse the worst passions.

When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty of disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature. Children who are under this firm, decisive rule, know that when a thing is forbidden or denied, no teasing or artifice will secure their object. Hence they soon learn to submit, and are much happier in so doing. The children of undecided and over-indulgent parents have a constant hope that coaxing, crying, or sullenness may gain their object, or that they may venture to disobey without suffering the penalty. Thus they are kept in a state of desire, hope, and uncertainty, which makes them restless, irritable, and insubordinate. God holds such parents guilty of wrecking the happiness of their children. This wicked mismanagement is the key to the impenitence and irreligion of thousands. It has proved the ruin of many who have professed the Christian name. The restless, rebellious spirit, unsubdued in youth, creates disturbance in the church of Christ. Many of the so-called church trials may be traced to defective family government. Intemperance and crime of every degree are often the fruit from seed sown by the parents.

Let none imagine, however, that harshness or severity are necessary to

secure obedience, or that a boisterous, commanding tone is proof of authority. On the contrary, I have seen the most efficient and constant family government maintained without one harsh word or look. In other families, commands were constantly given in an authoritative tone, and harsh rebukes, and severe punishments were often administered. In the first case the children followed the course pursued by the parents, and seldom spoke in harsh tones to each other. In the second, the parental example was imitated by the children; cross words, fault-finding, disputes, were heard from morning till night.

Fathers and mothers, you are teachers; your children are the pupils. The tones of your voice, your deportment, your spirit, are copied by your children. In the fear of God, seek to know and to do your duty. Take up your God-given responsibilities, and work for time and for eternity.

February 16, 1882

Among the Churches

Freshwater

From St. Helena I went alone on the cars to Williams. Sister Manor came eight miles to meet me at the station, and took me to her home at Freshwater. Here also I was provided with a convenient room, where I could write, meditate, and pray undisturbed. Mr. Manor and his wife were attentive to my comfort, and endeavored to make my stay with them agreeable. Nearly the entire week was cloudy and rainy, yet despite the unpleasant weather, I continued to improve in health.

On the Sabbath the few believers in present truth assembled in Sr. Manor's sitting-room; after Sabbath-school I endeavored to speak to them the word of life. Although but few were present, I knew that they needed comfort and encouragement even more than the members of larger congregations who are oftener favored with preaching.

On Sunday forenoon and evening, I spoke to a larger number who met in a school-house. I had freedom in speaking, and the people listened with evident interest. Bro. Rice has been presenting here the reasons of our faith. This called out opposition from some, while others were pleased and interested, and one came out firmly upon the truth, and was baptized. There are but few in this age of the world who have moral courage to take their position on the side of unpopular truth. Its principles are the principles of Heaven. Hence it conflicts with every wrong habit and sinful desire. Those who accept and obey the truth, must deny self, bear the cross daily, and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Therefore there is

a constant warfare between inclination and duty. Inclination too often prevails, and silences the convictions of the Holy Spirit.

The faith which we cherish as "present truth" is sustained by the clearest and most conclusive evidence from the word of God. Still there is urged against it one objection which our ablest ministers cannot remove. Christ himself could not remove it. It has effectually barred the way of life to thousands. This hindrance is the cross. The cross, covered with shame and reproach, which Jesus bore for us, stands directly in the Christian's path. To evade that cross, the selfish, the world-loving, and the pleasure-seeking turn from the light that would guide their feet to Heaven. They choose doubt, unbelief, and infidelity, that they may have the pleasure of following inclination, and giving loose rein to the promptings of the carnal heart. Those who choose the broader and easier path, may enjoy the friendship of the world, which inspiration declares to be enmity with God; they may receive the empty praise of men whose hearts are not pure and whose lives are not holy; but they lose the only honor which is of lasting value, the honor which comes from above. They may secure worldly gain and transient pleasures, but they lose the eternal riches and that life which measures with the life of God. The language of many who are standing undecided is

"I thought that the course of the pilgrim to Heaven Would be bright as the summer, and glad as the morn; Thou show'dst me the path; it was dark and uneven, All rugged with rock, and all tangled with thorn. "I dreamt of celestial rewards and renown; I grasped at the triumph which blesses the brave; I asked for the palm branch, the robe, and the crown; I asked--and thou showd'st me a cross and a grave."

Those who sincerely believe and teach the word of God must expect to be received by the world with no greater favor than was the ancient preacher of righteousness. Those who lived in Noah's day despised his prophecy. Scientists quieted the fears of the people by assuring them that it was

impossible for his predictions to be fulfilled; they were but the delusive fancies of an imbecile old man. But the unbelief and mockery of the people did not hinder the event. The God of science manifested his power in a manner which has astonished the philosophers of every age.

The laws of nature cannot prevent the fulfillment of God's word. The law is never greater than the Law-giver, nor are the things created greater than the Creator. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. As men are warned of impending judgment, thousands will say, It cannot be. They will despise the truth, make light of prophecy, and deride the teacher of righteousness. One will turn aside to his farm, another to his merchandise, and care for none of these things.

The inhabitants of the antediluvian world were condemned to destruction for their iniquity, yet they had the offer of mercy. By repentance and reformation of life they might have secured forgiveness and the protection of God. So in this dispensation, every one who believes and obeys the divine word will find pardon and a shelter from the wrath to come. The history of their sins, with the sure destruction that followed, should be a warning to us. There is to be a baptism of fire as there was of water, and all the unbelief and scoffing of the ungodly will not hinder the event.

The Scriptures briefly state the reason for the prevailing iniquity in Noah's day. The sons of God married the daughters of men. Those who still cherished the knowledge of God united themselves with the ungodly and corrupt, and as a result became assimilated to them in character. The message of warning would have been received by a larger number, had it not been for their connection and association with those who despised and derided the word of God.

In the days of Noah the Spirit of God was so long and stubbornly rejected that it ceased to strive with men. Thus will it be, prior to the end of

the world. When the gospel falls on closed ears, when the Holy Spirit ceases to imprint the truth upon the heart, preaching and hearing will alike be in vain. Are we not fast approaching this state of things?

Those who would stand now must be Bible-readers, and Bible Christians; they must faithfully obey the divine precepts, both in private and in public. There are some who think it an evidence of superior ability to manifest indifference for the Bible and for religious things. They think it weak and unmanly to be always fearing to do wrong. Many a man permits himself to be allured from Christ, from purity and holiness, by those who at heart he despises. And these very persons will privately ridicule his weakness in yielding to temptation. Those who associate with godless companions learn ways of life, habits of thought and speech, which lead them down to darkness and perdition. To win the applause of the low, the worthless, and the vulgar, they degrade themselves in the sight of God and man.

There is no class in greater danger than the young. Evil men and seducers are no less active now than before the flood. On the contrary, the word of God declares that they shall wax worse and worse. There are not wanting agents of Satan to taunt and ridicule all who would be true to virtue and true to God. We are pained to see young men fearful or ashamed to acknowledge their principle before the ungodly or the blasphemer; ashamed that they have cherished holier sentiments, and cultivated purer morals. Oh, if these youth would but be firm and bold in the practice of virtue; if they would frown down the base advances of the agents of Satan, what a victory might be gained over the world, the flesh, and the devil! God calls upon the youth of today to love and serve him with the whole heart. They need a daily connection with Heaven to keep them unsullied by the corruptions of the last days.

Says Christ, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall

have the light of life." And again, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Those who obey God's will as it is revealed to their understanding, will be safely guided into the way of life. But it is impossible for finite man to fully understand the purposes and ways of the Infinite One. Those who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light. Truth and error are before us. God has given us sufficient evidence to determine the right way, and then he leaves us to choose for ourselves.

Jesus calls us to walk with him in the light, instead of wandering in the dark mazes of unbelief. If men would but stop to consider the worth of the soul, and their own need of a Savior, they would gladly, gratefully accept the hand which he has stretched out to them. Alas that so many, in their pride and stubbornness of heart, refuse to accept the guidance of infinite wisdom! Faith, hope, and love, man's highest and noblest faculties, have been paralyzed by sin and Satan. But Jesus stands ready to awaken them to new life, that they may be enlisted in his service. The power of renewing grace will bring them again into vigorous exercise.

Temptations to discouragement will at times come upon the children of God like an overwhelming torrent. Many are disheartened as they see that Christian example and instruction seem almost powerless before the tide of ignorance and unbelief. But Jesus is the stronghold of his people. His light shines still. It can never be quenched. Though evil now seems to prevail over righteousness and truth, yet it is by no means the strongest power. It shall not always conquer. Nay, even now its end is nigh. Truth and righteousness are plants of heavenly origin. God nourishes them every hour. He will no more suffer them to die than he will forget the honor of his own throne and name.

Every Christian must meet trial and temptation. Those who basely shun the reproach of Christ, and choose the honor which the world bestows, will

surely reap the bitter harvest. Separation from God, the loss of Heaven, agony and despair, must be their portion. But if we will stand fearlessly and firmly for God and the right, relying upon the promises of the sacred word, we shall not be ashamed. Earth and hell can have no power to triumph over us. Let not the weakest be discouraged because they are assailed by temptation. The best men who ever lived have been grievously assaulted by Satan and his agents. Unless we yield to its power, temptation is not sin. The armor of truth will prove a sure defense against all the fiery darts of the enemy.

Yet the Christian should not place himself needlessly in the way of temptation. Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own, laden with the fragrance of love and piety, the heavy fogs of unbelief, or the deadly poison of infidelity and crime. When brought in contact with others, we are unconsciously affected by the atmosphere surrounding them. If this be laden with moral poison, the very life-blood of the soul may become tainted, ere we are conscious of danger.

The worth of a human soul can be estimated only by the light reflected from the cross of Calvary. So terrible was the doom of the lost race, so great the glory to which the redeemed might be exalted, that the Father is satisfied with the infinite price which he pays for their redemption. It was the joy set before Christ in accomplishing so great salvation, that led him to submit to shame, agony, and death. How do all the treasures and the glories of earth sink into insignificance when compared with the value of a human soul!

As I see in the world such astonishing indifference to the work of redemption; as I see the unbelief, the skepticism, the Heaven-daring rebellion against God and his law, I am more and more convinced that we have reached those days of peril foretold in the Scriptures. I feel assured that the end is near; that our time of waiting and watching is short.

May divine grace and power be imparted to the few in Freshwater who love God and keep his commandments. We earnestly hope that those who have been convicted of the truth will decide to follow the light, that it may not for them go out in darkness.

February 23, 1882

Among the Churches

Arbuckle

Sabbath, Dec 31, I spent at Arbuckle. Here I spoke to the church twice on Sabbath, and once on first-day. The Lord gave me freedom.

The believers in present truth here are few in number, and some of them are very unfavorably situated, their families not being united in the faith. Those who are thus striving alone to obey God, have trials, temptations, and opposition to encounter, of which others know nothing. They need our sympathy and our prayers.

Some are struggling with poverty, but this need not prevent them from obtaining the eternal riches. All should seek, so far as possible, the most favorable position for perfecting a Christian character. This is a duty which we owe to ourselves, to society, and to God. We should endeavor to become intelligent Christians, growing in grace, and in knowledge of the truth. Those whose advantages are few, should not feel that they are therefore excused from effort for self-improvement. The most illiterate may be elevated, sanctified, and ennobled by the Spirit and the word of God. If the love of Christ dwells in the heart, we shall not be content to keep a low level, and shall not associate with those who will have no influence to increase our aspiration after knowledge or holiness.

A sore trial has been brought upon the little company here, by the course of their leader. Since he was chosen elder of the church he has repeatedly attended dancing parties with his wife and daughter. This is the first instance of the kind that I have ever met among our churches. I was greatly surprised

that one who had a knowledge of our faith could thus unite with the ungodly. Even if he has so little spiritual discernment as to see no wrong in this fascinating pleasure, he can but know that he is placing a stone of stumbling in the way of others. He knows that he is wounding his brethren. What say the Scriptures concerning these things? "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." And again, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way."

But dancing, as practiced at the present day, is detrimental to the health of soul and body. Theater-going, dancing, card-playing, gambling, inebriety, are all steps in the path of vice and dissipation. He who, having received the light of present truth, will yet persist in venturing into this path, is unworthy of the name of Christian. What attractions can this elder of the church find in the dance-hall? Is he in this godless company fitting himself to exert a proper influence over the flock of God? The so-called little things of life, the little acts of faith or sacrifice, go to make up the sum of Christian character and influence. It is the spirit of Christ manifested at home, in the field, in the workshop, in the church, that makes men living epistles, known and read of all.

The state of the world in the last days is declared by our Saviour to be similar to that which existed before the flood. Men were wholly absorbed in the things of this life. They forgot the claims of their Maker, and thought only of self-gratification. God's people are not to pursue such a course. Their example and influence should be such as to win men away from selfish aims and sensual indulgence, to higher motives and purer joys. The history of the antediluvians is recorded as a warning to us. We are living in a most solemn period of earth's history. The divine judgments are again to be poured out upon the world. The prophet declares that God's people are not in darkness, that the day of wrath should overtake them as a thief. They should be men and women of serious thought and earnest prayer.

Those whose hearts are cheered by the presence of an indwelling Saviour, will have no disposition to resort to places of worldly amusement. A Christian family is one in which the love of Christ is the spring of action, the precepts of God's word the rule of life. Those who can turn away from the sacred influences of truth to engage in the frivolous and exciting pleasures of the world, are regarded by our Saviour as showing contempt for himself. Jesus will not abide in any household, to guide and bless them, unless they first relinquish the sinful customs, practices, and amusements of the world. All who refuse to comply with these conditions are thereby bidding him depart from them. And how dreadful are the words he utters, as in sorrow he turns away,--"Your house is left unto you desolate." Desolate indeed must be that home from which the presence of Christ is withdrawn!

The religion of the Bible takes men as they are, with all their wants and weaknesses. It satisfies the restless cravings of the mind, ennobles the aspirations, purifies the heart. When Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, the true, joyous life of the soul begins. Those who feed upon the bread of life, so freely provided in the store-house of God's word, will become strong and vigorous to labor for Christ and for their fellow-men.

A great responsibility rests upon the husband--house-band--to bind the household together, by the ties of kindness, love, and harmony. In the patriarchal ages, the husband and father was the priest of his own household. And still it is his duty to invoke in their behalf the divine blessing, and to instruct and guide them in the way of life. Alas that his influence should ever be exerted to lead them into folly and dissipation! When about to accompany his wife and children to the theater or the ball-room, let the professed Christian ask himself, Can I seek God's blessing upon the scene of pleasure? Would my Master be a guest at such a place? Will angels minister to me there? Can I there let my light so shine before men, that they may be led to glorify God? Worldlings themselves look upon these amusements as

inconsistent with the Christian's profession. The following incident expresses the feeling which is entertained by many: A young lady professing to be a Christian had been gliding through the mazes of the dance, in a fashionable ball-room, when in conversation with another lady who lived only for this world, she revealed the fact that she was a member of a Christian church. "What!" exclaimed the other, "are you a Christian?" "I am," was the answer. Whereupon she received the stinging rebuke, "Then why are you here?"

Ours is a solemn faith. We profess to be giving the last message of warning to the world. In our religious life we should be in advance of every other people upon earth. We must rise above the standard of public opinion, even in a professedly Christian community, if we would have our character without fault in the day of God. When the final hour shall come, and the shadows of death gather about the soul, shall we regret that we have visited so few places of amusement? that we have joined in so few dances? Shall we regret that religion has debarred us from scenes of revelry, profanity, and mirth? Will not many, rather, bitterly regret that precious time has been squandered, golden opportunities neglected, by following inclination rather than duty?

God's word declares that our Saviour is soon to come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. We are admonished to watch, and wait, and pray for his appearing. Yet notwithstanding the testimony of the Scriptures, unbelief is expressed everywhere. Even ministers of the gospel are teaching that the day of God may not come for thousands of years. And while the world is enshrouded in darkness, and the night of doom is fast approaching, let us who are of the day be sober. By the intensity of our faith, the purity of our love, let us show that we believe the end of all things to be at hand. If God has given us light from Heaven, he requires us to reflect that light to the world. Christ is soon to act as Judge, where now he officiates as mediator. When he shall come, he will reward every man according to his works. The test in that day will not be, What did you profess? to what church

did you belong? But it will then be asked, What character was developed in your life? Only to those who have been faithful, to those who have done well, will the Saviour say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

March 2, 1882

Daniel a Temperance Reformer

To rightly understand the subject of temperance, we must consider it from a Bible stand-point. The first chapter of Daniel presents a most comprehensive and forcible illustration of the principles of true temperance and the blessings to be derived from their observance. Inspiration has recorded the history of Daniel and his companions as a shining example for the youth of all succeeding ages.... What men have done, men may do. Did those faithful Hebrews stand firm amid great temptation, and bear a noble testimony for God and the right? We may bear a similar testimony, even under circumstances as unfavorable.

It was not their own pride or ambition which had brought Daniel and his associates into the king's court, into the companionship of those who knew and feared not the true God. Infinite wisdom had placed them where they were. It was their duty to honor God and give to the world an example of faithfulness. They considered their position with its difficulties and dangers, and then, in the fear of God, made their decision. Even at the risk of the king's displeasure, they would be true to the laws which had been divinely given to their fathers.

Besides a portion of his wine, the food apportioned them "from the king's table," would include swine's flesh and other meats pronounced unclean by the law of Moses, and which the Jews were forbidden to eat. The Hebrew captives requested the officer who had them in charge, to grant them more simple fare. The officer demurred, fearing that such rigid abstinence as the young captives proposed would unfavorably affect their personal appearance, and thus bring himself into disfavor with the king. Daniel pleaded for a ten-day's trial. This was granted, and those youth were found at

the expiration of that time to present a far more healthy appearance than those who had indulged in the king's dainties. Hence the simple "pulse and water" which they at first requested was thereafter supplied to Daniel and his companions.

These young men had received a right education in early life, and now, when separated from home influences and sacred associations, they honored the instructors of their childhood. They obeyed the divine law both natural and moral, and the blessing of God gave them physical strength and comeliness, and intellectual power. With their habits of self-denial were coupled earnestness of purpose, diligence, and steadfastness. They had no time to squander in thoughtless pleasure, vanity, or folly. They were not actuated by pride or unworthy ambition. They sought to acquit themselves creditably, for the honor of their down-trodden people, and for His glory whose servants they claimed to be.

God always honors the right. The most promising youth of every land subdued by the great conqueror, had been gathered at Babylon, yet amid them all the Hebrew captives were without a rival. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance showing that the blood was uncorrupted, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath,--all were so many certificates of good habits,--insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who render obedience to her laws.

When their ability and acquirements were tested by the king, at the close of the three years of training, none were found "like unto Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Their keen apprehension, their choice and exact language, their extensive and varied knowledge, testified to the unimpaired strength and vigor of the mental powers. Would that youth of today would emulate the example of these Hebrew children. All who will, may, like them enjoy the favor and blessing of God.

Not only did these young men decline to drink the king's wine, but they refrained from the luxuries of his table. The lesson is one which we would do well to ponder. Our dangers are not from scarcity, but from abundance. We are constantly tempted to excess. Those who would preserve their powers unimpaired for the service of God must observe strict temperance in the use of all his bounties, as well as total abstinence from every injurious or debasing indulgence.

The youth are surrounded by allurements addressed to the appetite. In our cities, liquor saloons on almost every corner make indulgence easy and inviting. The evil does not often begin with the use of intoxicating liquors. Tea, coffee, tobacco, as well as alcoholic beverages, are different degrees in the scale of artificial stimulants. Those who, like Daniel, refuse to defile themselves, will reap the reward of their temperate habits. With their greater physical stamina and increased power of endurance, they have a bank of deposit upon which to draw in case of emergency.

Right physical habits promote mental superiority. Intellectual power, physical strength, and longevity, depend upon immutable laws. There is no happen-so, no chance, about this matter. The higher powers will not interfere to preserve men from the consequence of the violation of nature's laws. There is much of sterling truth in the adage that every man is the architect of his own fortune. While parents are responsible for the stamp of character they give their offspring, as well as for the education and training of their sons and daughters, it is still true that our position and usefulness in the world depend, to a great degree, upon our own course of action. Daniel and his fellows enjoyed the benefits of correct training and education in early life, but these advantages alone would not have made them what they became. The time came when they must act for themselves. Their future then depended upon their own course. They decided to be true to the lessons given them in childhood. The fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, was the foundation of their greatness. His Spirit strengthened every true

purpose and noble resolution.

The great work of temperance should begin with the child in its mother's arms. With patient care the little ones should be trained to unpervverted tastes and simple habits. Fathers and mothers will have a fearful account to render at the day of final reckoning. The rich, highly seasoned, unwholesome food which the mother spreads upon her table, produces indigestion, headache, and other unpleasant sensations. The children are permitted to eat whatever they please, and at any hour of the day, thus allowing the jaded stomach no rest. Hence they are constantly in a state of nervous irritation. Then, perhaps following the example of the father, they become addicted to the use of tobacco, wine or beer, and in many cases, the path to drunkenness is short. Habits of strict temperance always have been and always must be the only safeguard for our youth.

Let old and young remember that for every violation of the laws of life, nature will utter her protest. The penalty will fall upon the mental as well as the physical powers. And it does not end with the guilty trifler. The effects of his misdemeanors are seen in his offspring, and thus hereditary evils are passed down, even to the third or fourth generation. Think of this, fathers, when indulging in the soul and brain benumbing narcotic, tobacco. Where will this practice leave you? Whom will it affect besides yourself?

We rarely pass through a crowd, but men--we cannot call them gentlemen, for they do not deserve the name--will puff their poisoned breath into our face. Is it honest thus to contaminate the air which others must breathe? Wherever we go is the tobacco devotee, enfeebling both mind and body in the enjoyment of his darling indulgence. Have men a right thus to deprive their Maker and the world of the service which was their due? Is such a course Christlike? There is no middle ground. If not in harmony with the divine will, it must be Satanic.

The slaves of appetite are constantly spending their earnings in sensual indulgence, and thus robbing their children of food and clothing and the advantages of education. Millions of gallons of intoxicating liquors are drunk annually, and thirty million dollars are spent for tobacco. It is estimated by Dr. Cole, an able writer on health, that professed Christians of the different denominations annually squander five million dollars in these indulgences. It is said that a larger sum is spent for the single article of cigars than for all the churches and common schools in the Union.

Opium, tea, coffee, intoxicating liquors, and tobacco are extinguishing as fast as they well can, the spark of vitality left for the race. We are suffering for the wrong habits of our fathers, and yet how many take a course in every way worse than they. Can any be called Christians who thus willfully destroy themselves?

There can never be a right state of society, until the law shall close up liquor saloons, not only on Sunday but on all other days of the week. This would render it much easier to maintain public order, and would conduce greatly to domestic happiness. And why cannot this be done? It is not too much to say that liquor saloons would be closed at once, in obedience to the dictates of reason and religion, if public officers, judges, police, sheriffs, magistrates, and others were not the patrons. These men are by their influence corrupting society, and then they concur in judging and condemning the poor souls who follow their example!

Only men of strict temperance and integrity should be admitted to our legislative halls and courts of justice. Property, reputation, and even life itself is insecure when left to the judgment of men who are intemperate and immoral. How many innocent persons have been condemned to death, how many more have been robbed of all their earthly possessions, by the injustice of besotted jurors, lawyers, witnesses, and even judges! The records of crime published in our public journals show that intemperance and profligacy are

increasing. While every right-minded person stands aghast at the condition of the world, is it not time to inquire, Who are giving their influence to increase this tide of evil? Who are digging the pitfalls for our youth? But every inquiry is met by the authoritative announcement that the process is sustained by law. We are expected to look on in silence, while our youth are engulfed in ruin.

Notwithstanding thousands of years of experience and of progress, the same dark blot which stained the first pages of history remains to disfigure our modern civilization. Drunkenness, with all its woes, is to be found everywhere. Its victims are more numerous today than before the license laws were enacted. Legal regulation has not stayed its progress. Efforts are now made to establish institutions where the victims of intemperance may receive help to overcome their terrible appetite. This is a noble work, and yet how much wiser, how much more effective, would be the removal of the cause of all this woe! Considering only the financial aspect of this question, what folly is it to tolerate a business that is making paupers by the thousand! The laws of the land legalize the trade of making drunkards, and then at great expense provide an institution for converting them again into sober men! Is this the best solution of the question that can be furnished by our legislators?

The fact is, government can provide only one effective safeguard against inebriety, and that is prohibition. This is the grandest inebriate retreat ever erected. Such a law, rigidly enforced from ocean to ocean, would produce the greatest temperance reform that the world has ever known. Take away from men all opportunity for indulgence, and the appetite for intoxicants would cease. But as long as the sale of liquor is sanctioned by law, the poor victim of appetite can receive little benefit from inebriate asylums. He will not be content to remain there always. He must again take his place in society. The appetite, though dormant, is not wholly destroyed; temptation assails him on every hand, and too often he falls an easy prey.

The use of intoxicating liquor dethrones reason, and hardens the heart against every pure and holy influence. The inanimate rocks will sooner listen to the appeals of truth and justice than will that man whose sensibilities are paralyzed by intemperance. This change is not wrought at once. Those who venture to enter the forbidden path are gradually and unconsciously seduced, demoralized, corrupted, and maddened. And while Christians are asleep, this evil is constantly gaining more strength and making fresh victims.

There is need now of men like Daniel to do and dare. A pure heart and a strong, fearless hand are wanted in the world today. God designed that man should be constantly improving,--daily reaching a higher point in the scale of excellence. He will help us, if we seek to help ourselves. It is the duty of every Christian to see that his example and influence are on the side of reform. Let ministers of the gospel lift up their voice like a trumpet, and show the people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins. The youth need to be instructed. Our hope of happiness in two worlds depends upon the right improvement of one. We should be guarded at every point against the first approach to intemperance. If we would preserve our children from evil, we must give them a right example, and then teach them to make God their fear, their wisdom, and their strength.

March 2, 1882

Visit to College City

A few weeks since, I visited College City, to speak, by invitation, upon the subject of temperance *. The church was tendered for the occasion, and there was a good attendance. The people of this place have already taken a praiseworthy stand upon temperance principles. In fact, it was upon this condition that a college was established here. The land upon which the college building stands, with a large tract surrounding it, was donated to the Christian Church for educational purposes, with the stipulation that no saloon should ever be opened within three miles of the college. This agreement seems to have been faithfully kept. We would feel that the youth were much safer in attending school in such a town than where there are saloons open day and night on every street corner.

The rules of this college strictly guard the association of young men and young women during the school term. It is only when these rules are temporarily suspended, as is sometimes the case that gentlemen are permitted to accompany ladies to and from public gatherings. Our own College at Battle Creek has similar regulations, though not so stringent. Such rules are indispensable to guard the youth from the danger of premature courtship and unwise marriage. Young people are sent to school by their parents to obtain an education, not to flirt with the opposite sex. The good of society, as well as the highest interest of the students, demands that they shall not attempt to select a life partner while their own character is yet undeveloped, their judgment immature, and while they are at the same time deprived of parental care and guidance.

It is because the home training is defective that the youth are so unwilling to submit to proper authority. I am a mother; I know whereof I

speaking, when I say that youth and children are not only safer but happier under wholesome restraint than when following their own inclination. Parents, your sons and daughters are not properly guarded. They should never be permitted to go and come when they please, without your knowledge and consent. The unbounded freedom granted to children at this age has proved the ruin of thousands. How many are allowed to be in the streets at night, and parents are content to be ignorant of the associates of their children. Too often, companions are chosen whose influence tends only to demoralize.

Under the cover of darkness, boys collect in groups to learn their first lessons in card-playing, gambling, smoking, and wine or beer sipping. The sons of religious parents venture into the saloons for an oyster supper, or some similar indulgence, and thus place themselves in the way of temptation. The very atmosphere of these resorts is redolent with blasphemy and pollution. No one can long remain in it without becoming corrupted. It is by such associations that promising youth are becoming inebriates and criminals. The very beginnings of the evil should be guarded against. Parents, unless you know that their surroundings are unexceptionable, do not permit your children to go into the streets after nightfall to engage in outdoor sports, or to meet other boys for amusement. If this rule be rigidly enforced, obedience to it will become habitual, and the desire to transgress will soon cease.

Those who are seeking to shield the youth from temptation and to prepare them for a life of usefulness, are engaged in a good work. We are glad to see in any institution of learning a recognition of the importance of proper restraint and discipline for the young. May the efforts of all such instructors be crowned with success.

March 9, 1882

The Light of the World

Said Christ to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." As the sun goes forth in the heavens to fill the world with brightness, so must the followers of Jesus shed the light of truth upon those who are groping in the darkness of error and superstition. But Christ's followers have no light of themselves. It is the light of Heaven that falls upon them, which is to be reflected by them to the world. Jesus speaks through clay. Let men beware how they slight or reject the words of his representatives, for in so doing they are rejecting Christ.

A great responsibility rests upon the professed followers of Jesus. If they present to the world self instead of Christ, they will have a fearful account to render at the day of final reckoning. But none need thus to fail. Our compassionate Redeemer has provided for us the help we need. He is waiting to kindle in every heart that will receive his words such love as he alone can inspire. He will impute his own righteousness to the sincere penitent, and will fit him to become a witness for Christ.

The light of life is freely proffered to all. Every one who will, may be guided by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Christ is the great remedy for sin. No man can plead his circumstances, his education, or his temperament, as an excuse for living in rebellion against God. The sinner is such by his own deliberate choice. Said our Saviour, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." The reason why there are so many of the present time to oppose the truth is, they love some indulgence which the word of God condemns.

Hence they hate the light which reveals their sin.

There are many styled by the world liberal, generous-hearted, noble men whom God looks upon as wicked and corrupt. He sees not as man sees. His thoughts are not as our thoughts. Many in their self-complacency attempt to gloss over the defects in their lives and characters, and flatter themselves that all is well. To come to the light would reveal their danger, and strike the death-blow to their self-satisfaction. Then they would see the importance of a holy life, and their own need of Christ as a Saviour.

Many of those who profess to believe the Bible, and even to expound its sacred truths, are yet living in the indulgence of some cherished sin--living as though there were no God whose eye could search the inmost recesses of the soul. They are blessed with Heaven's bounties, and yet they express no more gratitude to the Giver than do the beasts of the field. They may now have no sense of their own sinfulness; but when summoned before the great white throne, they will in speechless terror stand condemned. The excuses now so flippantly urged to shield themselves from the divine requirements, they dare not mention with the eye of the Judge looking upon them. They knew their Master's will, but did it not, and they will be beaten with many stripes.

When the claims of God are presented, those who love sin evince their true character by the satisfaction with which they point to the faults and errors of professed Christians. They are actuated by the same spirit as their master, Satan, whom the Bible declares to be the "accuser of the brethren." Let an evil report be started, and how rapidly it will be exaggerated and passed from lip to lip! How many will feast upon it, like vultures upon a heap of garbage. Whether the slanderous tale comes with or without proof, they give it ready credence, showing a strength of faith that is surprising. And yet these very persons will refuse to believe the truths of God's word so long as there is the semblance of an excuse for doubt.

The fact that some professed Christians are not what they should be, does not prove that religion is at fault, but only that these persons are not faithfully obeying its teachings. Neither does it prove that the church is corrupt. Does she not deal with an offending member, and separate from her company those who persist in all evil way? But the very ones who make the most of a person's faults while he is a member of the church, will, when he is expelled, turn about and sympathize with him, declaring the church to be uncharitable and severe. It is thus that Satan works through his agents, to turn men away from the Light of life.

The true Christian, "he that doeth truth, cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." His godly life and holy conversation are a daily testimony against sin and sinners. He is a living representative of the truth which he professes. Of these true-hearted followers, Jesus declares that he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Every one who at last secures eternal life will here manifest zeal and devotion in the service of God. He will not be ready to flee at the approach of trial, hardship, or reproach. He does not search the Scriptures to find some excuse for resistance to the truth. He does not inquire, What will my friends say, if I take my position with the people of God? To know his duty, is to do it heartily and fearlessly. He follows the light, as it shines upon his path, regardless of consequences. The God of truth is on his side, and will never forsake him. All apparent losses for Christ's sake will count to him as infinite gain.

Our thoughts and purposes are the secret springs of action, and hence determine the character. Every thought, feeling, and inclination, though unseen by men, is discerned by the eye of God. With what care, then, should we examine our hearts in the light of the divine law, and compare ourselves with the one faultless Pattern, that no defect may be found upon us in the day of God. We cannot afford to make a mistake in a matter in which eternal

interests are involved.

The rebellious purpose formed in the heart needs not expression by word or act to consummate the sin, and bring the soul into condemnation. The unlawful word or deed is but the fruition of the evil which has taken root in the heart; the outward evidence that temptation has prevailed, and hell has triumphed. Says the apostle, "Every man is tempted [that is, enters into temptation] when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." God has provided the means by which we may resist temptation. These are the study of his word, and earnest prayer. In his encounters with the prince of darkness our Saviour prefaced every answer with the words, "It is written." It was the word of God that vanquished Satan. Those who make that word their study are arming themselves with weapons of divine power against the attacks of the foe. "Thy word," said the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Every Christian should be a diligent student of the Scriptures. The word of God, believed and obeyed, exerts a transforming power upon the life and character. Its sublime truths, its pure and holy principles, strengthen the intellect, ennoble the affections, enlighten the understanding. How great the loss which they sustain who neglect this store-house of eternal riches.

We should know why we believe as we do, and should be able to give to others the reasons for our faith. But this will require effort. The mind grows by what it is fed upon. The understanding gradually adapts itself to the subjects which it is required to grasp. If allowed to dwell only upon the things of this life, it becomes dwarfed and enfeebled. If absorbed in vanity and folly, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. To secure strength and vigor, the mind must be tasked; and there is no other means by which this can be so successfully accomplished as by the study of the Scriptures.

Hours are worse than wasted when spent in the society of those who are not seeking to improve in mind or morals. Idle gossip, frivolous chitchat, the cruel slander, the base innuendo, weaken the intellect and corrupt the heart. Time is precious. We have but a brief space in which to prepare for the future life. All who expect to dwell hereafter with the pure and holy, must here obtain a fitness for such society. Let the moments heretofore squandered in idleness and folly be henceforth devoted to prayer and the reading of God's word. This discipline every Christian may have, and, rightly improved, it will make him wise unto eternal life.

Many accept the theory of the truth, whose hearts have not felt the renewing power of divine grace. They do not wholly renounce their former life of sin and folly. They do not see the work which must be wrought in them by the Holy Spirit before they can be transformed from Satan's subjects to sons of God. In his words to Nicodemus, Christ explained the nature and importance of true conversion. He solemnly declares, "Except a man be born again,"--unless he receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life--"he cannot see the kingdom of God." He must no longer remain in subjection to the power of sin. He is no longer to be a willing subject to the enemy of Christ. He is to become an heir of God by faith, a son of God by adoption.

Those who have experienced the new birth have but entered upon the Christian life. To such are addressed the words of the apostle, "As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him." In the storm of opposition, the whirlwind of strife that we are called to meet, it is sometimes hard to maintain the patience and gentleness of Christ, hard to meet the railing accusation with words of Scripture truth. But such must be the Christian's course. God has promised grace for every trial. By patient endurance we may become strong, by failure we may learn success, and through apparent defeat we may conquer.

Let not those be discouraged who are sorely tried and tempted, and who feel that they have not strength to cope single-handed with the power of evil. God asks you to become co-laborers with him. You need not wait for great opportunities nor ask for extraordinary talents. Use the ability that you now have. Do not weary yourself with anxiety about the success of your efforts, but quietly, faithfully do what you can, leaving the result with God. Though surrounded by the darkness of unbelief, you may let your daily life be a light to the world, a living testimony to the power of divine grace. The influence of that testimony will widen and deepen, so long as you are connected with the God of wisdom and power. Be assured that your memorial is written above, and in the day of God some at least among the redeemed will call you blessed.

March 16, 1882

Sanctification Through Obedience to the Truth

Christ prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." In every age, God has committed to his people some special truth which is directly opposed to the desires and purposes of the natural heart. It is no argument against the truth, that there are few ready to accept it. The word of God was received with little favor when priests and people, Pharisees and publicans, listened to the divine Teacher.

Christ brought to men truths glowing with the light of Heaven, showing in contrast the darkness of error and revealing the superstition, self-righteousness, and bigotry of that age. His heart overflowed with sympathy for the poor, the ignorant, the afflicted, and the fallen. He healed the sick, comforted the desponding, cast out devils, raised the dead, and made known to all the words of eternal life. The priests and elders, who professed to be the expositors of divine truth, were sending forth no rays of heavenly light to a benighted people. In their self-righteousness they held themselves aloof from those who most needed help. When One came to do the work which they had left undone, they felt that his life was a constant rebuke to them; and they feared that he would turn the people from their teachings. Their hearts were filled with pride, love of ostentation, and desire for praise. They despised Christ's humility and self-denial. They hated the purity while they feared the power of his teachings. They refused to accept him themselves, and bent all their energies to hinder others. Against these professed leaders of the Jewish people, Christ brings the terrible accusation, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge. Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

Reformers of the present time will meet with the same discouragements

as did their Master. Men are no more favorable to Bible simplicity or to practical godliness than in Christ's day. Few accepted the world's Redeemer; few will now accept the message of his servants. Though the multitude eagerly flocked around him to receive temporal blessings, yet Christ sadly declares, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Thus the mass of mankind are today seeking earthly good, to the neglect of eternal riches.

When Christ was upon earth, frowning priests and angry rulers threatened the people with exclusion from the synagogue, and thus kept many from hearing the great Teacher. Today the so-called "orthodox" ministers by similar threats deter their hearers from listening to the words of Christ's ambassadors. Many fear even to study the word of God for themselves, lest they shall be convinced. Young persons who find no attractions in the Bible, and who have never searched its pages, will, parrot-like, repeat the sayings of opposers to the truth. They imagine that it savors of manly independence to talk of having a mind of their own, when in fact they merely echo the opinions and sentiments of others. What the minister says in the desk, against the truth, is greedily devoured by those who love to have it so, and his assumptions, though wholly destitute of Scripture proof, are repeated as conclusive evidence.

Those words of inspiration are even more applicable today than when first uttered: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so. And what will ye do in the end thereof?" A solemn question indeed; but how few give heed to it.

Christ says of the people in his day, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes; and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." The Jews willfully closed their eyes and their ears, and barred their hearts with prejudice, lest they should see a better way, and thus be

aroused from their pleasant dreams of carnal security. The people of the present generation are pursuing the same course. The great mass of mankind are unwilling to exchange error for truth. They are satisfied with their present condition, and have no desire to be converted.

New truth is constantly unfolding; at every step, new and clearer light is shining upon the pathway of God's people, that they may go onward and upward. We are to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. For want of this Bible sanctification, the soul of many a professed Christian has become a desecrated shrine, the haunt of hollow formalism, of selfishness and hypocrisy, pride and passion. Thousands are living on in guilty unconsciousness of their sin and danger, despising the Saviour's warnings, treating his ambassadors with contempt, and their words as idle tales.

The servants of ChriST 5/at times feel almost disheartened as they see that there are many obstacles to the progress of the truth, and the work seems to move slowly. But their duty remains the same. They are to sow the seed of truth beside all waters. Whatever their difficulties and trials, they can carry all to God in prayer. They can weep between the porch and the altar, saying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." By study of the Scriptures and earnest, wrestling prayer, they may become strong in the strength of the mighty one. Labor on, brethren, while the day lasts. The night cometh, in which no man can work. The world must be warned, and God has called us to this work. If we neglect our duty, souls will be lost through our unfaithfulness.

A serious and perhaps unsuspected hindrance to the success of the truth is to be found in our churches themselves. When an effort is made to present our faith to unbelievers; the members of the church stand back, as though they were not an interested party, and let all the burden rest upon the minister. I know that for this reason the labor of our most able ministers has been at times productive of little good. The very best sermons may be

preached, the message may be just what the people need, and yet no souls are gained as sheaves to present to Christ.

In laboring where there are some already in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to secure his army of workers. He is not merely to present the truth from the desk, but as the shepherd of the flock he should care for the sheep and the lambs, searching out the lost and straying, and bringing them back to the fold. He should visit every family, not merely as a guest, to enjoy their hospitality, but as Christ's servant to inquire into the spiritual condition of every member of the household. His own soul must be imbued with the love of God; by kindness, love, and courtesy, he should win his way to the hearts of all, and then labor faithfully for the good of parents and children, entreating, warning, encouraging, as the case demands.

A constant effort to promote personal piety should be seen in the minister's public labors. Sermon after sermon should not be given on the prophecies alone. Practical religion should have a place in every discourse. The discourses should be short, and to the point, and followed by a spirited social meeting. Sometimes the social meeting would have the best influence to come first. Let every member of the church feel a duty to labor wisely, skillfully, and earnestly. Let all bear testimony with the one object in view, to glorify God, to gain a deeper experience themselves and to save souls. Thus the church will be kept working with the minister, the careless will be aroused to seek a reconversion themselves, and then they are prepared to work for others. This is good generalship. The results will be found to be far better than if the minister performed all the labor alone.

Each church can enjoy the labors of a minister but a short time at best. Hence they should seek to gain the greatest possible benefit from his labors. During his stay among them, they should give less attention to their temporal affairs, and all stand ready to second the efforts of the Lord's messenger.

It is harder to reach the hearts of men today than it was twenty years ago. The most convincing arguments may be presented to sustain the truth, and yet sinners seem as far from repentance and conversion as ever. The work of saving souls is no child's play. It requires earnest, untiring labor to wrench the prey of Satan from his grasp. But God will sustain his servants in the work which he has himself committed to their hands. Said Christ to the first disciples, as they toiled upon the sea of Galilee, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." When the gospel net is cast, let there be a watching by the net, with tears and earnest prayer. Let the workers determine not to become discouraged; and not to let go the net until it is drawn ashore, with the fruit of their labor. Sometimes, indeed, we may say with Peter, "We have toiled all the night and have taken nothing," but still it is the Master's command, as of old, "Let down the net on the right side of the ship,"--work on in faith, and God will give success.

Jesus bids us as a people, Go forward. There are higher attainments, a purer love, a deeper experience for us, if we will consecrate ourselves to God, and humbly take him at his word. The reason why we have no greater confidence and joy is that there is in us an evil heart of unbelief. Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. Let us shake off the spiritual paralysis that dishonors God and imperils our souls. If we draw near to God, he will draw near to us. We must not wait for better opportunities, for strong persuasions, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must trust to Jesus' power to save. He is holding out to us the crown of life, and desires us to accept it. Let us come to him, just as we are, and we shall find a present help in our time of need.

The sweet sense of sins forgiven, the light and love which Christ alone can give, fill the soul with subdued, solemn joy. The assurance that we are under the protection of Omnipotence imparts new courage and confidence,

inspires a hope that is as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. With this assurance we have a source of strength unknown before. Whatever the duty which God requires, we are ready cheerfully to perform it. So long as we have the presence of our Saviour, difficulties cannot dismay nor dangers appall us. If we were only as free to speak of the blessings we receive from God as we are to talk of doubts and discouragements, we would enjoy far more of his presence. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth God." Let us praise God more, and complain less; let us talk of the love of Jesus, and his wondrous power, and we shall be brought nearer and nearer to our Saviour.

Shall we not consecrate ourselves to God without reserve? Christ, the King of glory, gave himself a ransom for us. Can we withhold anything from him? Shall we think our poor unworthy selves too precious, our time, our property, too valuable to give to Jesus? No, no; the deepest homage of our hearts, the ablest service of our hands, our talents of ability and of means, all are but too poor to bring to our Redeemer.

"Were the whole realm of the nature mine, That were a tribute far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my life, my soul, my all."

March 16, 1882

Among the Churches

Sabbath and First-day, January 28, 29, I attended the quarterly meeting at Healdsburg. February 1, I went to Santa Rosa. Elds. Van Horn and Israel had been holding meetings here for two weeks. They labored earnestly, not only to present before the people the evidences of our faith, but to urge upon them the importance of practical godliness. Some manifested an interest to hear the word, but we were pained to see that the number was so small. My heart was especially burdened for the church, who were not themselves prepared to unite with their ministers in laboring for the salvation of souls. The Lord aided me by his Spirit as I endeavored to present before them their duty.

February 6, in company with Bro. and Sr. Cole, I visited Bro. Thorpe's family, among the mountains eight miles from Santa Rosa. They invited their neighbors to come in, and though living at quite a distance, fathers, mothers, and children, young men, and young women assembled, until the family sitting-room was full. I spoke to them from the text, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." I had as much freedom in addressing this intelligent mountain audience as in speaking to assembled thousands. The Lord's presence is not confined to large numbers. He is ready to bless the few who assemble for his worship.

We next visited Green Valley, and spent a pleasant and profitable evening with Bro. and Sr. Babcock, and Bro. Morton's family. We conversed upon the wisest and most successful manner of laboring for the salvation of souls, and also considered how the Sabbath can be most profitably spent where there are but very few who observe it. If there are but three who can

meet on the Sabbath, these should come together and search the Scriptures, read from our publications whatever seems most suitable for both parents and children, and then unite in prayer for the presence and blessing of God.

Sabbath, February 11, I spent at Santa Rosa. It was a day not soon to be forgotten by the church there.

I spoke in the morning from the words of Christ, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." The solemn scenes of the day of God seemed to me a living reality. I felt the danger of his professed people, and urged them to seek a preparation for the soon-coming Judgment. We are far from being as earnest and devoted as we should be. How few among us have become dead indeed to the world, and alive unto God. Many of the children of believing parents, children who have been trained in the Sabbath-school, and are familiar with the Scriptures, have yet no interest in religion. Under the most powerful appeals of the Holy Spirit, they seem as unmoved as if chiseled out of stone. What can be done to break the spell which Satan has cast upon these souls? I can see no help, except as parents shall present their children at the throne of grace, in humble, earnest, believing prayer, entreating the Lord to work with their efforts and the efforts of their ministers, until conviction and conversion shall be the result.

As I spoke the word, the Spirit of God rested upon me with power, and set home the truth to many hearts. I entreated both the unconverted and backsliders to return to the Lord with confession and repentance. Between twenty-five and thirty responded. Heartfelt confessions were made, and earnest prayer was offered for those who had come forward, and also for

others who had not yet decided to give their hearts to God. Eld. Van Horn was greatly blessed while praying. The unction of the Holy Spirit rested upon him, and the sacred influence seemed to pervade the assembly.

In the afternoon we met again, and the blessing of the Lord was with us in still greater measure. The testimonies borne seemed to come from hearts softened and subdued by the Holy Spirit. To me this was a precious season. My cup of blessing seemed full to overflowing. The Son of God was with us as with the disciples of old, saying, "Peace be unto you." Several remarked that Jesus seemed very near. They felt that they had but to reach out the hand to touch him. The light of Heaven seemed to be streaming down from the gates ajar, through which an ascending Saviour has entered to make intercession for us. We would not have been deprived of this bright spot in our experience for any amount of gold or silver.

We hope that the experience of this Sabbath may not be lost upon the church at Santa Rosa. Jesus has come very near to them in blessing. Oh, will any suffer the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit to come and go unappreciated? Will they treat it lightly, as of little moment? God forbid! Let every one to whom the Lord has revealed himself cherish the holy influence. Let not unbelief come in to poison the soul. Let us hold fast that whereunto we have attained and press forward, toward the mark for the prize.

We should remember that every blessing unimproved increases our guilt. Said Christ to Capernaum, that city so highly favored during his public ministry, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Let us beware lest, by slighting, Heaven's favors, we bring upon ourselves this terrible malediction.

A good work was accomplished by the labor at Santa Rosa, though little

interest was manifested by unbelievers. The opportunity was gratefully improved by those who loved the truth. They listened to the reasons of our faith with feelings akin to those of the disciples to whom Jesus expounded the Scriptures on the way to Emmaus. When these disciples learned that it was Christ who had walked and talked with them, they said, one to the other, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Christ is still sending chosen servants as his representatives to explain and enforce the truths of his sacred word. This is one important channel by which he has chosen to communicate his will to men. Those who reject these opportunities lose the message which Christ has sent them by his servant.

There were some at Santa Rosa who had, through many discouragements, given up the truth. These were reclaimed by the recent effort there, and they have again united with the church. May the Lord impart strength and courage to these trembling souls. Persons are sometimes so reserved, timid, and sensitive upon religious subjects, even after they have given their hearts to God, that they do not receive the strength which they might have. We talk without reserve of our temporal affairs, and why should we be so reluctant to speak of our eternal interests? Would that all hearts might be inspired with holy boldness. Would that we all might lift up Jesus before the people with courage, and fortitude, and faith.

April 20, 1882

The Primal Cause of Intemperance

Only one lease of life is granted us here; and the inquiry with every one should be, How can I invest my life that it may yield the greatest profit? Life is valuable only as we improve it for the benefit of our fellow-creatures and the glory of God. Careful cultivation of the abilities with which the Creator has endowed us, will qualify us for elevated usefulness here, and a higher life in the world to come.

That time is spent to good account which is directed to the establishment and preservation of sound physical and mental health. We cannot afford to dwarf or cripple a single function of the mind or body, by overwork or abuse of any part of the living machinery. As surely as we do this, we must suffer the consequences. Our first duty to God and our fellow-beings, is that of self-development. Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable. In order to purify and refine our characters, we need the grace given us of Christ that will enable us to see and correct our deficiencies, and improve that which is excellent. This work, wrought for ourselves in the strength and name of Jesus, will be of more benefit to our fellow-creatures than any sermon we might preach them. The example of a well-balanced, well-ordered life, is of inestimable value.

Intemperance is at the foundation of the larger share of the ills of life. It annually destroys tens of thousands. We do not speak of intemperance as limited only to the use of intoxicating liquors; it has a broader meaning, including the hurtful indulgence of any appetite or passion. There are today thousands suffering the torture of physical pain, or writhing under a sense of mental and moral degradation, and wishing again and again that they had

never been born. God did not design this condition of things; but it was brought about through the gross violation of Nature's laws. If the appetites and passions were under the control of sanctified reason, society would present a widely different aspect. Many things that are usually made articles of diet, are unfit for food; the taste for them is not natural, but has been cultivated. Stimulating food creates a desire for still stronger stimulants.

Indigestible food throws the entire system out of order, and unnatural cravings and inordinate appetites, are the results. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," is a motto that should be carried farther than the mere use of spirituous liquors. True temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use judiciously only such articles of food as are healthful and nutritious.

The first steps in intemperance are usually taken in early youth. Stimulating food is given to the child, which excites unnatural cravings of the stomach. These false appetites are pandered to as they develop. The taste continually becomes more perverted; stronger stimulants are craved and are indulged in, till soon the slave of appetite throws aside all restraint. The evil commenced early in life, and could have been prevented by the parents. We witness strenuous efforts in our country to put down intemperance; but it is found a hard matter to overpower and chain the strong, full-grown lion.

In half the efforts that are put forth to stay this giant evil were directed toward enlightening parents as to their responsibility in forming the habits and characters of their children, a thousand-fold more good might result, than from the present course of combatting only the full-grown evil. The unnatural appetite for spirituous liquors is created at home, in many cases at the very tables of those who are most zealous to lead out in the temperance campaigns. We bid all workers in the good cause, God speed; but we invite them to look deeper into the causes of the evil they war against, and labor more thoroughly and consistently in the work of reform.

Parents should so conduct themselves that their lives will be a daily lesson of self-control and forbearance to their household. The father and mother should unite in disciplining their children. They should feel themselves under solemn obligation to God to train up their offspring in such a way as to secure to them, as far as possible, good physical health and well-developed characters. Upon the mother, however, will come the heavier burden, especially in the first few years of her children's lives. It is her duty to control and direct the developing minds of her tender charge, as well as to watch over their health. The father should aid her with his sympathy and counsel, and share her burdens so far as possible.

Parents should not lightly regard the work of training their children. They should employ much time in careful study of the laws which regulate our being. They should make it their first object to learn the proper manner of dealing with their children, that they may secure to them sound minds in sound bodies. Too many parents are controlled by custom, instead of sound reason and the claims of God. Many who profess to be followers of Christ are sadly neglectful of home duties. They do not perceive the sacred importance of the trust which God has placed in their hands, so to mold the characters of their children, that they will have moral stamina to resist the many temptations that ensnare the feet of youth.

We urge that the principles of temperance be carried into all the details of home-life; that the example of parents should be a lesson of temperance; that self-denial and self-control should be taught to the children, and enforced upon them, so far as consistent, from babyhood. And first it is important that the little ones be taught that they eat to live, not live to eat; that appetite must be held in abeyance to the will; and that the will must be governed by calm, intelligent reason. Much parental anxiety and grief might be saved if children were taught from the cradle that their wills are not to be made law, nor their whims to be continually indulged. It is not so difficult as

is generally supposed to teach the little child to stifle its outbursts of temper, and subdue its fits of passion.

Few parents begin early enough to teach their children obedience. The child is usually allowed to get two or three years the start of its parents, who forbear to discipline it, thinking it is too young to learn to obey. But all this time self is growing strong in the little being, and every day makes it a harder task for the parent to gain control of the child. At a very early age children can comprehend what is plainly and simply told them; and, by kind and judicious management, can be taught to obey.

The mother should not allow her child to gain an advantage over her in a single instance; and, in order to maintain this authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand, and a kindness which convinces the child of your love, will accomplish the purpose. But let selfishness, anger, and self-will, have their course for the first three years of a child's life, and it will be hard to bring it to submit to whole-some discipline. Its disposition becomes soured; it delights in having its own way; parental control is distasteful. These evil tendencies grow with the child's growth, until, in manhood, supreme selfishness and a lack of self-control place him at the mercy of the evils that run riot in our land.

May 4, 1882

Labor as a Blessing

Many look upon work as a curse, originating with the enemy of souls. This is a mistaken idea. God gave labor to man as a blessing, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. Adam labored in the garden of Eden, and he found in mental and physical activity the highest pleasures of his holy existence. When he was driven from that beautiful home as the result of his disobedience, and was forced to struggle with a stubborn soil to gain his daily bread, that very labor was a relief to his sorrowing soul, a safeguard against temptation.

Judicious labor is indispensable both to the happiness and the prosperity of our race. It makes the feeble strong, the timid brave, the poor rich, and the wretched happy. Our varied trusts are proportioned to our various abilities, and God expects corresponding returns for the talents he has given to his servants. It is not the greatness of the talents possessed that determines the reward, but the manner in which they are used,--the degree of faithfulness with which the duties of life are performed, be they great or small.

Idleness is one of the greatest curses that can fall upon man; for vice and crime follow in its train. Satan lies in ambush, ready to surprise and destroy those who are unguarded, whose leisure gives him opportunity to insinuate himself into their favor, under some attractive disguise. He is never more successful than when he comes to men in their idle hours.

The greatest curse following in the train of wealth is the fashionable idea that work is degrading. "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Here

are presented before us, in the words of Holy Writ, the terrible results of idleness. It was this that caused the ruin of the cities of the plain. Idleness enfeebles the mind, debases the soul, and perverts the understanding, turning into a curse that which was given as a blessing.

The rich often consider themselves entitled to the pre-eminence among their fellow-men and in the favor of God. Many feel above honest labor, and look down with contempt upon their poorer neighbors. The children of the wealthy are taught that to be gentlemen and ladies they must dress fashionably, avoid all useful labor, and shun the society of the working classes. They dare not shock their fashionable associates by putting the gifts of God to a practical use.

Such ideas are wholly at variance with the divine purpose in the creation of man. What are the possessions of even the most wealthy, in comparison with the heritage given to the lordly Adam? Yet Adam was not to be idle. An all-wise Creator understands what is for man's happiness; and this is why he gave to Adam his appointed work.

The Son of God honored labor. Though he was the Majesty of Heaven, he chose his earthly home among the poor and lowly, and worked for his daily bread in the humble carpenter shop of Joseph. Christ is our example. He came to earth to teach us how to live. Does it require too great humiliation for us to follow where the King of glory has led the way?

Misguided parents are trying to improve upon God's plan. Many send their children away from home influences and home duties, to some boarding-school or college, to obtain an education. There, deprived of parental care, the youth squander precious hours in novel reading, in frivolous amusements, or in studying the adornment of the person, that they may outrival their companions. For such pursuits, their duties to their fellow-beings and to God are neglected.

This false education leads young ladies to regard uselessness, frivolity, and helplessness as proofs of gentility. Fashionable butterflies, they have nothing to do for the good of others, at home or abroad. Here may be found the secret of many of the unhappy marriages and flirtations ending in shame, that curse our world today.

Those who are in the possession of wealth and leisure, and yet have no purpose in life, have nothing to arouse them to either mental or physical activity. Thus many a woman loses her health, and is sent to some medical institution for treatment. Here attendants are hired, at great expense, to rub, stretch, and exercise the muscles, which have become powerless by inaction. She hires servants, that she may live a life of idleness, and then hires other servants to exercise the muscles enfeebled by disuse. What consummate folly! How much wiser and better for women, young or old, to brave the sneers of fashion's votaries, and obey the dictates of common sense and the laws of life. By the cheerful performance of domestic duties, they might become useful and happy members of society. Such labor affords a more efficient and profitable "movement cure" than the best inventions of the physicians.

Young men, as well as young women, manifest a sad lack of earnest purpose and moral independence. To dress, to smoke, to talk nonsense, and to indulge their passion for amusement, is the ideal of happiness, even with many who profess to be Christians. It is painful to think of the time which is thus misspent. Hours that should be given to the study of the Scriptures or to active labor for Christ are worse than wasted.

Life was given for a true and holy purpose. It is too precious to be thus squandered. I entreat those who have taken the name of Christ to examine their own hearts, and pass sentence upon themselves. Do you not love pleasure more than you love God or your fellowmen?

There is work to be done. There is the mind, with all its capabilities, to strengthen and store with the treasures of divine wisdom. There are souls to save. There is a Heaven to win. There are battles to fight. You may come to the front and join in the warfare against the hosts of evil. In the strength of God you may do a good and noble work for the Master.

God designed that all should be workers, and upon those whose opportunities and abilities are greatest, rest the heaviest responsibilities. Upon them, also, will fall the heaviest condemnation if they are unfaithful to their trust. The patient beasts of burden put to shame that indolent do nothing, who, endowed with reasoning powers and a knowledge of the divine will, refuses to perform his allotted part in God's great plan.

The indolence of the many, occasions the overwork of the few. A large class refuse to think or act for themselves. They have no disposition to step out of the old ruts of prejudice and error; by their perversity they block up the way of advancement, and force the standard-bearers of the right to more heroic efforts in their march forward. Earnest and devoted laborers are failing for the want of a helping hand, and are sinking beneath their double burdens. Their graves are waymarks along the upward paths of reform.

The true glory and joy of life are found only by the working man and woman. Labor brings its own reward, and the rest is sweet that is purchased by the fatigue of a well-spent day. But there is a self-imposed toil which is utterly unsatisfying and injurious. It is that which gratifies unsanctified ambition, that which seeks display or notoriety. The love of appearance or possession leads thousands to carry to excess what is lawful, to devote all the strength of mind and body to that which should occupy but a small portion of their time. They bend every energy to the acquisition of wealth or honor; they make all other objects secondary to this; they toil unflinchingly for years to accomplish their purpose; yet when the goal is reached, and the

coveted reward secured, it turns to ashes in their grasp; it is a shadow, a delusion. They have given their life for that which profiteth not.

Yet all the lawful pursuits of life may be safely followed, if the spirit is kept free from selfish hopes and the contamination of deceit and envy. The business life of the Christian should be marked with the same purity that held sway in the work shop of the holy Nazarene. It is the working men and women--those who are willing to bear its responsibilities with faith and hope--who see something great and good in life.

Patient laborers, remember that they were sturdy working men whom Christ chose from among the fishermen of Galilee and the tent-makers of Corinth, to labor with him in the work of salvation. From these humble men went forth a power that will be felt through all eternity.

The angels are workers; they are ministers of God to the children of men. Those slothful spirits who look forward to a Heaven of inaction will be disappointed; for the Creator has prepared no such place for the gratification of sinful indolence. But to the weary and heavy-laden, rest is promised. It is the faithful servants who are welcomed from their labors unto the joy of their Lord. Gladly will they lay off their armor, and forget the noise of battle in the peace that shall be the inheritance of the saints.

The path of the Christian laborer may be hard and narrow, but it is honored by the foot-prints of the Redeemer, and he is safe who follows in that sacred way.

May 4, 1882

Our School at Healdsburg

In the providence of God a school has been established by our people in California. The time has fully come for such a step. The need of a school has been deeply felt, and we trust that our brethren on this coast will sustain it by their means and their patronage.

It is the purpose of managers and teachers, not so much to copy the plans and methods of other institutions of learning, as to make this school such as God can approve. We trust that a high moral and religious standard will be maintained, and that Healdsburg Academy will be free from those pernicious influences which are so prevalent in popular schools.

Some parents may feel that they cannot afford to pay for the tuition of their children, when an education can be obtained free of charge, in the public schools. But we maintain that even in the matter of dollars and cents, parents will find it their wisest course to place their children under good moral and religious influences. In their association with worldlings, the young are exposed to many temptations. Pride and extravagance in dress are among the prevailing sins of the age. Will not the influence of worldly associates affect the habits, tastes, and desires of your children? Will it not lead them away from simplicity in dress, and make them discontented with that which is useful and substantial? Will not the extra demand upon your purse far exceed the cost of tuition at a school where such influences would be held in check? We have seen this experiment made again and again. In every instance parents have lost instead of saving.

By association with ungodly or vicious companions, the young often contract tastes and habits which prove a lifelong injury. Boys from six to

twelve years old may be seen coming from the public schools, smoking their cigarettes. Some who have been taught better things are not proof against such examples.

Instead of permitting our children to imitate the customs and practices of the world, we should seek to impress upon their minds that the love of pleasure and selfish indulgence is dangerous to virtue and morality. We often hear it said that the young must "sow their wild oats." But let it be remembered that the seed sown will determine the character of the harvest. Youthful follies and indiscretions will leave an impress upon the mind and character. In early life the brain is peculiarly susceptible to injury. Even a slight degree of sensual indulgence lowers its tone and impairs its power. The effect of such indulgence will be seen and felt, long after the sin itself has been repented of.

If parents desire that their children shall become pure, noble, upright men and women, they must give them right surroundings and proper associates in childhood. Inquire into the history of the world's best and noblest men,--those who have made life a success,--and you will find that from childhood they were governed by sterling principle. They were simple in their tastes, and temperate in their habits. The lessons of self-denial and self-control were early learned. Such men can be said, in the highest sense, to still enjoy their youth. Its purity remains unsullied, its strength and vigor undiminished. The parents thought less of hoarding money for their children than of securing to them pure morals and a vigorous intellect. The fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, was the foundation of their greatness.

Fathers and mothers, will you not seek to build a barrier about your children, that the contaminating, corrupting influence of the world, like a fast-sweeping current, may not bear them down to perdition? When you count the cost of educating your sons and daughters at our own school,

please take into account, also, the cost of educating them in the public schools and in the colleges of the day. Consider what will be their associations, to what temptations they will be exposed, what tastes and habits they will form.

Nearly all youth wish to be and try to be fashionable. Not only the sons and daughters of fortune, but the children of poverty as well, are engaged in the wild chase for pleasure and display. However limited their circumstances, most parents will yield to the influence of their pleasure-loving children, and find means to gratify their desires. Many a youth is constantly in a state of exhaustive excitement or depressing discontent. Indulgence only increases the thirst for pleasure and display, until it becomes an insatiable craving. Examples of this are as frequent as they are painful. One such instance I will relate. A lady had from her girlhood found pleasure in the gratification of pride and vanity, until a love for display and a desire for admiration became the ruling passion of her life. It was still the ruling passion in her dying hour. While the death-damp gathered upon her brow, she was thinking only how she might create a sensation. She expressed a wish to be attired for the grave in her richest robes, and to be adorned with all her costly jewels. It was done, and in hollow mockery, gold and gems glittered upon the decaying body. This is idolatry scarcely to be surpassed by the worshipers of heathen gods. But to such lengths will pride and fashion lead their votaries. Shall we expose our children to these baleful influences?

To gain wealth, men will cheerfully brave any danger and endure any hardship. They will cross the sea, explore the depths of the earth, scale the mountains, or traverse the desert. They will incur any and every risk, in anticipation of future profits. Should not God's people be willing to make some sacrifice for the present and future welfare of their children?

I have felt surprised and pained to see parents send their sons and daughters hundreds of miles away from home, among unbelievers, to obtain

an education. Deprived of parental watchcare, these youth are surrounded by influences that are opposed to God. The parents will find, to their sorrow, that their children have received an education in frivolity and worldliness which will place them beyond the influence of the truth.

We counsel parents to avail themselves of the opportunity now offered to separate their children from these worldly associations. Mothers, would it not be true wisdom to practice economy and self-denial in the furnishing of your house or the adorning of your dress, and let the means thus saved be devoted to the education of your children? Fathers, can you not sell a piece of your land, and send your children to a school where the moral and religious influence predominates? The money thus invested will bring returns more valuable than bank-stock. It will be repaid to you, both principal and interest, in the mental and spiritual advancement of your children.

It is designed that the education given in our school shall be in harmony with the teachings of God's word. Religious instruction will be given daily. Christian principles will be faithfully inculcated. It is the purpose of the Principal to conduct the school on the plan of a well-regulated Christian family. Whether engaged in study or recreation, the pupils will be under the supervision of kind yet watchful teachers.

The Bible is the word of God to men. It teaches us how to live that we may secure life's great end. The knowledge contained in this book lies at the very foundation of all knowledge. Yet God and his word have been ignored, while the words of men have been treasured as the counsels of wisdom. We should give the Bible its proper place in our schools and our homes, as the most valuable book which men possess.

Thousands in this age are seeking to clothe sin in garments of righteousness, to conceal its true deformity. The youth should be taught to

study the word of God for themselves, and to try every act and purpose of life by this unerring test. Let the fact be ever kept before their minds that truth and justice could not be compromised, even to save a lost race. Looking upon the cross of Calvary, can we entertain the thought that sin is a matter of little moment? God could give his only-begotten Son to die for our redemption, but he could not permit the principles of his government to be overthrown.

Sin is the evil thing which has brought such misery upon our race. The young should be taught to hate sin, to avoid it, not merely from fear of punishment, but from a sense of its inherent baseness. They should learn to do right because it is right. Every youth should be impressed with the fact that he is not his own; that his strength, his time, his talents, belong to God. It should be his chief purpose in life to glorify God and to do good to his fellow-men. The Bible teaches him that he is a branch, on which fruit must be found; a steward, whose capital will increase as it is wisely improved; a light, whose bright beams are to illuminate the moral darkness that enshrouds the earth. Every man, every child, has work to do for God's glory, and for the salvation of souls that are ready to perish.

The greatest want of this age is the want of men,--men who will not be bought or sold; men who are true and honest in their inmost souls; men who will not fear to call sin by its right name, and to condemn it, in themselves or in others; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right, though the heavens fall.

To form such a character in the young, there is needed a different system of education from that generally adopted. Moral and religious training must receive more attention. We are educating our children for time and for eternity. Let us enter upon our work as though we realized its importance.

May 18, 1882

Burning of the Magical Books

In the days of the apostles, the city of Ephesus was famed for the worship of the goddess Diana and the practice of magic. The temple of Diana was considered, for its size and splendor, one of the wonders of the world. Its surpassing magnificence made it the pride of both the city and the nation. The idol itself was but an uncouth wooden image, on which were inscribed mystic characters and symbols. These were supposed to possess great power. When pronounced, they were said to accomplish wonders. When written, they were treasured as a potent charm to guard their possessor from robbers, from disease, and even from death. Numerous and costly books were written by the Ephesians to explain the meaning and use of these mysterious symbols.

In this city, the very stronghold of superstition and sorcery, the apostle Paul labored for several years. Here the power of God was mightily displayed through his servant. The sick were healed, and evil spirits were cast out.

The miracles wrought by Paul in the name of Jesus, created great excitement in Ephesus. Among those who practiced magic arts were certain Jewish exorcists, who claimed to possess the same power exercised by Paul. Believing that the name of Jesus acted as a charm, they determined to cast out evil spirits by the same means which the apostle had employed.

An attempt was made by seven brothers, the sons of Sceva, a chief priest of the Jews. Finding a man who was possessed with an evil spirit, they addressed him, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." But the evil spirit answered with scorn, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are

you?" and the man who was possessed attacked them with such violence that they fled out of the house, naked and wounded.

The discomfiture and humiliation of those who had profaned the name of Jesus soon became known throughout Ephesus, by Jews and Gentiles. It furnished unmistakable proof of the sacredness of that name, and the peril which they incurred who should invoke it, while they had no faith in Christ's divine mission.

Many dared not breathe aloud the name, on which they had hitherto heaped reproach and blasphemy. A large number were convinced that Christ was all that Paul claimed him to be, and they determined to receive the gospel. These openly renounced the practice of sorcery, and acknowledged their secret arts to be deceptive and Satanic. They brought together the manuals of enchantment, the costly books containing the mystic symbols of Diana, and the secrets of their art, and burned them in the presence of all the people. The sacrifice thus made was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver, equal to about ten thousand dollars.

The conversion of these Ephesians was attended with the results that always follow genuine conversion. When convinced that their magical books were false and pernicious, they were unwilling to sell them and thus place temptation in the way of others. They promptly burned the records of divination, at a great personal sacrifice. The power of truth triumphed over men's prejudices, favorite pursuits, and love of money.

Those magical books contained rules and forms of communication with evil spirits. They were, in fact, the regulations of the worship of Satan; directions for soliciting his help, and obtaining information from him. The system of magic or sorcery then extant was in reality the same as that which is now known as modern Spiritualism. Many were deceived in Paul's day by this Satanic delusion, and many are deceived today by the same power.

"Magical books" were not confined to the apostolic age, or to nations that are called heathen. The sorcerers of our time are taking advantage of the freedom of the press to spread abroad their baleful literature. Could all the productions of modern Spiritualism be treated as were the magical books of the Ephesians, one of Satan's most successful avenues to destroy the souls of men would be cut off.

Witchcraft and sorcery are practiced in this Christian age and Christian nation, even more boldly than by the old-time magicians. Satan is finding access to thousands of minds by presenting himself under the guise of departed friends. The Scriptures of truth declare that "the dead know not anything." Their thoughts, their love, their hatred, have perished. The dead do not hold communion with the living. But Satan--true to his early cunning, when in the form of a serpent he deceived the mother of our race--employs this device to gain control of the minds of men.

Paul warns his Corinthian brethren of the deceptive power of their great adversary. He declares, "I fear that by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

He writes to his son Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

In his second epistle to the Thessalonians, he warns them that the second advent of our Lord will be preceded by the working of Satan," with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

Because the children of men reject the plainest teachings of his word, and trample upon his law, God leaves them to choose that which they desire. They spurn the truth, and he permits them to believe a lie. They refuse to yield to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, leads them captive at his will. If men were but conversant with the word of God, and obedient to its teachings, they could not be thus deceived; but they neglect the great detector of fraud, and the mind becomes confused and corrupted by the deceptive arts of men, and the secret power of the father of lies.

Men of intelligence are infatuated with Satanic sorcery as verily today as in the days of Paul. Thousands accept the opinion of the minister or obey the injunctions of the pope or priest, and neglect God's word and despise his truth. God would have his people learn their duty for themselves. The Bible declares his will to men, and it is as much our privilege and our duty to learn that will as it is that of ministers and popes and priests to learn it. What they can read from God's word, we can all read.

When the Ephesian converts burned their books on magic, they showed that they hated what they had once loved, and loved what they had once hated. The light of truth, shining into their minds, had convinced them of the unlawfulness of their arts, and had stirred their souls with abhorrence of their unholy deeds. Such a change is the best evidence of true conversion.

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion; yet this does not prove him to be unconverted. Said Christ to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Though the work of grace is silent and almost imperceptible, it may be fully as effective as when its operations are more apparent. But if the heart has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, the life will bear witness to the fact. "By

their fruits ye shall know them." Light and darkness are not more distinct than are the state of the converted and the unconverted. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are.

The world and the church have a right to expect such proof of true conversion as was given by the Ephesians,--proof that a new moral taste has been created. You may not have practiced sorcery, you may not have tampered with Spiritualism; but remember that "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." If you indulge in any practice forbidden in God's word, you have yielded obedience to Satan; you are his servant.

Every unconverted man is fascinated, bewildered, by the bewitching power of the great deceiver. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Every person who cherishes a known error, in faith or practice, is under the power of sorcery, and is practicing sorcery upon others. Satan employs him to mislead other souls.

If we would indeed become children of God, we must renounce at once and forever, every sinful indulgence. We must close every avenue through which Satan may gain control of our thoughts or our affections. Many persons manifest determined hatred of some sins denounced in the word of God, while they at the same time indulge their favorite sin. Not so did the Ephesian converts. Their particular sin was magic. By this means Satan held them in his power. They might have been earnest and vigilant to correct other evils, but had they spared this one sin, they would ere long have yielded their faith. But they laid the axe to the root of the tree; they renounced the hidden things of darkness and destroyed that which had led them into sin.

This incident, was placed on record as an important lesson for every age.

The Ephesians directed their efforts against the very sin of which they were guilty. Have the people of God in this age acted in like manner? There are many who manifest supreme devotion to their money, their business or their houses and lands. The ambitious man worships fame or honor as his idol. The covetous man fosters covetousness. The sensualist is wedded to his lust. These love their cherished objects of pursuit more than they love God. They are idolaters.

Those who venture to cherish the sin which they love best, are tampering with Satan's sorcery. The enchanting power of temptation has paralyzed conscience and blinded reason, so that they do not perceive their danger. The magical books have not been destroyed.

When the truth, presented to the understanding, exerts its sanctifying power upon the heart, the sins which were once cherished will be put away, that Jesus may occupy the soul-temple. If covetousness has been indulged, it will be given up. If the love of the world has captivated the senses, a higher attraction will break its power. Deceit, falsehood, impurity, will be cleansed from the heart. He who maintains his allegiance to Christ, can render no service to Christ's bitterest foe.

Many place themselves on the enchanted ground by frequenting scenes of amusement where fallen spirits congregate. Professing Christian, when you resort to the theater, remember that Satan is there, conducting the play as the master-actor. He is there to excite passion and glorify vice. The very atmosphere is permeated with licentiousness. Satan presides, also, at the masquerade and the dance; he throws around the card-table its bewitching power. Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget their Creator, there Satan is at work, it matters not how innocent the guise under which he conceals his purpose.

Many who cannot be attracted by the allurements of pleasure, are

ensnared by the teachings of "science falsely so-called." These are led to extol human reason, above divine revelation; to exalt nature, and forget the God of nature. Is there no magic, no sorcery, going on around us?

The press is now sending out books in great numbers, that teach the ignorant and unsuspecting how they may serve Satan. There are works breathing the poison of skepticism and infidelity. There are treatises on money-making, that fill thousands of minds with fancies and follies, that fire thousands with an insane desire to amass wealth. There are fascinating volumes, that portray with all the power of human eloquence the lives of those who have made fame their god. And outnumbering all other productions of the press, like the swarms of locusts that darkened the whole land, comes the flood of novels and romances, to cultivate in the youth a love-sick sentimentalism, to teach them that courtship and marriage are the great object of their existence, and to unfit them for the practical duties of a useful life.

Satan is seeking by every means he can devise, to suggest doubts concerning the truth of God's word. Those who are naturally inclined to skepticism should, above all others, avoid everything that would strengthen this dangerous tendency. On the contrary, many read with avidity skeptical writings which exert such a deceptive, bewitching power that the reader seeks in vain to free the mind or purify the heart from the unholy spell. Evil angels, having once gained access, suggest doubts that human reasoning is powerless to remove. When God speaks to the soul, those who would be free will cut every tie that holds them under Satan's power. They will destroy that which so nearly proved their ruin, lest it prove the ruin of others.

Many a work is highly prized for its wealth and beauty of language, when these are but a fair garment to conceal principles that in their native deformity would shock the reader. Those principles have led the author step by step away from God, from hope, and Heaven. Will they not exert the

same influence upon the reader? The course of the Ephesians was the only safe course for them; it is the only safe course for you. Destroy these agencies of Satan. Put beyond your reach that which has power to seduce you.

The authors of no small share of current literature are men who have lived in the atmosphere of vice, and who are slaves of passion. Poets of brilliant talents have perverted their powers to the service of Satan. Over all that is good, and pure, and noble, they have cast the darkness of their own base thoughts. They encourage dissipation and sanction vice.

The bewildering brilliancy, the deceptive pathos, of many a gifted author, are Satan's bait to allure and destroy the souls of men. Many who are in no danger from the productions of the gross and sensual, are deceived by writers who virtually clothe Satan in angel's garments and make him a benefactor of the race. Such works are legion.

Have the disciples of Christ burned the magical books? Have they made a decided change in their principles and habits of life? Have they separated themselves from the enchantments of the world? Those who, knowing their danger, will yet venture into places of worldly, demoralizing amusement, or who will poison the mind with the literary productions of the skeptic, or the sensualist, are guilty of presumption. God does not give his angels charge to keep those who choose to walk in forbidden paths.

When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king's court, we may be assured that God will preserve us. But if, through stubbornness, hardihood, or bravado, we place ourselves under the power of temptation, we shall fall, sooner or later.

We are living at a time when Satan's power is great. "As a roaring lion, he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Anon, he will quell his

roar to the faintest whisper, that he may deceive the unsuspecting by his hellish arts. The glories of the world are presented in glowing colors to fascinate the senses, to beguile unstable souls. What have professed Christians done to close every avenue whereby Satan can approach them? Have they given proof of the work wrought in them by the Holy Spirit? Have they erected barriers, firm and strong, between their soul and every earthly idol?

The infidel, when converted, will abhor the books that led him to doubt the word of God. The dissolute man who has purified his soul by obedience to the truth, will not venture into the haunts of dissipation, from curiosity or habit. Neither will he permit his mind to dwell upon such scenes, portrayed in the pages of the sensualist. He will be awake to his danger, shunning temptation himself, and earnestly warning others of its bewitching power. Whatever the idol previously cherished, the converted man will not only resist evil, but will, so far as possible, place himself beyond the power of Satan. Again we would ask the followers of Christ, "Have you burned the magical books?"

May 25, 1882

Home Training--Its Importance and Results

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." It should be the object of every parent to secure to his children a well-balanced, symmetrical character. This is a work of no small magnitude and importance. It will require earnest thought and prayer, no less than patient, persevering effort. A right foundation must be laid, a framework, strong and firm, erected, and then day by day the work of building, polishing, perfecting, must go forward.

Upon the mother rests, to a great degree, the responsibility of the early training of her children. Did mothers but realize the importance of their mission, they would be much in secret prayer, presenting their children to Jesus, imploring his blessing upon them, and pleading for wisdom to discharge aright their sacred duties. Let the mother improve every opportunity to mold and fashion the disposition and habits of her children. Let her watch carefully the development of character, repressing traits that are too prominent, encouraging those that are deficient. Let her make her own life a pure and noble example to her precious charge.

The mother should enter upon her work with courage and energy, relying constantly upon divine aid in all her efforts. She should never rest satisfied until she sees in her children a gradual elevation of character, until they have a higher object in life than merely to seek their own pleasure. Children should be taught at home to exert every faculty of mind or body. Thus they gain an understanding of their own capabilities, and at the same time strengthen and develop every power by calling it into action.

Parents, your own home is the first field in which you are called to labor. The precious plants in the home garden demand your first care. To you it is appointed to watch for souls as they that must give account. Carefully consider your work, its nature, its bearing, and its results. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little you must instruct, warn, and counsel, ever remembering that your looks, words, and actions, have a direct bearing upon the future course of your dear ones. Your work is not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, or to chisel it from marble; but to impress upon a human soul the image of the Divine.

Mothers, will you not dispense with useless, unimportant labor for that which must perish with the using? Will you not seek to draw near to God, that his wisdom may guide and his grace assist you, in a work which will be as enduring as eternity? Aim to make your children perfect in character. Remember that such only can see God.

I speak the more freely and earnestly, because I know that many parents are neglecting their God-given work. They are themselves far from purity and holiness. They do not see the defects of their children as they would if their own eyes were beholding and admiring the perfection of Christ's character.

For Christ's sake, for the sake of your children, seek to conform your own life to the divine standard. Let nothing come in between you and your God. Be earnest, be patient and persevering, instant in season, out of season. Give your children intellectual culture, and moral training. Let their young hearts be fortified, with firm, pure principles. While you have the opportunity, lay the foundation for a noble manhood and womanhood. Your labor will be rewarded a thousand fold.

You must make the Bible your guide, if you would bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let the life and character

of Christ be presented as the pattern for them to copy. If they err, read to them what the Lord has said concerning similar sins. There is need of constant care and diligence in this work. One wrong trait tolerated by parents, uncorrected by teachers, may cause the whole character to become deformed and unbalanced. Teach the children that they must have a new heart; that new tastes must be created, new motives inspired. They must have help from Christ; they must become acquainted with the character of God as revealed in his word.

Family prayer receives too little interest and attention. In many cases, the morning and evening worship is little more than a mere form, a dull, monotonous repetition of set phrases in which the spirit of gratitude or the sense of need finds no expression. The Lord accepts not such service. But the petitions of a humble heart and contrite spirit he will not despise. The opening of our hearts to our Heavenly Father, the acknowledgment of our entire dependence, the expression of our wants, the homage of grateful love,-this is true prayer. When we come pleading the merits of Christ's blood, and trusting with implicit faith his promises, we shall secure the blessing of the Lord.

Redeem the precious hours worse than wasted in talking of your troubles, or gossiping over the faults of others. Seek earnestly to God for help, and you will become strong in his strength. You may have Christ as a guest in your home. Be not satisfied merely to bear the name of Christians. Be in truth followers of Jesus. Let your hearts be warmed with his love. Make him your friend, your helper, your counselor.

The most valuable rules for social and family intercourse, are to be found in the Bible. There is not only the best and purest standard of morality, but the most valuable code of politeness. Our Saviour's sermon on the mount contains instruction of priceless worth to old and young. It should be often read in the family circle, and its precious teachings exemplified in the daily

life. The golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," as well as the apostolic injunction, "In honor preferring one another," should be made the law of the family. Those who cherish the spirit of Christ, will manifest politeness at home, a spirit of benevolence, even in little things. They will be constantly seeking to make all around them happy, forgetting self in their kind attentions to others. This is the fruit which grows upon the Christian tree.

Few realize the influence of the little things of life, upon the development of character. Mothers, cease to spend your time and strength for that which is merely attractive to the eye, but which does not minister to comfort or real happiness, and you will cut off a large share of the cares and worries that make you nervous and irritable, impolite and unchristian. The precious moments heretofore given to needless labor should be devoted to beautifying the souls of your children, teaching them how they may obtain the inward adorning, that meek and quiet spirit which God accounts of great price.

If real politeness were practiced by all the followers of Christ, if obedience to the golden rule were made one of the corner-stones of Christian character, we would see fewer church-trials, less hardness and animosity between brethren. There would be no harsh, thoughtless words, no strife for the highest place. God's people will be tested. Every one will be exposed to the fierce fire of trial and temptation. If we would not be consumed as dross, we must have the love of God--the gold that has been tried--abiding in us. Now is the time to soften and subdue our rough, harsh traits of character. We must cherish kindness, forbearance, Christian integrity. Ungenerous criticism, hard speeches, questioning the motives of another, or magnifying his faults, open the door to Satan's temptations, and lead many away from God. The Holy Scriptures give us a safe and profitable rule for thought and conversation. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are

lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." If we would have our children practice kindness, courtesy, and love, we ourselves must set them the example.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind." It "thinketh no evil,"--another fruit borne on the tree of love. Our souls must be stayed upon God, imbued with his Spirit, if we learn these sacred lessons. Said the apostle, "Gird up the loins of your mind." If the thoughts are rightly disciplined, it will be a far less difficult task to control the feelings. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, will give us courage, hope and constancy. Shall we not obey the teachings of God's word? Shall we not make it our guide and counselor? Shall we not devote time and thought to its perusal? How can Christians neglect the book in which God has revealed his will to men? Our children need help to understand the Scriptures. They should become acquainted with the life and character of Jesus, that they may love him, and choose to obey him.

Parents and guardians must themselves maintain purity of heart and life, if they would have their children pure. They must give the needed instruction, and in addition to this, they must exercise unceasing watchfulness. Every day new thoughts are awakened in the minds of the young, new impressions made upon their hearts. The associations they form, the books they read, the habits they cherish--all must be guarded. The interests of your children, for this life and the next, are at stake.

"What now you do, you know not, But shall hereafter know, When the seeds your hands are sowing, To a ripened harvest grow."

When you stand before the great white throne, then your work will appear as it is. The books are opened, the record of every life made known. Many in that vast company are unprepared for the revelations made. Upon

the ears of some, the words will fall with startling distinctness, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting." To many parents the Judge will say in that day, "You had my word, plainly setting forth your duty. Why have you not obeyed its teachings? Knew ye not that it was the voice of God? Did I not bid you search the Scriptures, that you might not go astray? You have not only ruined your own souls, but by your pretensions to godliness you have misled many others. You have no part with me. Depart, depart!"

Another class stand pale and trembling, trusting in Christ, and yet oppressed with a sense of their own unworthiness. They hear with tears of joy and gratitude the Master's commendation. The days of incessant toil, of burden-bearing, and of fear and anguish, are forgotten, as that voice, sweeter than the music of angel harps, pronounces the words, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." There stand the host of the redeemed, the palm branch of victory in their hand, the crown upon their head. These are the ones who by faithful, earnest labor, have obtained a fitness for Heaven. The life-work performed on earth is acknowledged in the heavenly courts as a work well done.

With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. The days of hope and fear are ended. The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed.

Fathers, mothers, shall the voices of your children swell the song of gladness in that day?

May 25, 1882

At the Southern Camp-Meeting

Accompanied by W. C. White and Sister Mary A. Davis, I reached the grounds, Thursday, May 4, at 10 P. M. We found a neat, commodious tent, conveniently fitted up for us during our stay on the ground.

At the 9 o'clock meeting on Friday morning, I tried to present before our people the importance of the occasion. This holy convocation affords a precious opportunity to draw near to God. We should improve this privilege to search our own hearts, to compare our life and character with the divine law, and see what would hinder the Spirit of God from abiding with us. We should begin the meeting aright, that God may impart to us his blessing. We must carefully shun any violation of the Sabbath, making all needful preparation on Friday. We are not to consult our own pleasure or convenience, but to consider how we can best honor our Creator.

One day in the week God claims as his own; he has set it apart for religious worship, and has commanded man, "In it thou shalt not do any work." He will not grant his blessing to those who willfully trample upon his holy day. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The Lord gave the children of Israel explicit instructions prohibiting unnecessary labor upon the Sabbath. "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy

Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that which ye will seethe." Carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath has crept in among us as a people. Many have sought to please themselves rather than to honor God. If we would enjoy the blessing of the Lord, the Sabbath-day must be kept holy. All cooking should be done on Friday. On the campground, when the mornings are cool, hot water or hot gruel should be provided. In winter, at our homes, the food previously cooked should be warmed before it is eaten. In warm weather this is unnecessary. Divine mercy has directed that the sick and suffering should be cared for; the labor required to do this is a work of necessity, and no violation of the Sabbath.

At our annual gatherings we assemble to seek the Lord, to humble ourselves before him, to search diligently our own hearts, and to learn whether we are in the faith. How inconsistent for us, on such an occasion, to make eating and drinking our chief business. The one day in seven, which God has sanctified, should be observed in accordance with the commandment.

If we would preserve health and clearness of mind, we should eat temperately of plain, wholesome food. Those who have been accustomed to eat three meals would experience benefit from taking only two meals of simple food, prepared in a simple manner. If we had bread and water only, we should receive it with thankfulness; but we are not yet compelled to confine ourselves to this restricted diet. I am convinced, however, that very many would find it a great advantage to partake of a much plainer diet on the Sabbath than on the working days of the week.

The violation of the fourth commandment is not confined to the preparation of food. Many carelessly put off blacking their boots, and shaving, until after the beginning of the Sabbath. This should not be. If any neglect to do such work on a working day, they should have respect enough for God's holy time to let their beards remain unshaven, their boots rough

and brown, until the Sabbath is past. This might help their memory, and make them more careful to do their own work on the six working days.

At every camp-meeting, instruction should be given on all these points. How can we expect the special blessing of God, unless we shun with abhorrence the smallest sin. We should choose to suffer inconvenience, loss, or privation, rather than disregard the instructions of the Lord. Our lack of spirituality has been caused by our own course. We have gradually and insensibly chosen to please ourselves instead of seeking to honor God. Christian perfection consists in the complete harmony of our will with the will of our Creator. The inhabitants of Heaven find, in obeying the will of God, their joy and blessedness.

Let every family of Seventh-day Adventists honor God by a strict regard for his law. The children should be taught to respect the Sabbath. On the day of preparation, clothing should be put in proper repair, shoes polished, baths taken. Then around the family altar all should wait to welcome God's holy day, as they would watch for the coming of a dear friend.

To the praise of God, I would say that my words upon this point met a response in the hearts of the people. Our restaurant table was well furnished, yet free from extravagance. On Friday, all needful preparation was made, so that the least work was performed on the Sabbath that I have seen at camp-meeting for many years. The plain, wholesome food was eaten with a relish. Only two meals a day were prepared at the restaurant, and those in charge had an opportunity to attend nearly all, if not all, the meetings.

For two mornings I observed that while the five o'clock meetings were in session, our sisters were busily engaged in preparing breakfast, but after this I was gratified to see that nearly all were present in the tent. These meetings were intensely interesting. There was no great excitement, but a steady advance in spiritual strength. The people were hungry for the bread of

life. I have never attended a meeting where there seemed to be a stronger desire to learn, and to profit by the instruction received, than at this meeting. Oh, how much easier to labor where the people put forth earnest efforts to help themselves! Most encouraging testimonies were borne. I received precious blessings as I sought to present some practical points of truth in a few minutes' talk. And it was encouraging to learn from the testimonies borne, that our brethren and sisters gathered up these gleams of light, and purposed to make the best use of them.

Our meetings were a great blessing to myself as well as to the people. So deep was the affliction experienced in the loss of my husband, that I have felt I had received my death-wound. And as I saw our people drifting away from God, into the current of worldliness and pleasure-loving, and neglecting the light which God has permitted to shine upon them, it caused me far deeper grief than the death of my children and my husband. I had no rest day nor night.

I longed for peace. I longed for the burden to be lifted from me. I had in faithful testimony reproved, warned, and counseled. I could do no more. I was powerless to correct the existing evils. I had feared to attend the southern camp-meeting; I hardly dared test my strength by the labor which I should be called to perform; but from the first day I felt that the Lord was sustaining me. The everlasting arms were my support. When standing before the people, I was conscious of a strength not my own. I was but the instrument; God spoke to the people through clay. The burden which had weighed me down, was removed. Peace, like a river, flowed into my soul. I was cheerful, yea, joyful, in God. Thus has the Lord in mercy often helped me in time past, as I have labored for the salvation of souls. Peace and joy continued with me through the meeting. My wakeful hours at night were spent in communion with God. I felt that a risen Saviour pleads in our behalf, at the right hand of the Father. Because Jesus lives, we live also; he in us, and we in him.

On the Sabbath, we invited all those to come forward who desired to reach a higher standard in their religious life, and also those who desired, for the first time, to give their hearts to Jesus. A large part of our number at once responded, and we had a season of confession, prayer, and humiliation, before God. This meeting was timely; it seemed to break the spell of coldness and worldliness, and, from this point, there was steady advancement.

I was strengthened to speak to the people ten times during the meeting, besides several short talks of from fifteen to forty minutes, in the social gatherings. In addition to this, I wrote not less than one hundred pages, during the ten days we were upon the ground.

Of many interesting features of the meeting, I have not space here to write. The Bible-classes were productive of much good, in directing the minds of our people to the contemplation of Scripture truth. The meetings held specially for the youth and children, were among the best of the series. At all these yearly gatherings, special attention should be given to the spiritual interests of the young. Earnest labor should be put forth in their behalf.

On the last Sunday, I spoke in the five o'clock morning prayer-meeting upon the importance of cherishing faith. We must not allow our minds to be led into the channel of unbelief. If we talk of our doubts, we shall always find doubts to express. If we talk faith, we shall have faith, hope, and courage, in the Lord.

Sunday afternoon, I spoke to a good congregation on the subject of temperance, and in the evening continued the same subject, before a larger company. The Lord gave me strength and freedom. To his name be all the glory. After the exertion of this day, we slept about two hours, and then arose

to prepare for our homeward journey, leaving the camp-ground at three o'clock, Monday morning.

I returned from this meeting with improved health, increased courage, and renewed hope, and with the peace of Christ abiding in my heart. As I look back at my condition of health a few weeks since, and then see what the Lord has wrought for me, I can hardly find language to express my gratitude to God. In every emergency he has sustained me. I fear that my faith has not always been as strong as it should have been. The waves of affliction had almost gone over my head. But the Lord has again revealed himself in power to me, and I will cast all my care upon him who careth for me. To me this camp-meeting has been one of the best I ever attended.

Dear brethren and sisters who shall assemble in our camp-meetings, Jesus will do great things for us, if we will faithfully perform our duty. We must yield our will to the will of God. We must honor the Lord by obeying all his commandments, even in what we term little things. The truth, like its divine Author, is unchangeable in its requirements, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is not in harmony with the traditions of men, it does not conform to their opinions. The truth has ever brought a separation between God's people and the world. But if our position in former years, as a peculiar people, was approved of God, how does he regard our present position? Have we gained in spirituality since we departed from our early simplicity? "Ye are living epistles, known and read of all men." It was our Saviour's mission to "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." To his disciples he says, "Ye are the light of the world." And the apostle Paul declares, "We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men."

Every person will reveal in his life all the faith that he possesses. Our dress, our conversation, our house, our associates, all bear testimony to the world with greater force than words can have. "Faith is made perfect by works," "but faith without works is dead." We profess to be giving to the

world the last message of mercy. Is our daily life in harmony with our profession?

A form of godliness is popular in the world. A profession of Christianity costs little. There are but few who choose the way of self-denial, the way of the cross. A few, only, with the apostle, bear about in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus, desiring to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified. But God's blessing will attend the faithful few. He will make them channels of light to the world.

Those who conduct our camp-meetings should from the very beginning of each meeting, teach others how to work. This is wise generalship. The labor should not be permitted to come wholly upon the ministers, for this will deprive the people of the education which they need. They should feel that a responsibility rests upon them to engage in the meetings in the tents. There is work that all can do, and should do to help others, and in doing thus they help themselves. The reason why so many are dying spiritually is that they are slothful servants, do-nothings. Would they go to work, they would increase in spiritual strength.

The work before us is great. Probation is soon to close. The wrath of God is about to be poured upon the earth. The sweet voice of mercy will soon cease to be heard. Every servant of the True Shepherd will realize the perils of this time, and will labor earnestly to bring souls to Christ. We must not depend on theory. The most conclusive arguments are not sufficient in themselves. Our only hope is to reach the people through God. The Bible is the sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed; but those who labor in word and doctrine must have a vital connection with God, a deep and living experience. While clear and convincing arguments appeal to the understanding, the Spirit of God abiding in the heart of the minister, must speak to the hearts of those who hear.

As a rule, ministers are too formal. We must show the people that we are in earnest, not merely in the desk, but out of the desk; that we fully and solemnly believe the truths we preach. If we wish them to feel, we must feel ourselves. Some ministers are adopting the customs of other churches, copying their habits and manner of labor. With many, pulpit preaching is mechanical, a mere trade. They do not kindle their taper at the divine altar. They do not have the unction from on high. The shepherds of the flock should be earnest, vigilant, and active now; the end is nearer than when we first believed. The people have a right to ask, Watchman, what of the night? Satan would have them sleep until the time for the salvation of sinners is past. Let the trumpet give a certain sound.

Let not our camp-meetings be occasions for visiting and feasting. They should be occasions of heart-searching, deep humiliation, earnest, agonizing prayer. The judgments of God are about to fall upon the unsheltered head of the sinner. We have no time now to seek worldly honor, no time to exalt self, to indulge pride or ambition. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence. A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people." How shall we stand in that day when heaven and earth shall hear the voice of God calling to judgment?

When each thought, and word, and motive, is revealed as it stands registered in the books of Heaven, when every soul shall be tried by the one perfect standard, the law of God, how will our case stand? When God makes inquisition for the blood of souls, when the undershepherds gather with their flocks around the great white throne, where will those stand with whom we have been associated, whom we have influenced? In that day, may it be seen that we have done well the work committed to our hands. May our voices swell the glad chorus.

June 8, 1882

Skepticism--Its Cause and Cure

The present age is marked by an alarming prevalence of infidel and atheistic tendencies. To successfully resist the tide of evil, God's people should give diligent heed to the instruction and counsel of his word. Its precious examples of faith, its warnings against unbelief, will, if rightly heeded, arm us with divine power to repel the attacks of Satan.

The healing of the impotent man at Bethesda has a lesson of priceless worth to every Christian, a lesson of solemn and fearful import to the unbelieving and the skeptical. As the paralytic lay beside the pool, helpless and well-nigh hopeless, Jesus drew near and asked, in tones of pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Be made whole!--this had been the burden of his desire and prayers for long, weary years. With trembling eagerness he told the story of his efforts and disappointments. No friend was at hand to bear him with sturdy arm into the healing fountain. His agonizing appeals for help fell unheeded; all around him were those who sought for their own loved ones the coveted boon. When at the troubling of the waters he painfully sought to reach the pool, another would be hurried down before him.

Jesus looked upon the sufferer, and said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." There was no assurance of divine help, no manifestation of miraculous power. What marvel, had the man made answer, "It is impossible! How can I be expected now to use my limbs, that have not obeyed my will for thirty-eight years?" From a merely human stand-point, such reasoning would appear consistent. The sufferer might have given place to doubt, and thus have permitted that God-given opportunity to pass unimproved. But no; without a question, he seized his only chance. As he attempted to do what Christ had commanded, strength and vigor came; he

was made whole.

Would you, doubting reader, receive the blessing of the Lord? Cease to question his word and distrust his promises. Obey the Saviour's bidding, and you will receive strength. If you hesitate, to enter into a discussion with Satan, or to consider the difficulties and improbabilities, your opportunity will pass, perhaps never to return.

The miracle at Bethesda should have convinced all beholders that Jesus is the Son of God. But the Jews desired only a pretext for unbelief, and it was not hard to find what they sought. At Christ's command, the paralytic had borne away the simple mat on which he had lain; and now Satan, ever ready with his insinuations, suggested that this act might be construed into a violation of the Sabbath. The Jews had perverted this sacred rest-day from its original design by their customs and traditions, making its observance a burden rather than a blessing. It was hoped that a controversy on this point would destroy the faith inspired in some hearts by our Saviour's act of healing.

As the restored one went on his way with quick, elastic step, his pulses bounding with the vigor of renewed health, his countenance glowing with hope and joy, he was met by the Pharisees, who told him, with an air of great sanctity, that it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. There was no rejoicing at the deliverance of that long-imprisoned captive, no grateful praise that One was among them who could heal all manner of disease. Their traditions had been disregarded, and this closed their eyes to all the evidence of divine power.

Bigoted and self-righteous, they would not admit that they could have misapprehended the true design of the Sabbath. Instead of criticising themselves, they chose to condemn Christ. We meet with men of the same spirit today, who are blinded by error, and yet flatter themselves that they are

right, and all who differ from them are in the wrong.

The man on whom the miracle had been wrought, entered into no controversy with his accusers. He simply answered, "He that had power to make me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." The Pharisees, pretending ignorance, still urged, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?" It was their policy to question and cavil, that they might perplex and entangle him, and lead him to doubt, or else cast discredit upon his testimony.

When the Jews were informed that it was Jesus of Nazareth who had performed the miracle of healing, they openly sought to put him to death, "because he had done these things on the Sabbath day." These pretentious formalists were so full of zeal for their own traditions, that to sustain them they were ready to violate the law of God!

To their charges, Jesus replied calmly, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Through the operations of nature, and by the ministration of angels, God is constantly working to sustain and bless humanity. I am working in perfect harmony with my father." This answer furnished another pretext to condemn him. Murder was in their hearts, and they waited only for a plausible excuse to take his life. But Jesus steadily continues to assert his true position. "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do. Whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that he himself doeth."

Ample evidence had been presented, on which to base their faith in Christ, yet all who desired to doubt and cavil found opportunity. And what was the occasion of that murderous outbreak against Christ? A poor sufferer had been made whole! No better excuse have the cavers of our time. God works through whom he will, by ways and means of his own choosing; but there are ever some to act the part of the criticising Pharisees. They cannot

deny that the power of God is manifested through his servants; but still, in some points, the work does not accord with their ideas. If with their finite judgment they can find but the semblance of an excuse, they are free to challenge and disbelieve.

In the carrying forward of his work in the earth, and the manifestation of his power, God does not consult the will or imperfect judgment of men. His plans and methods may be directly opposite to those approved by human wisdom. If men would criticise and condemn the Saviour's work, when they had such evidence of divine power as the miracle at Bethesda, can we wonder that they criticise and condemn those through whom he works today? Unbelief will always find an excuse for its existence. God designs that men shall believe, not because there is no possibility of doubt, but because there is abundant evidence for faith. Christ bade the Pharisees, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Jewish teachers professed to be expounders of God's word; but had they prayerfully studied and rightly understood its teachings, they would not have substituted their own traditions for the law of Jehovah.

The Saviour continued, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?" Those who begin by doubting and disbelieving the Old Testament, will come to doubt and disbelieve the New. We cannot afford to slight or neglect any of the provisions of God's grace, any of the manifestations of his Spirit. Those who do not gratefully accept and improve the warnings, counsel, or reproofs of divine mercy, will little by little come to regard them with indifference. They feel that it is optional with themselves to receive or reject the light from Heaven. Like the Jews in Christ's day, they reject the clearest evidence, because they find some pretext for doubt, something to criticise.

Thus are many in their pride and self-conceit placing themselves where no divine influence can reach them. By persistently cherishing doubt, they lose all power to believe. The Holy Spirit is slighted until its influence is no longer felt. Thus is cut off the means by which God has chosen to communicate with men. He has in reserve no more potent agency through which to reach them. In their own estimation, they are wiser than their Creator. Light has become darkness to them, and how great is that darkness!

The word of God is looked upon with distrust for the same reason as was its Author--because it reproves and condemns sin. Those who are unwilling to obey its requirements, endeavor to overthrow its authority. Many read the Bible, or listen to its words as presented from the sacred desk, merely to find fault with the Scriptures or with the sermon. Not a few become infidels, simply through their willful neglect of duty. Others are led to adopt skeptical principles from pride or indolence. They do not love close application. They will not put forth the effort necessary to accomplish anything noble or really useful. But they desire to be thought sharp and critical, to secure a reputation for superior wisdom. Turning their attention to the Bible, they find much which the finite mind, unenlightened by the wisdom from above, is powerless to comprehend, and they begin to doubt and cavil.

The indolent man invites Satan's temptations, while those who are actively engaged in some useful calling have neither time nor inclination to cherish doubts or indulge repining. Adam in holy Eden was commanded to labor, and he found in this employment one of the greatest blessings of his sinless existence. If the would-be skeptics of our time would apply themselves to honest, useful toil, they would enjoy improved spiritual as well as physical health.

Many consider it a virtue to doubt; and they delight in finding something in the Scriptures to puzzle the minds of others. They do not realize that they are thus entangling themselves in the snare of the fowler. There is a

bewitching power in skepticism. Unbelief and stubbornness usually go hand in hand. When a man has once yielded to this deception of Satan, it will be found well-nigh impossible to break the spell.

There are some who at first criticise and reason on the wrong side, from a mere love for controversy. But having openly expressed unbelief, they feel that they must maintain their position. Thus they unite with the ungodly, and close to themselves the gates of Paradise.

We encounter skeptics not only in the world, but in the church. When the people of God assemble to worship him, there Satan intrudes his presence. Wherever there is a religious interest, there the poor souls that have been entangled in his snare may be found zealously working for their master. On almost every camp-ground may be seen little groups gathered here and there, eagerly listening to what some doubter or infidel has to say. Here the skeptic is in his element. He delights to talk. He has studied the Bible with the sole object of finding passages which he can use to trouble and perplex other minds. Some Christians feel it their duty to defend the word of God, and they enter into controversy with the skeptic--rather with Satan and his angels, who speak through him. This is just what the Prince of darkness and his agents desire. The infidel has nothing to lose, however the discussion may terminate; but the Christian suffers an immeasurable loss when his confidence in God's word is lessened.

These scoffers at sacred things may utter many sharp, witty, apt sayings, but "the poison of asps is under their lips." The father of lies lends them his power and his Satanic cunning. Christians should avoid controversy with these men. We may feel that we are in no danger from their influence, but others will gather about to listen, and some soul may be led into the path of doubt and skepticism. Treat them kindly, but give them no opportunity to parade their infidelity. Give no place for Satan to insinuate his presence. Do not take one step on the enemy's ground.

God would have his people shun the society of infidels, atheists, and spiritualists. He has warned us of their character and their fate: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off."

Satan will endeavor to destroy the faith of every follower of Christ. He comes to some as a roaring lion. To others he appears in angel garments, his voice subdued to the gentlest whisper. Our only safety is to cling with unwavering faith to the word of God, and promptly and resolutely to shun whatever that word condemns, it matters not how pleasing its appearance, or how specious its pretenses.

There are some professed Christians who are always weak, always desponding. They permit themselves to be constantly harassed by doubts, and seem to think they must always remain in this condition. These persons might be free, did they but realize their danger, and put forth an effort to escape from the snare of Satan. Let them cease to give utterance to their doubts. Every unbelieving word strengthens their own tendency to doubt, and plants the evil seed in the minds of others. Whatever we choose to sow, that we must reap. If the farmer sows wheat, he will reap wheat. If he sows thistle seed, his harvest will consist only of thistles.

Light and darkness, truth and error, are before us. We are free to choose. God will never remove all excuse for unbelief. Those who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon, will find them close at hand. It is far easier to suggest doubts than to inspire faith. Because the natural heart is at enmity with God, a greater effort is required to believe than to doubt the word of the Most High. And Satan himself opposes everything that would strengthen faith.

There is one course which all must pursue who honestly desire to be freed from doubts. They are cherishing some indulgence forbidden by the word of God, or neglecting some duty enjoined therein. Let those who complain that they walk in darkness, give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light. Let them do every duty which has been made plain to their understanding, and they will be enabled to understand and perform those of which they are now in doubt. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

June 15, 1882

"The Fear of the Lord Tendeth to Life"

"Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The opinion is widely held, that spirituality and devotion to God are detrimental to health. While this conclusion is radically false, it is not without apparent foundation. Many who profess to be Christians are ever walking under a cloud. They seem to think it a virtue to complain of depression of spirits, great trials, and severe conflicts.

But these persons do not correctly represent the religion of the Bible. So far from being antagonistic to health and happiness, the fear of the Lord lies at the foundation of all real prosperity. "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil, and do good, seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

The consciousness of right-doing, is the best medicine for diseased bodies and minds. He who is at peace with God has secured the most important requisite to health. The blessing of the Lord is life to the receiver. The assurance that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and his ear open to our prayer, is a never-failing source of satisfaction. To know that we have an all-wise friend, to whom we can confide all the secrets of the soul, is a privilege which words can never express.

The gloom and despondency supposed to be caused by obedience to

God's moral law, is often attributable to disregard of his physical laws. Those whose moral faculties are beclouded by disease, are not the ones to rightly represent the Christian life, to show forth the joys of salvation, or the beauties of holiness. They are too often in the fire of fanaticism, or the water of cold indifference or stolid gloom.

The Saviour of mankind declared, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life;" and he bade his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." It is the duty of every Christian to follow closely the example of Christ; to cultivate peace and hope and joy, which will be manifested in unfeigned cheerfulness, and habitual serenity. Thus may they shed light upon all around them, instead of casting the dark shadow of discouragement and gloom.

Many are constantly craving excitement and diversion. They are restless and dissatisfied when not absorbed in mirth, frivolity, and pleasure-seeking. These persons may make a profession of religion, but they are deceiving their own souls. They do not possess the genuine article. Their life is not hid with Christ in God. They do not find in Jesus their joy and peace.

The vain and trifling amusements of the world may divert for a time, but when the excitement is past, when the mind reflects, and conscience arouses and makes her voice heard, then the pleasure-seeker feels how powerless are his pursuits to give health to the body or peace to the soul.

Undue excitement is invariably followed by corresponding depression. Transgression yields only disappointment and remorse. Those who walk in the path of wisdom and holiness, will not be troubled with vain regrets for their misspent hours; they will not need to plunge into the round of gayety or dissipation to banish gloomy or harassing thoughts. Useful, active labor that quickens the circulation and gives strength to the muscles, will also give tone

and vigor to the mind, and will prove a most effective agent in the restoration of health.

The religion of Christ is first pure, then peaceable, full of righteousness and good fruits. Such religion is needed in the world today. Many young persons who profess to be followers of Christ, are indulging in romantic sentimentalism which is deteriorating in its influence, and dangerous in its tendency. They indulge day-dreaming and castle-building, and thus squander their precious hours, and unfit themselves for usefulness.

With great self-complacency many flatter themselves that if circumstances were only favorable they would do some great and good work. They do not view things from a correct stand-point. They have lived in an imaginary world, and have been imaginary martyrs, and imaginary Christians. Their character is destitute of sterling virtue, and real stamina.

Young ladies of this class sometimes imagine that they possess exquisite delicacy and refinement of character, and a keenly sensitive nature, which must receive sympathy and encouragement from all around them. They put on an appearance of langour and indolent ease, and imagine that they are not appreciated. These sickly fancies are an injury to themselves and to others.

Despondent feelings are frequently the result of undue leisure. Idleness gives time to brood over imaginary sorrows. Many who have no real trials or hardships in the present, are sure to borrow them from the future. If these persons would seek to lighten the burdens of others, they would forget their own. Energetic labor that would call into action both the mental and physical powers, would prove an inestimable blessing to mind and body.

Invalids should not allow themselves to sink down into a state of inaction. This is highly detrimental to health. The power of the will must be asserted; aversion to active exercise, and the dread of all responsibility must

be conquered. They can never recover health, unless they shake off this listless, dreamy condition of mind, and arouse themselves to action.

There is much deception practiced under the cover of religion. Passion controls the minds of many who flatter themselves that they have reached high spiritual attainments. Their experience consists of idle fancies and love-sick sentimentalism, rather than of purity and true goodness.

The mind should be trained to look away from self, to dwell upon themes which are elevated and ennobling. Let not the precious hours of life be wasted in dreaming of some great work to be performed in the future, while the little duties of the present are neglected.

The heart must be in the work or it will drag heavily; whatever it may be. The Lord tests our ability by giving us small duties to perform. If we turn from these with contempt or dissatisfaction, no more will be intrusted to us. If we take hold of them with cheerfulness, and perform them well, greater responsibilities will be committed to our trust.

Talents have been committed to us, not to be squandered, but to be put out to the exchangers, that at the Master's coming he may receive his own with usury. These talents have not been unjustly distributed. God has dispensed his sacred trusts according to the known ability of his servants. "To every man his work."

As he bestows his gifts upon each, he expects from each a corresponding return. If we faithfully perform our duty, the amount intrusted to us will be increased, be it large or small. All who thus prove their fidelity, will be accounted as wise stewards, and will be intrusted with the true riches, even the gift of everlasting life.

"No man liveth to himself." True happiness will not be found by those

who live merely for self-gratification. He who would secure the highest, and most satisfactory enjoyment of this life, as well as a right hold upon the future immortal life, must make it his highest aim to glorify God, and do good to his fellow-men. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.

"Pure religion before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." True religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, and sanctifies the judgment. It makes the soul a partaker of the purity of Heaven, brings angels near, and separates more and more from the spirit and influence of the world.

It reveals to man an infinite and all-wise Protector, a Redeemer from sin, a Comforter in sorrow, a Light in darkness, a Guide in obscurity. It invites man to become a son of God, an heir of Heaven. It fills the soul with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

This precious gift of Heaven is freely offered to all who will accept it. Our brightest hopes, our loftiest aspirations can ask nothing more complete, more noble, more exalted. The tokens of infinite love, the pleadings of divine mercy, are ever wooing us to turn to God. "Why do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live."

June 22, 1882

The Schools of the Prophets

The institutions of human society find their best models in the word of God. For those of instruction in particular, there is no lack of both precept and example. Lessons of great profit, even in this age of educational progress, may be found in the history of God's ancient people.

The Lord reserved to himself the education and instruction of Israel. His care was not restricted to their religious interests. Whatever affected their mental or physical well-being, became also an object of divine solicitude, and came within the province of divine law.

God commanded the Hebrews to teach their children his requirements, and to make them acquainted with all his dealings with their people. The home and the school were one. In the place of stranger lips the loving hearts of the father and mother were to give instruction to their children. Thoughts of God were associated with all the events of daily life in the home dwelling. The mighty works of God in the deliverance of his people were recounted with eloquence and reverential awe. The great truths of God's providence, and of the future life, were impressed on the young mind. It became acquainted with the true, the good, the beautiful.

By the use of figures and symbols, the lessons given were illustrated, and thus more firmly fixed in the memory. Through this animated imagery the child was, almost from infancy, initiated into the mysteries, the wisdom, and the hopes of his fathers, and guided in a way of thinking and feeling and anticipating, that reached beyond things seen and transitory, to the unseen and eternal.

From this education many a youth of Israel came forth vigorous in body and in mind, quick to perceive and strong to act, the heart prepared like good ground for the growth of the precious seed, the mind trained to see God in the words of revelation and the scenes of nature. The stars of heaven, the trees and flowers of the field, the lofty mountains, the babbling brooks, all spoke to him, and the voices of the prophets, heard throughout the land, met a response in his heart.

Such was the training of Moses in that lowly cabin home in Goshen; of Samuel, by the faithful Hannah; of David, in the hill-dwelling at Bethlehem; of Daniel, before the scenes of the captivity separated him from the home of his fathers. Such, too, was the early life of Christ, in the humble home at Nazareth; such the training by which the child Timothy learned from the lips of his "mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois," the truths of the Holy Writ.

Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the "school of the prophets." If a youth was eager to obtain a better knowledge of the Scriptures, to search deeper into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, this school was open to him.

These institutions were missionary seminaries, designed to maintain a higher standard of morals and religion at a period when the deplorable condition of degeneracy and corruption called loudly for such reformatory effort. The aged Eli had dishonored the Lord by his neglect to restrain and control his children. These degenerate sons called license liberty, and under the cover of their holy office practiced the most debasing sins. The character of these men as leaders of the nation, indicates clearly the state of things existing at that time. Had Eli restrained his excessive fondness for his sons, and performed his duty to them as a father and a priest, theirs had been a nobler life and a happier fate. They might have been an honor to their father,

the crown of the nation, and the guardians of the sanctuary. But their crimes had polluted the ordinances of the Lord, and corrupted his people. To prevent the moral degeneracy from becoming universal, he resorted to a speedy and powerful remedy. Divine justice destroyed the father and the sons.

Then amid the moral darkness there shone forth once more the light of purity and holiness and truth. The chosen leader was a youthful Levite, whose infant years had been guarded by a faithful, praying mother, whose boyhood had been unsullied by the surrounding corruption. Samuel was now invested by the God of Israel with the threefold office of judge, prophet and priest. Placing one hand in the hand of Christ, and with the other taking the helm of the nation, he holds it with such wisdom and firmness as to preserve Israel from destruction.

By Samuel, the schools of the prophets were established, to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, and to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth. These schools proved a great blessing to Israel, promoting that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and furnishing it with men qualified to act, in the fear of God, as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God and studied his word and his works, they were imbued with wisdom from above, as well as richly endowed with intellectual treasures. The instructors were men not only well versed in divine truth, but those who had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of his spirit. They enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and piety.

In Samuel's day there were two of these schools--one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim, where the ark then was. Two more were added in Elijah's time, at Jericho and Bethel, and others were afterward established at Samaria and Gilgal.

The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labor as husbandmen and mechanics. In Israel this was not considered strange or degrading; indeed it was regarded a crime to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. In obedience to the command of God, every child was taught some trade, even though he was to be educated for holy office. Many of the religious teachers supported themselves by manual labor. Even so late as the time of Christ, it was not considered anything degradable that Paul and Aquila earned livelihood by their labor as tent-makers.

The chief subjects of study in these schools were, the law of God with the instructions given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. The manner of instruction was far different from that in the theological schools of the present day, from which many students graduate with less real knowledge of God and religious truth than when they entered. In those schools of olden time, it was the grand object of all study to learn the will of God and the duties of his people. In the records of sacred history, were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. From the events of the past were drawn lessons of instruction for the future. The great truths set forth by the types and shadows were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system, the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world.

The Hebrew language was cultivated as the most sacred tongue in the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of his Spirit. Sanctified intellects brought forth from the treasure-house of God, things new and old.

The Spirit of God was signally manifested in these seminaries, in prophecy and sacred song. Upon one occasion a company of prophets met Saul at the "hill of God," not far from Gibeah, with psaltery and tabret, pipe

and harp. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, these men were prophesying and praising God with the music of instruments and the voice of song. The Spirit of the Lord and his converting power came also upon Saul, and he prophesied with them.

The art of sacred melody was diligently cultivated in those schools of the prophets. No frivolous waltz was heard, nor flippant song that should extol man and divert the attention from God; but sacred, solemn psalms of praise to the Creator, exalting his name and recounting his wondrous works. Thus music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which was pure and noble and elevating, and to awaken in the soul, devotion and gratitude to God.

How different the objects to which musical talent is often devoted! How many who profess this gift employ it to honor and exalt self, instead of glorifying God! A love for music leads the unwary to unite with world-lovers in pleasure gatherings where God has forbidden his children to go. Thus that which is a great blessing when rightly used, becomes one of Satan's most successful agencies to allure the mind from God and from eternal things.

Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above. We should endeavor in our songs of praise to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. I have often been pained to hear untrained voices, pitched to the highest key, literally shrieking the sacred words of some hymn of praise. How inappropriate those sharp, rasping voices for the solemn, joyous worship of God. I long to stop my ears, or flee from the place, and I rejoice when the painful exercise is ended.

Those who make singing a part of divine worship should select hymns with music appropriate to the occasion, not funeral notes, but cheerful yet solemn melodies. The voice can and should be modulated, softened, and subdued.

The proper training of the voice should be regarded as an important part of education. The singer should train himself to utter every word distinctly. It should be remembered that singing as a part of religious service is as much an act of worship as is the prayer. The heart must feel the spirit of the words, to give them right expression. Parents should not employ to instruct their children, a teacher of music who has no reverence for sacred things, nor should they allow them to learn and practice dance songs and frivolous music.

How wide the difference, between the schools of ancient times, under the supervision of God himself, and our modern institutions of learning. Few schools are to be found that are not governed by the maxims and customs of the world. There are few in which a Christian parent's love for his children will not meet with bitter disappointment.

In what consists the superior excellence of our systems of education? Is it the classical literature which is crowded into our sons? Is it in the ornamental accomplishments which our daughters obtain at the sacrifice of health or mental strength? Is it in the fact that modern instruction is so generally separated from the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation? Does the chief excellence of popular education consist in treating the individual branches of study, apart from that deeper investigation which involves the searching of the Scriptures, and a knowledge of God and the future life? Does it consist in imbuing the minds of the young with heathenish conceptions of liberty, morality, and justice? Is it safe to trust our youth to the guidance of those blind teachers who study the sacred oracles with far less interest than they manifest in the classical authors of ancient Greece and Rome?

"Education," remarks a writer, "is becoming a system of seduction." The most bitter feelings, the most ungovernable passions, are excited by the

course of unwise and ungodly teachers. There is a deplorable lack of proper restraint and judicious discipline. The minds of the young are easily excited, and drink in insubordination like water.

The existing ignorance of God's word, among a people professedly Christian, is alarming. The youth in our public schools, have been robbed of the blessings of holy things. Superficial talk, mere sentimentalism, passes for instruction in morals and religion; but it lacks the vital characteristics of real godliness. The justice and mercy of God, the beauty of holiness, and the sure reward of right-doing; the heinous character of sin, and the certainty of punishment,--these great truths are not impressed upon the minds of the young.

Skepticism and infidelity, under some pleasing disguise, or as a covert insinuation, too often find their way into school books. In some instances, the most pernicious principles have been inculcated by teachers. Evil associates are teaching the youth lessons of crime, dissipation, and licentiousness that are horrible to contemplate. Many of our public schools are hot-beds of vice.

How can our youth be shielded from these contaminating influences? There must be schools established upon the principles, and controlled by the precepts, of God's word. Another spirit must be in our schools, to animate and sanctify every branch of education. Divine co-operation must be fervently sought. And we shall not seek in vain. The promises of God's word are ours. We may expect the presence of the heavenly Teacher. We may see the Spirit of the Lord diffused as in the schools of the prophets, and every object partake of a divine consecration. Science will then be, as she was to Daniel, the handmaid of religion; and every effort, from first to last, will tend to the salvation of man, soul, body, and spirit, and the glory of God through Christ.

June 29, 1882

Importance of Physical Training

The present age is one of unparalleled interest in education. The wide diffusion of knowledge through the agency of the press, placing the means for self-culture within the reach of all, has awakened a general desire for mental improvement.

While we acknowledge with gratitude our increased facilities, we should not close our eyes to the defects in the present system of education. In the eager effort to secure intellectual culture, physical as well as moral training has been neglected. Many youth come forth from institutions of learning with morals debased, and physical powers enfeebled; with no knowledge of practical life, and little strength to perform its duties.

As I have seen these evils, I have inquired, Must our sons and daughters become moral and physical weaklings, in order to obtain an education in the schools? This should not be; it need not be, if teachers and students will but be true to the laws of nature, which are also the laws of God. All the powers of mind and body should be called into active exercise, that the youth may become strong, well-balanced men and women.

Many students are in so great haste to complete their education that they are not thorough in anything which they undertake. Few have sufficient courage and self-control to act from principle. Most students fail to understand the true object of education, and hence fail to take such a course as to secure this object. They apply themselves to the study of mathematics or the languages, while they neglect a study far more essential to the happiness and success of life. Many who can explore the depths of the earth with the geologist, or traverse the heavens with the astronomer, show not the

slightest interest in the wonderful mechanism of their own bodies. Others can tell just how many bones there are in the human frame, and correctly describe every organ of the body, and yet they are as ignorant of the laws of health, and the cure of disease, as though life were controlled by blind fate, instead of definite and unvarying law.

Physical health lies at the very foundation of all the student's ambitions and his hopes. Hence the pre-eminent importance of gaining a knowledge of those laws by which health is secured and preserved. Every youth should learn how to regulate his dietetic habits,--what to eat, when to eat, and how to eat. He should learn how many hours to give to study, and how much time to spend in physical exercise. The human body may be compared to nicely-adjusted machinery, which needs care to keep it in running order. One part should not be subjected to constant wear and pressure, while another part is rusting from inaction. While the mind is tasked, the muscles also should have their proportion of exercise.

The proper regulation of his habits of eating, sleeping, study, and exercise, is a duty which every student owes to himself, to society, and to God. The education which will make the young a blessing to the world, is that which enables them to attain a true and noble manhood or womanhood. That student who is studying hard, sleeping little, exercising little, and eating irregularly of an improper or inferior quality of food, is obtaining mental training at the expense of health and morals, of spirituality, and, it may be, of life.

The young naturally desire activity, and if they find no legitimate scope for their pent-up energies after the confinement of the school-room, they become restless and impatient of control, and thus are led to engage in the rude, unmanly sports that disgrace so many schools and colleges, and even to plunge into scenes of actual dissipation. Many of the youth who left their homes innocent, are corrupted by their associations at school.

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Every institution of learning should make provision for the study and practice of agriculture and the mechanic arts. Competent teachers should be employed to instruct the youth in the various industrial pursuits, as well as in the several branches of study. While a part of each day is devoted to mental improvement, let a stated portion be given to physical labor, and a suitable time to devotional exercises and the study of the Scriptures.

This training would encourage habits of self-reliance, firmness, and decision. Graduates of such institutions would be prepared to engage successfully in the practical duties of life. They would have courage and perseverance to surmount obstacles, and firmness of principle that would not yield to evil influences.

If the youth can have but a one-sided education, which is of the greatest importance, the study of the sciences, with all the disadvantages to health and morals, or a thorough training in practical duties, with sound morals and good physical development? We unhesitatingly say, the latter. But with proper effort both may, in most cases, be secured.

Those who combine useful labor with study have no need of gymnastic exercises. And work performed in the open air is ten-fold more beneficial to health than in-door labor. Both the mechanic and the farmer have physical exercise, yet the farmer is the healthier of the two. Nothing short of nature's invigorating air and sunshine will fully meet the demands of the system. The

tiller of the soil finds in his labor all the movements that were ever practiced in the gymnasium. His movement-room is the open fields. The canopy of heaven is its roof, the solid earth its floor. Here he plows and hoes, sows and reaps. Watch him, as in "haying time" he mows and rakes, pitches and tumbles, lifts and loads, throws off, treads down, and stows away. These various movements call into action the bones, joints, muscles, sinews, and nerves of the body. His vigorous exercise causes full, deep, strong inspirations and exhalations, which expand the lungs and purify the blood, sending the warm current of life bounding through arteries and veins. A farmer who is temperate in all his habits, usually enjoys health. His work is pleasant to him. He has a good appetite. He sleeps well, and may be happy.

Contrast the condition of the active farmer with that of the student who neglects physical exercise. He sits in a close room, bending over his desk or table, his chest contracted, his lungs crowded. He cannot take full, deep inspirations. His brain is tasked to the utmost, while his body is as inactive as though he had no particular use for it. His blood moves sluggishly through the system. His feet are cold, his head hot. How can such a person have health?

Let the student take regular exercise that will cause him to breathe deep and full, taking into his lungs the pure invigorating air of heaven, and he will be a new being. It is not hard study that is destroying the health of students, so much as it is their disregard of nature's laws.

In institutions of learning, experienced teachers should be employed to instruct young ladies in the mysteries of the kitchen. A knowledge of domestic duties is beyond price to every woman. There are families without number whose happiness is wrecked by the inefficiency of the wife and mother. It is not so important that our daughters learn painting, fancy work, music, or even "cube root," or the figures of rhetoric, as that they learn how to cut, make, and mend their own clothing, or to prepare food in a

wholesome and palatable manner. When a little girl is nine or ten years old, she should be required to take her regular share in household duties, as she is able, and should be held responsible for the manner in which she does her work. That was a wise father, who, when asked what he intended to do with his daughters, replied, "I intend to apprentice them to their excellent mother, that they may learn the art of improving time, and be fitted to become wives and mothers, heads of families, and useful members of society."

Washing clothes upon the old-fashioned rubbing-board, sweeping, dusting, and a variety of other duties in the kitchen and the garden, will be valuable exercise for young ladies. Such useful labor will supply the place of croquet, archery, dancing, and other amusements which benefit no one.

Many ladies, accounted well-educated, having graduated with honors at some institution of learning, are shamefully ignorant of the practical duties of life. They are destitute of the qualifications necessary for the proper regulation of the family, and hence essential to its happiness. They may talk of woman's elevated sphere, and of her rights, yet they themselves fall far below the true sphere of woman. It is the right of every daughter of Eve to have a thorough knowledge of household duties, to receive training in every department of domestic labor. Every young lady should be so educated that if called to fill the position of wife and mother, she may preside as a queen in her own domain. She should be fully competent to guide and instruct her children and to direct her servants, or, if need be, to minister with her own hands to the wants of her household. It is her right to understand the mechanism of the human body and the principles of hygiene, the matters of diet and dress, labor and recreation, and countless others that intimately concern the well-being of her household. It is her right to obtain such a knowledge of the best methods of treating disease that she can care for her children in sickness, instead of leaving her precious treasures in the hands of stranger nurses and physicians.

The idea that ignorance of useful employment is an essential characteristic of the true gentleman or lady, is contrary to the design of God in the creation of man. Idleness is a sin, and ignorance of common duties is the result of folly, which after-life will give ample occasion to bitterly regret.

Those who make it their rule of life to serve and honor God will give heed to the apostle's injunction, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Such students will preserve their integrity in the face of temptation, and will come from school with well-developed intellects, and with health of body and health of soul.

July 13, 1882

Israel Desire a King

The first form of government over men was established by God himself, and acknowledged him as the only Sovereign. He made known his will by written commands and revelations, by messages to his chosen servants, by dreams, by signs, and wonders. He would have continued to be their king, had they been content with his paternal care.

At the beginning, the father was constituted priest and magistrate of his own family. Then came the patriarchal rule, which was like that of the family, but extended over a greater number. When Israel became a distinct people, the twelve tribes, springing from the twelve sons of Jacob, had each a leader. These leaders, or elders, were assembled whenever any matter that pertained to the general interest was to be settled. The high priest was the visible representative of Christ, the Redeemer of his people. When the Hebrews settled in Canaan, judges were appointed, who resembled governors. These rulers were invested with authority to declare war and proclaim peace for the nation; but God was still the recognized king of Israel, and he continued to reveal his will to these chosen leaders, and to manifest through them his power.

But increase of population, and intercourse with other nations, brought a change. The Israelites adopted many of the customs of their heathen neighbors, and thus sacrificed to a great degree, their own peculiar, holy character. Their worship became less earnest and sincere. Gradually they lost their reverence for God, and ceased to prize the high honor of being his chosen people. Dazzled by the pomp and display of heathen monarchs, they tired of their own simplicity, and desired to be freed from the rule of their Divine Sovereign. As they departed from the Lord, the different tribes

became envious and jealous of one another. Strife and dissensions increased, until it was vainly imagined that the installation of a king was the only means by which harmony could be restored.

The government of Israel had never been conducted with so great wisdom and success as under Samuel's sole administration. In no previous ruler had the people reposed so implicit confidence. He had labored with untiring and disinterested zeal for the highest good of the nation. In every transaction he had been governed by justice and benevolence. And not only was his course wholly unselfish, but he was often inattentive to his own dues and rights. Hence, the selfishness manifested by his sons appeared more striking in contrast with the course of their faithful father.

The arrogance and injustice of these judges caused much dissatisfaction among the people, who were far more troubled by dangers threatening their temporal interests than they had been by the profligacy and sacrilege of Hophni and Phinehas. Ere long many who considered themselves aggrieved presented their complaints to the elders of Israel. A pretext was thus furnished for urging the change which had long been secretly desired.

Had Samuel been informed on the unjust course of his sons, he would at once have removed them, and appointed others, more upright, in their place. When, however, the complaint against his sons was laid before him, followed immediately by the petition for a king, Samuel saw that the real motive was discontent and pride. He perceived that the desire did not spring from a sudden impulse, but was the result of long deliberation and a determined purpose.

The petitioners were careful to state that they could find no fault with Samuel's administration; but they urged that he would soon be too old to serve them, and his sons had given evidence that they could not be trusted. Despite these explanations and professions of regard, Samuel was deeply

wounded. He looked upon the request as a censure upon himself, and a direct effort to set him aside. But he did not reveal his feelings. He uttered no reproaches because of the ingratitude of the people. Had he done this, one bitter recrimination might have wrought great harm.

Samuel carried this new, and to him difficult matter to the Lord in prayer, and sought counsel alone from him. His petitions were heard; "and the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee." The prophet was reprov'd for grieving at the conduct of the people toward himself as an individual. They had not manifested disrespect for him, but for the authority of God, who had appointed the rulers of his people.

The days of Israel's greatest prosperity had been those in which they acknowledged Jehovah as their king,--when the laws and the government which he had established were regarded as superior to those of all other nations. Moses himself in his last address, appealed to Israel, "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

And yet, notwithstanding the Lord had so often wrought mightily for their deliverance, the Israelites were now disposed to attribute all their disasters to their manner of government. The Lord permitted his people to follow their own course, because they refused to be guided by his counsels. Hosea declares that God gave them a king in his anger. In their pride they desired to be like other nations, not considering that with the pomp of royalty

they must endure also its tyranny and exaction. This would be a bitter exchange for the mild and beneficent government of God.

It is a hazardous step to place the scepter in the hands of finite man, and crown him monarch. God understands the human heart far better than men understand it themselves. A departure from the Lord's wise arrangement would pervert authority into tyranny, and subjection into slavery. Even if a ruler were naturally merciful and benevolent, unlimited power over his fellow-men would tend to make him a despot. Such power God alone is able to use with justice and wisdom.

The Lord had, through his prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king. But it by no means follows that this form of government was according to his will. Though he foresees all things, he often permits men to take their own course, when they refuse to be guided by the counsels of infinite wisdom. In this instance, he instructed Samuel to grant their request, but to faithfully warn them of the Lord's disapproval, and also make known what would be the result of their course: "Now therefore hearken unto their voice. Howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."

Samuel accordingly assembled the people, and faithfully represented to them the burdens which they would have to bear under a king, and the contrast between such a state of oppression and their present comparatively free and prosperous condition. He reminded them that their king would imitate the pomp and luxury of other monarchs, to support which, grievous exactions upon their persons and property would be necessary. He would take the young men for charioteers and horsemen, and would even employ some to run before and about his chariots. A standing army would require their services; and they would also be required to till his fields, to reap his harvest, and to manufacture for his service instruments of war.

The daughters of Israel, who should become the centers of happy homes, would be taken for confectioners and bakers, to minister to the luxury of the royal household. To support his kingly state he would find pretexts to seize upon the best of their lands, bestowed upon the people by Jehovah himself. The most valuable of their servants also, and of their cattle, would he take and "put them to his own work."

Besides all this, an oppressive taxation would be instituted. The people already gave to the Lord a tenth of all their income, the profits of their labor, or the products of the soil. The king would require an additional tithe of all. "Ye shall be his servants," concluded the prophet. "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

But the people were bent upon following their own course. The solemn warnings from God, through his aged prophet, had no effect to turn them from their purpose. They returned the answer, "Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we may also be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

"Like other nations"--the Israelites did not realize that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated Israel from every other people, to make them his own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen. What blindness! What ingratitude!

With deep sadness, Samuel listened to the words of the people, and then he again sought divine guidance. And the Lord said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

The prophet had done his duty. He had faithfully presented the warning, and it had been rejected. He could say no more. With a heavy heart he

dismissed the people, and himself departed to prepare for the great change in the government.

Would that this passage in Israel's history had no counterpart in the present experience of God's people! But alas, we see it frequently repeated! A discontented desire for change, a longing to conform to worldly plans and worldly customs, too often controls even professed Christians. As they depart from God, they become ambitious for the gains and honors of the world. Those who stand firm against conformity to the world, discouraging pride, superfluity, and extravagance, and enjoining humility and self-denial, are looked upon as critical, peculiar, and severe. Some argue that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs, Christians might exert a stronger influence in the world. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the source of their strength. Becoming friends of the world, they are the enemies of God.

The dissatisfied longing for worldly power and display, is as difficult to cure now as in the days of Samuel. Christians seek to build as worldlings build, to dress as worldlings dress,--to imitate the customs and practice of those who worship only the god of this world. The instructions of God's word, the counsels and reproofs of his servants, and even warnings sent directly from his throne, seem powerless to subdue this unworthy ambition. When the heart is estranged from God, almost any pretext is sufficient to justify a disregard of his authority. The promptings of pride and self-love are gratified at whatever expense to the cause of God.

The unconsecrated and world-loving are ever ready to criticise and condemn those who have stood fearlessly for God and the right. If a defect is seen in one whom the Lord has intrusted with great responsibilities, then all his former devotion is forgotten, and an effort is made to silence his voice and destroy his influence. But let these self-constituted judges remember that the Lord reads the heart. They cannot hide its secrets from his searching

gaze. God declares that he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.

The most useful men are seldom appreciated. Those who have labored most actively and unselfishly for their fellow-men, and who have been instrumental in achieving the greatest results, are often repaid with ingratitude and neglect. When such men find themselves set aside, their counsels slighted and despised, they may feel that they are suffering great injustice. But let them learn from the example of Samuel not to justify or vindicate themselves, unless the Spirit of God unmistakably prompts to such a course. Those who despise and reject the faithful servant of God, not merely show contempt for the man, but for the Master who sent him. It is God's words, his reproofs and counsel, that are set at naught; his authority that is rejected.

When men persist in following their own course, without seeking counsel from the Lord, he often grants their desires, in order to reveal their folly or punish their iniquity. When they lightly esteem the words of his servants, he may permit the voice of counsel and warning to be silenced. But human pride and wisdom will be found a dangerous guide. That which is most desired by the unconsecrated heart will prove the most painful and bitter in the end.

Let the servants of God carry their burdens to their compassionate Redeemer. His ear is ever open to their prayers. His eye notes every sacrifice and every sorrow. The neglect and injustice which they endure here will but make their reward greater in the coming day.

July 20, 1882

A King Chosen

While a monarchical form of government for Israel had been foretold in prophecy, the regulation had been established that only those should be raised to the throne who were chosen by Jehovah himself. The Hebrews still so far respected the authority of God as to leave the selection entirely to his hands. The choice fell upon Saul, a son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin.

The personal qualities of the future monarch were such as to gratify that pride of heart which prompted the desire for a king. There was not a goodlier person than he among all the people of the hills. Of a noble and dignified bearing, in the full prime of life, comely and tall, he appeared like one born to command. Yet with all these external attractions, Saul was destitute of those higher qualities which constitute true wisdom. He had not in youth learned to control his rash, impetuous passions; he had never felt the renewing power of divine grace.

Saul was the son of a powerful and wealthy chief, yet in accordance with the primitive simplicity of the times, he was engaged with his father in the humble duties of a husbandman. A herd of the father's cattle having strayed upon the mountains, Saul was sent with a servant to seek for them. For three days the search was fruitless, and then, finding themselves near Ramah, the home of Samuel, the servant proposed that they inquire of the prophet concerning the missing property: "I have here the fourth part of a shekel of silver; that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way" This was not intended as a bribe; it was customary for a person in approaching a superior in rank or office to make him a small present, as an expression of courtesy and respect.

Approaching the city, they made inquiry for the seer, of some young maidens who had come out to draw water. In reply they were informed that a religious service was about to take place, that the judge had already arrived, there was to be a sacrifice upon the "high place," and after that a select feast.

A great change had taken place under Samuel's administration. The worship of God was maintained throughout the land, and the people manifested an interest in religious services. The ark still remaining at Kirjath-jearim, and there being no services in the tabernacle, sacrifices were for the time offered elsewhere; and the cities of the priests and Levites, where the people resorted for instruction, were chosen for this purpose. The highest points in these cities were usually selected as the place of sacrifice, and were hence denominated the "high place."

On the present occasion a peace-offering was to be presented before the Lord, with fervent prayer for his acceptance, and for his blessing on the service as a means of spiritual good to the worshipers. Then, a blessing having been invoked upon that part of the sacrifice which had been reserved for the people, all would unite in a sacred feast. While establishing the external forms of religion, Samuel ever sought to encourage a spirit of true devotion. These services were not permitted to degenerate into a mere ceremony, or to become an occasion of self-gratification. Rightly conducted, they promoted real piety as well as a spirit of kindness and sympathy among the people.

At the gate of the city, Saul was met by the prophet himself. God had revealed to Samuel that at that day and that hour the destined king of Israel should present himself before him. As they now stood face to face, the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of. This same shall reign over my people."

The request of Saul, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is,"

Samuel replied, "I am the seer," assuring him also that his father had found the lost cattle, and had now begun to be anxious about his son. Nevertheless he urged him to tarry with him and attend the feast, at the same time giving some intimation of the great destiny before him.

Saul replied, with modest self-depreciation. "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"

About thirty of the principal men of the city had been invited to attend the feast, and Samuel conducted the stranger to the room where these guests were assembled, gave him the seat of honor, and when the meat was served he directed that the most honorable joint, the shoulder, be set before him.

Upon returning to his home in the city, Samuel repaired with his guest to the housetop, as the place of greatest quiet and seclusion, and there talked with him, setting forth the great principles on which the government of Israel had been established, and thus seeking to prepare him in some measure for his high position.

When Saul departed, early the next morning, the prophet walked forth with him. After a time, Samuel directed the servant to pass on, and then bidding Saul stand still that he might show him the purposes of God, he anointed him captain over the Lord's inheritance. Then he kissed him, and to strengthen his faith, told him with great exactness the various incidents which would occur on the homeward journey, and assured him that he would be qualified by the Spirit of God for the important station awaiting him.

As Saul went on his way, he witnessed the fulfillment of the prophet's words. Near Rachel's sepulcher, in the border of Benjamin, he was informed that the lost animals had been found. In the plain of Tabor he met three men who were traveling to the place of sacred stones at Bethel, to worship God

there. One of them carried three kids for sacrifice, another three loaves of bread, and the third a leather bottle of wine, for the offering-feast. They gave Saul the usual salutation, and also presented him with two of the three loaves of bread.

As Saul went on to Gibeah in Benjamin, he perceived a company of prophets returning from the high place where they had been to worship; and as they went, they sang the praise of God to the music of the pipe and the harp, the psaltery and the tabret. Then the Spirit of God rested upon Saul, and he joined the prophets, and with them sang the praise of the Most High and declared the wonders of divine truth. He spoke with so great fluency and wisdom, and joined so earnestly in the services of prayer and praise, that those who had known him only as the untaught husbandman exclaimed in wonder, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" They could not understand how so great a transformation had been effected.

Samuel had founded the first regular establishments for religious instruction and the unfolding of the prophetic gifts. Among the chief subjects of study, were the law of God with the instructions given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In these "schools of the prophets" young men were educated by those who were not only well versed in divine truth, but who themselves maintained close communion with God and had received the special endowment of his Spirit. These educators enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people both for learning and piety. The power of the Holy Spirit was often strikingly manifest in their assemblies, and the exercise of the prophetic gift was not unfrequent. These schools, or colleges, were of untold value to Israel, not only as providing for the dissemination of religious truth, but as preserving the spirit of vital godliness.

As Saul united with the prophets in their worship, a great change was wrought in him by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The light of divine

purity and holiness shone in upon the darkness of moral depravity. He saw himself as he was before God. He saw and felt the beauty of holiness. He was now to commence in earnest the warfare against sin and Satan, and he was made to feel that in this conflict his strength must come wholly from God. The plan of salvation, which had before seemed dim and uncertain, was opened to his understanding with great clearness and power. That experience which some Christians have been years in obtaining was gained by Saul in a short time. The Lord endowed him with courage and wisdom for his high position. He revealed to him the source of strength and grace, and then, having enlightened his understanding as to the divine claims, and his own duty, he left him free to obey the light which he had received.

The fact that Saul had been anointed king over Israel was not then made known to the nation. The choice of God was to be publicly manifested by lot. For this purpose Samuel convened the people at Mizpeh. Earnest prayer was offered for divine guidance; then followed the solemn ceremony of casting the lot. In breathless silence the assembled multitude awaited the issue. The tribe, the family, and the household were successively designated, and then Saul, the son of Kish, was pointed out as the individual chosen. But Saul was not to be found. Assured of the result, and burdened with a sense of the grave responsibility about to fall upon him, he had remained apart from the assembly.

When his retreat was discovered, he was led before the congregation, and they observed with pride and satisfaction that he was of kingly bearing and noble form, being "higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward." And even Samuel proclaimed him to the assembly with the words, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people!" In response to his words, one long, loud shout of joy arose from that vast throng, "God save the king!"

Samuel then set before the people "the manner of the kingdom," stating

the principles upon which the monarchical government was based, and by which it should be controlled. The king was not to be an absolute monarch, but to hold his power in subjection to the will of the Most High. This address was recorded in a book, wherein were set forth the prerogatives of the prince and the privileges to be accorded to the people. Samuel knew that a king would be inclined to assume undue authority, and he guarded as far as possible the liberties of the nation.

The people in general acknowledged Saul as their king, and brought him such presents as Oriental monarchs usually receive. But there was still a party who were displeased and discontented. That a king should be chosen from Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel, to the neglect of Judah and Ephraim, the most numerous and most powerful, was a slight which they could not brook. They refused to profess allegiance to Saul or to bring him the customary presents. He however took no notice of their insults, but wisely "held his peace." In the existing condition of affairs he did not see fit to assume royal dignity and power. Leaving Samuel to administer the government as formerly; he returned to his home at Gibeah. He was honorably escorted thither by a company, who, seeing the divine choice in his selection, were determined to sustain him.

Those who had been most urgent in their demand for a king, were the very ones who refused to accept with gratitude the man of God's appointment. Their expectations were not realized. They looked for a king to be inaugurated with great pomp and display; failing in this, they felt that little had been gained. Envy and jealousy burned in the hearts of many. Each had his favorite whom he had wished to see placed upon the throne, and several among the leaders had hoped themselves to occupy that exalted position. All the efforts of pride and ambition had resulted in disappointment and discontent. It is ever thus. The heart must learn to submit to God, in order to be at peace.

July 27, 1882

The Inauguration at Gilgal

Saul had been chosen by God and acknowledged by the nation as king of Israel; yet he made no attempt to maintain his right to the throne. In his home among the uplands of Benjamin he quietly occupied himself in the duties of a husbandman, and left the establishment of his authority entirely to the hand of God. It was not to be long deferred. Soon after his election, the Ammonites, under their king, Nahash, invaded the disputed territory east of the Jordan, and threatened the large and powerful city of Jabesh-gilead. The inhabitants endeavored to secure terms of peace by offering to become tributary to the Ammonites. But the barbarous and cruel king refused to spare them, except on condition that he might put out the right eye of every one of them, that they might remain as so many living monuments of his power.

The people of the besieged city begged a respite of seven days for deliberation, hoping that during this time the tribes on the west side of the river might be summoned to their deliverance. The Ammonites consented, reasoning that if the matter were thus made public it would greatly increase the honor of their expected triumph.

Swift messengers spread the tidings through Israel, creating wide-spread terror and consternation. Saul, returning with his herds from the field, heard the loud wail that told of some great calamity. He said, "What aileth the people that they weep?" When the shameful story was repeated, all his dormant powers were roused, and he stood up as a hero and a king. "The Spirit of God came upon him," as on Samson, and "he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul

and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen."

All Israel obeyed. Three hundred and thirty thousand men gathered on the plain of Bezek, under the command of Saul. Messengers were immediately sent to apprise the people of Jabesh-gilead that they might expect help on the morrow, the very day on which they were to yield up their eyes to the Ammonites.

By marching all night, the king appeared with his army before Jabesh-gilead in the morning. He then divided his force into three companies, which approached the camp of the Ammonites upon different sides, and making a sudden and vigorous attack, completely routed them, with great slaughter. Those who escaped were so scattered that no two could be found together.

By the king's promptitude and energy upon this occasion, as well as his bravery and military skill, the people were far more strongly influenced in his favor than they had been by the Lord's appointment, Samuel's anointing, or his own prepossessing appearance. They now, by universal acclamation, greeted him as their king, attributing all the honor of the victory to human skill, and forgetting that without God's special blessing all their efforts would have been in vain.

In their enthusiasm, some proposed to put to death those who had at first refused to submit to the new sovereign. But the king interfered, saying, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." Here Saul gave evidence of the great change which had taken place in his character. Instead of taking honor to himself, he gave the glory to God, to whom it rightfully belonged. Instead of showing a desire for revenge, as would have been natural, he manifested a spirit of compassion and forgiveness. This is unmistakable evidence that the grace of God dwells in the heart.

Samuel now proposed that the people go to Gilgal, and there solemnly confirm the kingdom to Saul, all opposition to his authority seeming now to have ceased. This was done, with great rejoicing, and abundant sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Gilgal was memorable as the place of Israel's first encampment in the promised land. Here Joshua set up the pillar of twelve stones to commemorate the miraculous passage of the Jordan; here the manna ceased; here circumcision was renewed; here the people kept the first passover after their wanderings; here the Captain of the Lord's host appeared. From this place they marched to the overthrow of Jericho and the conquest of Ai. Here Achan met the direful penalty of his sin, and here was made that unwise treaty with the Gibeonites which punished Israel's neglect to ask counsel of God. Upon this plain, so rich in thrilling associations, stood Samuel and Saul; and when the shouts of welcome to the king had died away, the aged prophet spoke to the people his parting words as ruler of the nation.

Lest the blessings granted to Israel should lead them to justify all their proceedings, Samuel took this occasion to admonish them that their course had been most displeasing to God. He also vindicated his own conduct and the purity of his administration. He called upon the people to cite one instance of fraud, oppression, or corruption, while he alone was their judge:

"Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said to me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you; and I am old and gray-headed; and behold, my sons are with you; and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you."

Without one dissenting voice, the people replied, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand."

Samuel had a higher object than merely to justify his own course. He had previously endeavored to set forth the principles which should govern both the king and the people, and he now desired to present before them an instructive example. From childhood, he had borne responsibilities in the work of God, and during his long life, one object had been ever before him,-- the glory of God and the highest good of Israel. This had been apparent to the whole nation, and all now bore testimony to his integrity and faithfulness.

The honor accorded him who is concluding his work is of far more worth than the applause and congratulations which those receive who are just entering upon their duties, and who have yet to be tested. One may easily lay off his burdens, when even the enemies of truth acknowledge his fidelity. But how many of our great men close their official labors in disgrace, because they have sacrificed principle for gain or honor. The desire to be popular, the temptations of wealth or ease, lead them astray. Men who connive at sin may appear to prosper; they may triumph because their undertakings seem crowned with success; but God's eye is upon these proud boasters. He will reward them as their works have been. The greatest outward prosperity cannot bring happiness to those who are not at peace with God or with themselves.

It may at times be necessary for the servant of God to vindicate his own character, and to defend his course, that the Lord's name may be glorified, and the truth be not reproached. Let all who are treated with neglect or injustice, follow the example of Samuel, taking care not to make self prominent, but to maintain the honor of God. Let the injured one, instead of dwelling upon the wrongs which he has suffered, show the people how they have wounded Christ in the person of his servant. Many hearts would thus be

led to humiliation and repentance, when if personal feelings were aroused, they would be as hard as stone.

Unless men constantly cherish mercy, compassion, and love, Satan will encourage a fault-finding, selfish spirit which will crowd these precious graces out of the soul. Those who have toiled long and unselfishly in the cause of God, should not be surprised if they are at last set aside. Many a man through whom God has wrought to achieve great results, whose influence has been felt east and west, north and south, is at last rewarded with neglect or cruel contempt. Ingratitude is natural to the unrenewed heart. No man is faultless, and many are ready to find some excuse for condemning or reproaching the one who has served them unselfishly. They forget that they themselves may be guilty of sins far more offensive in the sight of God than those of which they accuse his worn, wearied, and perplexed servant.

It seems to us strangely inconsistent and almost incredible that a man of Samuel's sterling virtue, integrity, and devotion could have been set aside for one who was wholly untried, and who had been well-nigh a stranger to God's cause and to his people. Yet we see the same course often repeated. The chosen of God, who might long have continued in his service, doing the good that they desired to do, are prevented because mercy, love, and gratitude are excluded from the hearts of their brethren. When the faithful laborers are no longer permitted to hold a leading position, let them instruct those who will appreciate their efforts. Let them do all the good they can do in any capacity. They have not received their commission from men, but from God. It is he who has given them their work. If they are shut out from all other avenues of usefulness, they can pray. They have proved the Lord again and again; they are familiar with his word, and can claim his promises. God hears their intercessions.

We should learn to honor those whom God honors. Those who have toiled long and unselfishly for his cause should be ever treated with respect

and tenderness, even though it may be evident that they cannot perform the work which they once could, or, that they sometimes err in judgment. Notwithstanding their imperfections, these very men may be far more useful in the work of God, than those who would criticise and reject them. All have defects of character. All need the help of God every hour, or they will decidedly fail.

Samuel rehearsed to Israel the leading events in their past history, the wonderful manifestations of divine power, and the evidence of his favor in establishing them as his peculiar people. He reminded them of their transgressions in departing from God, and seeking to imitate the example of surrounding nations; he pointed to the judgments which had been visited upon them for their sins, and the gracious deliverances which their repentance had secured. All their calamities had been brought upon them by rebellion against God. Their prosperity was secured by obedience. Yet when threatened by their enemies, they had not made God their trust, but had demanded a king to stand at the head of their armies. Samuel had sought to encourage them to rely upon their Divine Helper, and had even volunteered to lead them out to battle himself; but they had obstinately rejected his proposition.

Now the Lord had granted their desire, and set a king over them; yet their prosperity would still depend upon their obedience to God. Notwithstanding their sin, the Lord would pardon and bless them if they would from this time manifest true repentance and fidelity. "But," said the prophet, "if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers."

As a proof of the truth of his words, and also as evidence of the Lord's displeasure, Samuel called down thunder and rain from heaven. It being the time of wheat harvest, when the air is usually serene and mild, the people

were greatly terrified at this manifestation, and they confessed their sin, and entreated the prophet's prayers in their behalf. They now saw that God had greatly honored the man whom they had rejected; and they felt for the time being that they had made a great mistake in their opposition to the Lord's wise arrangement.

Samuel did not leave the people in a state of discouragement. He knew that this would prevent all effort for a better life. They would look upon God as unforgiving and severe, and thus would be exposed to manifold temptations. Such is not the character of our gracious God. He is merciful and forgiving, ever willing and anxious to show favor to his people when they will hear and obey his voice. Said the prophet, "Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn not ye aside; for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people." Samuel also assured the people of his continued intercession in their behalf, and also of his services as judge and teacher. He ended his address with the warning, "But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

Samuel's life of purity and unselfish devotion to God's cause, was itself a perpetual rebuke both to scheming, self-serving priests and elders and to the proud, sensual congregation of Israel. Although he assumed no pomp and encouraged no display, his labors bore the signet of Heaven. He was honored by the world's Redeemer, under whose guidance he ruled the Hebrew nation. But the people became weary of his piety and devotion, despised his humble authority, and rejected him for a man who should rule them as a king.

In the character of Samuel we see reflected the likeness of Christ. The spotless purity of our Saviour's life provoked the wrath of Satan. That life was the light of the world, and revealed the hidden depravity in the hearts of men. It was the holiness of Christ that stirred up against him the fiercest

passions of profligate professors of godliness.

Christ came not with the wealth and honors of earth, yet the works which he wrought showed him to possess a greater power than that of any human prince. The Jews looked for a Messiah who should break the oppressor's yoke, yet they cherished the sins which had bound it upon their necks. They would not bear Christ's fearless rebuke of their vices. The loveliness of a character in which benevolence, purity, and holiness reigned supreme, which entertained no hatred except for sin, they despised. Had Christ cloaked their sins and applauded their piety, they would have accepted him as their king. They hated him because he waged war with pride, injustice, lust, and hypocrisy.

Thus it has been in every age of the world. The light from Heaven brings condemnation upon all who refuse to walk in it. It is the duty of every Christian to maintain the honor of God by his own unselfish, spotless life, and fearlessly to condemn sin in all its forms. Satan will make strong efforts to sweep from the earth those who uphold purity and piety. But a stronger than he draws nigh to the believing, trusting soul, and measures weapons with the prince of darkness. In every age there have been faithful men to stand as God's witnesses in the earth. The present is a time of darkness and feebleness to the church; but this is because they are not united to Christ. The moral palsy upon professed Christians need not exist. They may have the vigor of perpetual youth, if they will put away their idols, and serve God with an undivided heart.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The natural heart is as strongly opposed to God now, as in the days of Samuel or of Christ. When rebuked by the example of those who hate sin, hypocrites will become agents of Satan to harass and persecute the faithful. "But," says the apostle, "what can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" Such have through faith been adopted into God's family; they will become

more than conquerors through Him who hath loved them.

August 3, 1882

The Forbidden Sacrifice

When Saul was crowned at Gilgal, the nation seemed unanimous in his support, and he felt that his throne was firmly established. He now dismissed to their homes the vast army that had arisen at his call to overthrow the Ammonites, reserving only two thousand men to be stationed under his command at Michmash, and one thousand to attend his son Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin.

Elated with the honor of the recent victory, Saul was disposed to relax his efforts. He preferred the enjoyment of ease and the pomp of royalty to the toil, uncertainty, and danger of the field of battle. Here was a serious error. While his army was filled with hope and courage, he should have proceeded at once to make war upon other enemies of Israel. By neglecting to do this, he lost the opportunity to strike a telling blow for the honor of God and the liberties of the nation.

Meanwhile their warlike neighbors, the Philistines, were active. After the defeat at Ebenezer, they had still retained possession of some hill fortresses in the land of Israel; and now taking advantage of the somewhat disorganized condition of the Hebrew nation, consequent upon the change in the government, these powerful foes had established themselves in the very heart of the country. Yet they were filled with fear at the defeat of the fierce and cruel Ammonites, and had they been attacked with the same courage and energy, they might then have been subdued.

In facilities, arms, and equipments, the Philistines had great advantages over Israel. During the long period of their oppressive rule, they had endeavored to strengthen their power, by forbidding the Israelites to practice

the trade of smiths, lest they should make weapons of war. At the conclusion of peace, they had still kept the trade in their own hands, the Hebrews resorting to the Philistine garrisons for such work as needed to be done. Had the men of Israel possessed proper energy and foresight, they would, during the long interval of peace, have secured the services of skilled workmen, and furnished themselves with weapons of war. But love of ease, and the abject spirit induced by long oppression, controlled them. Hence they had suffered even their agricultural implements to become blunt, and none among the Israelites, except Saul and his son Jonathan, possessed a spear or sword.

It was not until the second year of Saul's reign that an attempt was made to subdue the Philistines. The first blow was struck by Jonathan, who at the command of his father attacked and overcame their garrison of Geba. The Philistines were greatly exasperated by this defeat, and they made ready for a speedy attack upon Israel.

Saul was now aroused to the necessity of immediate action. He caused war to be proclaimed by the sound of the trumpet throughout the land, and also issued a proclamation calling upon all the men of war, including the tribes across the Jordan, to assemble immediately at Gilgal. This summons was obeyed.

The Philistines had gathered an immense force at Michmash--"thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is upon the sea-shore innumerable." When the Hebrews became apprised of the strength and numbers of the opposing force, and then considered their own defenseless condition, they became terrified and disheartened. Every day saw the army of Saul diminishing, as multitudes of the people stole away to hide themselves in caves, thickets, and pits; and some even fled across the Jordan, to the land of Gad and Gilead. Those who still remained "followed him trembling."

Where was now Israel's pride and confidence in their king, demanded, as they had declared, "that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles"? Alas, how utterly worthless are all hopes based on human pomp or pride!

Samuel had appointed to meet the king at Gilgal, there to "offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and to show him what he should do." The prophet did not arrive within the allotted time, and as Saul saw their dangers increasing, and the hearts of the people failing for fear, he became impatient. Instead of resorting to prayer, and humbling his soul before God, he determined to do something himself to relieve the difficulties of the situation.

Here is where many have failed, and continue to fail. They will not wait patiently for the Lord to work for them. They desire to be active, and if God does not give them something to do, they will venture to do even what he has forbidden. The Lord had detained his servant, in order to test the faith and obedience of the king. Saul did not stand the test. God had promised to be with him, if he would be obedient. He should have trusted this promise, and waited patiently for divine instruction and guidance. But thinking that something must be done at once to inspire the people with courage, he commanded them to bring forward their victims for sacrifice, and then he presumptuously took the place of priest, and himself offered them upon the altar. This act was a flagrant violation of the divine command that only those should offer sacrifice who had been sacredly consecrated to the work. Moreover, the public nature of the act, as well as the high position of the offender, added greatly to the pernicious influence of his example, and rendered prompt punishment indispensably necessary.

No sooner had Saul made an end of offering sacrifice, than he heard of Samuel's approach, and went out to meet him. But though greeted with demonstrations of reverence and affection, the prophet understood that all was not right. In answer to his pointed inquiry, "What hast thou done?" Saul

endeavored to excuse his own course, by depicting the terror of the people and the danger of an immediate attack from the Philistines. But the prophet returned the stern and solemn answer,

"Thou hast done foolishly. Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou has not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

Saul's transgression proved him unworthy to be intrusted with sacred responsibilities. One who had himself so little reverence for God's requirements, could not be a wise or safe leader for the nation. Had he patiently endured the divine test, the crown would have been confirmed to him and to his house. In fact, Samuel had come to Gilgal for this very purpose. But Saul had been weighed in the balance, and found wanting. He must be removed to make way for one who would sacredly regard the divine honor and authority.

An all-wise God had foreseen these events, yet Saul's threatened humiliation was chargeable only to his own sin and folly. God had given him great advantages to develop a right character. The Holy Spirit had enlightened his understanding, giving him clear views of the divine character and requirements, and of his own duty. All this made his sin more grievous.

Had Saul cherished the light which Christ had given him, he would have trusted less to the performance of religious rites, and would have felt more deeply the importance of humbling his heart before God. Impulse would have been guided by reason, and chastened and purified by conscience. But it is difficult for a man whose habits are fixed, to unlearn what he has for years been learning. Divine grace only can effect this transformation.

In the faithful performance of God's will, all the powers of the mind, all the emotions of the heart, will be called forth into their noblest, purest, happiest exercise. Great are the privileges of the Christian, and great the change which must be wrought by the Holy Spirit, ere men sinful by nature can become the sons of God. Mental abilities and spiritual affections, the treasures of memory and the anticipations of hope, are alike to be sanctified by the spirit of Christ, and consecrated to his service. The life of Christ's disciple is begun by faith and continued by obedience.

August 10, 1882

Victory at Michmash

The energy and military skill displayed by Saul in the victory of Jabesh-gilead were extolled by the whole nation. In their enthusiasm the people forgot that he was but the agent by whom the Lord had wrought for their deliverance. And though at first the king ascribed the glory to God, he afterward took honor to himself. When first called to the throne, he was humble and self-distrustful; but success made him self-confident, and ere long he was guilty of presumption and sacrilege, in offering the unbidden sacrifice at Gilgal.

The same blind self-confidence led him to reject Samuel's message of reproof. Saul acknowledged Samuel to be a prophet sent from God. Hence he should have accepted the reproof, even though he could not himself see that he had sinned. Such a course, showing a willingness to be set right, would have gone far to re-instate him in the favor of God. But Saul endeavored to vindicate his own course, and blamed the prophet, instead of condemning himself.

There are today many who pursue a similar course. Like Saul, they are blinded to their errors. When the Lord seeks to correct them, they receive reproof as insult, and find fault with the one who brings the divine message.

Had Saul been willing to see and confess his error, this bitter experience would have proved a safeguard for the future. He would afterward have avoided the mistakes which called forth divine reproof. But feeling that he was unjustly condemned, he would, of course, be likely again to commit the same sin.

The Lord would have his people, under all circumstances, manifest implicit trust in him. Although we cannot always understand the workings of his providence, we should wait with patience and humility until he sees fit to enlighten us. We should beware of taking upon ourselves responsibilities which God has not authorized us to bear. Men frequently have too high an estimate of their own character or abilities. They may feel competent to undertake the most important work, when God sees that they are not prepared to perform aright the smallest and humblest duty.

Saul was in disfavor with God, and yet unwilling to humble his heart in penitence. He desired to devise some plan by which to establish more firmly his royal authority, as well as to revive the courage of the people. What he lacked in real piety, he would endeavor to make up in pretension and display. Saul was familiar with the terrible history of Israel's defeat when the ark of God was brought into the camp by Hophni and Phinehas; and yet, knowing all this, he determined to send for the sacred ark and its attendant priests.

With a spirit of exultation he enters upon the accomplishment of his plans. He hopes to inspire the hearts of Israel with fresh courage, to reassemble his scattered army, and to vanquish the Philistines. He will now dispense with Samuel's presence and support, and thus free himself from the prophet's disagreeable criticisms and severe reproofs. He feels that Samuel does not rightly appreciate the position and authority of a king, and hence does not treat him with proper respect. He expects that Ahiah the priest will be awed by royal dignity, and will readily yield to the king as to a superior.

The Holy Spirit had been granted to Saul to enlighten his understanding and soften his heart. He had received faithful instruction and reproof from the prophet of God. And yet how great his perversity! The history of Israel's first king presents a sad example of the power of early wrong habits. In his youth, Saul did not love and fear God; and that impetuous spirit, not early trained to submission, was ever ready to rebel against divine authority.

The lesson is one which all would do well to ponder. Men cannot for years abuse the noblest powers which God has given them for his service, and then, when they choose to change, find these powers fresh and free for an entirely opposite course. Those who in early life cherish a sacred regard for the authority of God, and who faithfully perform the duties of their position, will be prepared for higher service in after years. If we would conquer in the battle of life, we must take counsel of infinite wisdom, first and last and always.

Saul's efforts to inspire the people with hope and courage proved unavailing. Finding his force reduced to six hundred men, he left Gilgal, and retired to the fortress at Geba, so lately taken from the Philistines. This stronghold was situated on the south side of a deep, rugged valley, or gorge, a few miles north of the site of Jerusalem. On the north side of the same valley, at Michmash, the Philistine force lay encamped, while detachments of troops went out in different directions to ravage the country.

On the one hand was a little company of almost unarmed men, on the other, vast numbers of well-drilled troops, with their thirty thousand chariots of iron. What marvel that the hearts of the men of Israel were filled with fear! God had permitted matters to be thus brought to a crisis, that he might rebuke the perversity of Saul, and teach his people a lesson of humility and faith.

Jonathan, the king's son, a man who feared God, was chosen as the instrument to deliver Israel. Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy's camp. "It may be," he urged, "that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to work by many or by few."

The armor-bearer, a man of faith and prayer, encouraged the design, and

together they withdrew from the camp of Israel, secretly, lest their purpose should be opposed as presumptuous. With earnest prayer to the Guide of their fathers, they agreed upon a sign by which they might determine how to proceed. Then passing down into the gorge separating the two armies, and which here stretched out to half a mile in width, they silently threaded their way, under the shadow of the cliff, and partially concealed by the mounds and ridges of the valley. Approaching the Philistine fortress, they were revealed to the view of their enemies, who said tauntingly, "Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they have hid themselves," then challenged them, "Come up, and we will show you a thing," meaning that they would punish the two Israelites for their daring.

This challenge was the token which Jonathan and his companion had previously agreed to accept as evidence that the Lord would prosper their undertaking. Passing now from the sight of the Philistines, and choosing a secret and difficult path, the warriors made their way to the summit of a cliff before deemed inaccessible, and therefore not very strongly guarded. Thus they penetrated the enemy's camp, and slew the sentinels, who were so overcome by surprise and fear as to offer no resistance.

The whole army was seized with consternation, which was increased by an earthquake miraculously occurring at the same time. The Philistines imagined that a vast army was upon them, and in their confusion they began to slay one another.

Soon the noise of the battle was heard in the camp of Israel. Upon inquiry it was found that none were absent but Jonathan and his armor-bearer. Saul at first desired to consult the Lord as to whether an attack should be made upon the Philistines; but the confusion among them evidently increasing, his impatient spirit could not brook delay. Marshaling his little force, he advanced against the enemy. The Hebrews who had deserted to the Philistines, now joined their fellow country-men; great numbers also came

out of their lurking-places, and as the Philistines fled, discomfited, Saul's army committed terrible havoc upon the fugitives.

August 17, 1882

King Saul's Rash Oath

When Saul beheld the Philistines fleeing in terror from Michmash, he determined to make the most of his advantage. To avoid unnecessary delay, he forbade the pursuers to partake of food for the entire day, enforcing his command by the solemn imprecation, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies."

The king might properly have warned his soldiers not to waste time in feasting upon the spoil of their enemies; but to deprive them of food for a whole day was unwise in the extreme. The long abstinence rendered them weak and exhausted at the very time when they should have been strong and courageous to push the battle against the foe. And then to confirm this inconsiderate prohibition by a solemn oath showed Saul to be both rash and profane. Such a course could not be prompted by a zeal for the glory of God. The king declares his object to be, not "that the Lord may be avenged on his enemies," but only "that I may be avenged on mine enemies." Yet the fact was, that Saul had no real share in the battle; the victory had been virtually gained without his knowledge or co-operation.

Fearing the king's displeasure, the soldiers refrained from partaking of the spoil of their enemies, and even from eating the wild honey which was found in great abundance as they passed through a forest. But Jonathan was ignorant of his father's prohibition, and unwittingly transgressed by eating a little of the honey.

In the evening, being hungry, and faint with labor, many of the people hastily slew the cattle which they had taken, and ate the flesh with the blood, contrary to the law. Thus did Saul's injudicious severity lead to disregard of

the divine command. When, however, the monarch learned what was going on, he interposed his authority, and directed that a sacrifice be first offered unto the Lord, and then the animals be properly slaughtered and the blood separated, as the Mosaic law required.

When the people had satisfied their hunger, Saul proposed to continue the pursuit that night; but the priest suggested that it would be wiser first to ask counsel of God. This was done in the usual manner; but no answer came. Regarding this silence as a token of the Lord's displeasure, Saul determined to discover the cause. Had he properly realized the sinfulness of his own course, he would have concluded that he himself was the guilty one. But failing to discern this, he gave command that the matter be decided by lot. "Draw ye near hither, all ye chief of the people, and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it were Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." The people listened in silence, their hearts thrilled with fear, as they saw the rash, impetuous spirit of their king.

Again the monarch commanded, "Be ye on one side, and I and my son Jonathan on the other." The lot was cast; it fell upon Saul and Jonathan. Again it was cast, and Jonathan was taken. The Lord was pleased that the course of Jonathan should be brought to light, to manifest more fully the spirit of Saul. Thus the people would be led to see their great error in rejecting the government which God had given them. They had exchanged the pious prophet whose prayers had brought down blessings, for a king who in his blind zeal had prayed for a curse upon them.

When the lot fell upon Jonathan, the king demanded with great sternness, "What hast thou done?" Jonathan replied frankly, acknowledging the act, and deprecating the direful penalty. Now at last we might expect Saul to see and deplore his folly in making so rash a vow. Now, surely, paternal affection will rise superior to royal authority. But no; Saul wished

his people to see that the justice of the king was superior to the affection of the father. He had not shared the honor of the victory; but he hoped now to secure honor by his zeal in maintaining the sacredness of his oath. Even at the sacrifice of his son, he would impress upon his subjects the fact that the royal authority must be maintained. How terribly significant the words which fell from that father's lips,--"God do so, and more also; thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."

At Gilgal, but a short time previous, Saul had presumed to officiate as priest, in direct violation of the command of God. When reproved by Samuel, he had stubbornly justified his own course. Now, upon the bare suspicion of sin in another--before the lots were cast--he had sworn that the offender should surely die; not considering whether the offense might not be a sin of ignorance, to be expiated by a sin-offering, instead of a willful transgression punishable with death.

When the offender is pointed out, and it is known that his only crime is the ignorant violation of an unreasonable requirement, the king and father coldly sentences his son to death. What a contrast between the boldness with which Saul himself violates the law of God and defies reproof, and the cruel severity manifested by him toward one whom God had honored!

The people refused to allow this unjust sentence to be carried into effect. They could see where the guilt belonged; that Saul himself was the one whom God was rebuking. Unheeding the anger of the king, they boldly declared, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." Noble decision! wise and courageous people! The proud monarch dared not disregard this unanimous verdict, and the life of Jonathan was preserved.

Saul could but feel that his son was preferred before him, both by the

people and by the Lord. Jonathan's deliverance was a severe reproof to the king's rashness. He felt a presentiment that his curses would fall upon his own head. He did not longer continue the war with the Philistines, but returned to his home, moody and dissatisfied.

Those who are most ready to excuse or justify themselves in sin are often most severe in judging and condemning others. There are many today, like Saul, bringing upon themselves the displeasure of God. They reject counsel and despise reproof. Even when convinced that the Lord is not with them, they refuse to see in themselves the cause of their trouble. How many cherish a proud, boastful spirit, while they indulge in cruel judgment or severe rebuke of others really better in heart and life than they. Well would it be for such self-constituted judges to ponder those words of Christ: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

To exalt self, to glory in what we have done or what we can do, is proof of extreme ignorance or folly. Those who have an undue estimate of themselves are often brought into positions where their true character will be developed. It was thus in the case of Saul. His own course convinced the people that kingly honor and authority were dearer to him than justice, mercy, or benevolence.

The Lord bears long with the waywardness of the children of men, and grants to all ample opportunity to see and forsake their sins. Yet he will maintain his own glory, and care for his own people; whatever the course of the rebellious and backsliding. He may appear to prosper those who disregard his will and despise his warnings; but in his own time he will surely make manifest their folly.

By one wrong decision, men may subject themselves to untold perils. One misstep may cost a lifetime of care, anxiety, and sorrow. Had not the

men of Israel interposed to save the life of Jonathan, that intrepid warrior would have perished by the decree of their chosen leader. With what misgivings must that people afterward have followed Saul's guidance! How bitter the thought that he had been placed upon the throne by their own act!

God's people of today are in danger of committing errors no less disastrous. We cannot, we must not, place blind confidence in any man, however high his profession of faith or his position in the church. We must not follow his guidance, unless the word of God sustains him. The Lord would have his people individually distinguish between sin and righteousness, between the precious and the vile.

Those who labor faithfully and unselfishly in the cause of God should be highly esteemed for their works' sake. We may, like the children of Israel, be tempted to exchange the devoted, self-sacrificing laborer for one who appears more pleasing, but whose faith and steadfastness are yet untried. Let us beware how we manifest ingratitude or contempt for those whom God has made burden-bearers in his cause. Those who smite the soldiers of the cross are smiting the hand of God that covers them as a shield.

August 24, 1882

A Doomed People

After delivering the reproof at Gilgal, Samuel had little intercourse with the king of Israel. Saul resented the prophet's stern rebuke, and avoided him as far as possible; and Samuel did not intrude his presence or his counsel. But the Lord commanded him to bear another message to the king. God purposed again to work through Saul, to destroy the enemies of Israel.

Obedying this command, the prophet reminded him that he had been commissioned by the Lord to anoint him king, and that he still spoke by the same authority. Then he declared the divine message. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not."

The Amalekites were a wandering people inhabiting the wilderness to the south of Palestine, between that country and Egypt. Like most of the neighboring tribes, they were idolaters, and bitter enemies of Israel. Soon after the exodus they attacked the Israelites in the desert of Rephidim, but were signally defeated by Joshua. The Amalekites were not among the nations whose lands were granted to Israel, nor had they received any injury from them. This assault was, therefore, wholly unprovoked. It was also most cowardly and cruel; the foe, not daring to risk an open encounter with the Hebrews, had attacked and slain those who from feebleness and exhaustion had fallen behind the body of the host.

Moses was commanded to preserve a record of the battle, and also of the final doom of that idolatrous people, as pronounced by God himself: "I will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven, because [marginal

reading] the hand of Amalek is against the throne of Jehovah." The Lord of all the earth had fixed his throne in Israel, and had shown his glorious power and majesty in bringing the chosen people from their bondage in Egypt. When Amalek made an assault upon them, he attacked the throne of God, who determined to vindicate his authority, as a warning to all future generations.

After denouncing judgments against the Amalekites, the Lord waited long for them to turn from their evil ways; but they went on in sin until their iniquity had reached its height, till their day of probation ended, and divine justice demanded their destruction. That wicked people were dwelling in God's world, the house which he had prepared for his faithful, obedient children. Yet they appropriated his gifts to their own use, without one thought of the Giver. The more blessings he poured upon them, the more boldly they transgressed against him. Thus they continued to pervert his blessings and abuse his mercy. They strengthened their souls in iniquity, but God kept silence; and they said in their hearts. "How doth God know? and is there knowledge with the Most High? "But the dark record of their crimes was constantly passing up to Heaven. There is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin,

"A hidden boundary between God's mercy and his wrath."

When that limit had been passed, God arose in his indignation to put them out of the house which they had polluted.

Our gracious God still bears long with the impenitent. He gives them light from Heaven, that they may understand the holiness of his character, and the justice of his requirements. He calls them to repentance, and assures them of his willingness to forgive. But if they continue to reject his mercy, the mandate goes forth devoting them to destruction.

Thus was it with Sodom. Behold the fairest city of the plain, set in a garden of beauty. To human vision it is a scene of quietness and security. The fertile fields are clothed with harvests. There is an abundance for the supply of every want, almost without labor. The distant hills are covered with flocks. The merchants of the East bring their treasures from afar. The people live for pleasure and make one long holiday of the year.

Idleness and riches are their curse. They are absorbed in worldly pursuits and sensual gratification. Yet no visible token of God's wrath hangs over the devoted city. Their last day is like many others that have come and gone. Their last night is marked by no greater sins than many others before it. But mercy, so long rejected, ceases at last her pleadings. The fires of divine vengeance are kindled in the vale of Siddim. The beautiful but guilty Sodom becomes a desolation, a place never to be built up or inhabited.

The flames which consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time. They bid us shun the sins that brought destruction upon the ungodly at that day.

God requires the service of all his creatures. Everything in nature obeys his will. The measureless heavens are ablaze with his glory. Of all that he has created upon the earth, only man rebels against the Creator. Puny, erring men, the creatures of an hour, dare to enter into controversy with the Eternal, the Source of all wisdom and all power. They who are constantly dependent upon God's bounty, dare to spurn the Hand whence all their blessings flow. There is no ingratitude so sinful, no blindness so complete, as that of men who refuse to acknowledge their obligation to their God.

Not only are men dwellers in God's great house, and partakers of his bounties, but they are the objects of his unceasing care and love. He makes it their privilege, through the righteousness of Christ, to call him Father. They may ask infinite blessings without exhausting the treasures of his grace. In

their ignorance they may be guided by the counsels of unerring wisdom. In calamity they may shelter themselves beneath the shadow of his throne, and find safety in his secret place.

This mighty God pledges his immutable word that those who love and trust him shall not want any good thing. But he declares that he will surely punish the transgressors of his law. The wickedness of the race is not forgotten nor overlooked because God does not at once visit them with judgments. Each century of profligacy and rebellion is treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When the scribes and Pharisees rejected the teachings of Christ, he bade them fill up the iniquity of their fathers, that it might be time for God to work; that the message of glad tidings might be given to others, who would joyfully receive it. When at last the divine forbearance was exhausted, God's wrath fell signally upon a people who had rejected so great light.

The Lord does not delight in vengeance, though he executes judgment upon the transgressors of his law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some, he must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. Says the prophet Isaiah: "The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act." The work of wrath and destruction is indeed a strange, unwelcome work for Him who is infinite in love.

Again, the divine message comes to Ezekiel: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." The very fact of God's unwillingness to punish sinners shows the enormity of the sins that call forth his judgments. And yet to every transgressor of his holy law is addressed that earnest, pleading call, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"

The records of sacred history declare, that while God is a God of justice, strict to mark iniquity, and strong to punish the sinner, he is also a God of truth, compassion, and abundant mercy. While he visits judgments upon the transgressors of his law and the enemies of his people, he will protect those who respect his statutes and show kindness to his chosen.

When he commanded that a war of extermination be waged against Amalek, he also directed that the Kenites, who dwell among them, should be spared, because they had shown mercy to Israel in their distress. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and a prince among the Kenites, had joined Israel soon after the latter came out of Egypt. His presence and counsel at that time was of great value to the Hebrews. Moses afterward urged Hobab, the son of Jethro, to accompany them in their journeyings through the wilderness, saying: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Hobab declined, choosing to live in his own country and among his own people. But Moses knew that his brother-in-law was well acquainted with the country through which they were to pass, and that he could greatly assist them in their journey. He therefore earnestly entreated: "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Hobab consented to this; but the journeyings of Israel over, he and his followers forsook the neighborhood of the towns, and betook themselves to freer air, to the wilderness of Judah, on the southern border of Canaan.

The promise of special protection and friendship given by Moses to the Kenites, was made by the direction of the Lord. Hence when Saul was

commanded to destroy the Amalekites, special directions were given that the Kenites should be spared. Jethro and his family had been devoted worshipers of the true God; but though the Kenites were still friendly to Israel, and acknowledged the living God as the ruler of the earth, their religion had become corrupted with idolatry. After this time they degenerated more and more into heathenism, and their influence became a snare to the Hebrews. Hence they were finally visited with divine judgments.

Balaam, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foretold the destruction of both the Kenites and the Amalekites: "When he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish forever. And he looked on the Kenites and took up this parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy rest in a rock. Nevertheless, the Kenites shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!"

August 31, 1882

The Final Test

The defeat of the Philistines at Michmash seemed a turning-point in the fortunes of Israel. Though the Lord was displeased with Saul, and purposed to set aside his family, yet he granted him success in battle against the oppressors of his people. No enemy seemed able to stand against him. He made war in turn against Moab, Ammon, and Edom, and against the Amalekites and the Philistines; and wherever he turned his arms, he gained fresh victories. Yet, having missed the opportunity which God had granted him, he was never able permanently to subdue the Philistines. He had sore war with them all the days of his life.

When commanded to destroy the Amalekites, Saul did not for a moment hesitate. To his own authority was added the command of the prophet, and at the call to battle the men of Israel flocked to his standard. Two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah were numbered at Telaim. With this force, Saul attacked and defeated the king of Amalek, and overran the country.

This victory was by far the most brilliant which Saul had ever gained, and it served to kindle anew that pride of heart which was his greatest danger. The divine edict devoting the Amalekites to utter destruction was but partially executed. Ambitious to heighten the honor of his triumphal return by the presence of a royal captive, Saul ventured to spare Agag, the fierce and warlike king of Amalek.

This act was not without influence upon the people. They too felt that they might safely venture to depart somewhat from the Lord's explicit directions. Hence they covetously reserved to themselves the finest of the

flocks, herds, and beasts of burden, destroying only that which was vile and refuse.

Here Saul was subjected to the final test. His presumptuous disregard of the will of God, showing his determination to rule as an independent monarch, proved that he could not be intrusted with royal power as the Lord's vicegerent. Unmindful of all this, Saul marshals his victorious army, and with the captive king and the long train of flocks and herds--a booty highly valued in the East--set out on the march homeward. At Carmel, in the possessions of Judah, he set up a monument of his victory.

While pride and rejoicing reigned in the camp of Saul, there was deep anguish in the home of Samuel. His intense interest for the welfare of Israel had not abated. He still loved the valiant warrior whom his own hands had anointed as king. It had been his earnest prayer that Saul might become a wise and prosperous ruler. When it was revealed to him that Saul had been finally rejected, Samuel in his distress "cried unto the Lord all night," pleading for a reversal of the sentence. With an aching heart he set forth next morning to meet the erring king. But when he heard that Saul had erected a monument of his own exploits, instead of giving glory to God, he turned aside and went to Gilgal.

Thither the monarch with his army came to meet him. Samuel had cherished a longing hope that Saul might, upon reflection, become conscious of his sin, and by repentance and humiliation before God, be again restored to the divine favor. But the king came forward with great assurance, saying, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Saul had so often followed his own will, regardless of the command of God through his prophet, that his moral perception had become dulled. He was not now conscious of the sinfulness of his course.

The sounds that fell upon the prophet's ears, disproved the statement of

the disobedient king. To the pointed question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul made answer, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." The plea here urged was at best but an excuse for covetousness. The beasts saved from the spoil were to be offered by the Israelites in place of their own animals required for sacrifice.

The spirit which actuated Saul is evinced by the fact that when proudly boasting of his obedience to the divine command, he takes all the honor to himself; when reproved for disobedience, he charges the sin upon the people. Samuel was not deceived by the king's subterfuge. With mingled grief and indignation he declares, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night." Then he reminded Saul of his early humility: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" He repeats the divine behest concerning Amalek, and demands from the king the reason for his disobedience.

Saul stubbornly persists in his self-justification; "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroy the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal." Had Saul himself obeyed the command of God, and enforced it upon the people with the same decision that he had manifested in carrying out his own decrees, he would have had no difficulty in securing obedience. God held him responsible for the sin which he basely endeavored to charge upon Israel.

In stern and solemn words the prophet of the Most High sweeps away

the refuge of lies, and pronounces against Saul the irrevocable sentence: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

As the king heard this fearful sentence, he cried out, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." Saul was filled with terror by the denunciation of the prophet, but he had, even now, no true sense of the enormity of his transgression. He still persisted in casting blame upon the people, declaring that he had sinned through fear of them.

This was the same excuse urged by Aaron to shield himself from the guilt of making the golden calf. But so far from accepting the excuse, Moses sternly rebuked Aaron, in the presence of all the people. As the high priest of Israel, and the representative of Moses in his absence, Aaron should at any risk have opposed the rash and godless designs of the people. His neglect to do this brought upon them sin, disaster, and ruin, which he was powerless to avert. While he found it easy to lead them into sin, he sought in vain to lead them to repentance. Moses afterward declared, "The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him." His sin would have been punished with death had he not in true penitence humbled himself before the Lord. Had Saul, in like manner, been willing to see and confess his sin, he too might have been forgiven.

It was not sorrow for sin, but fear of its penalty that actuated the king of Israel as he entreated Samuel, "I pray thee, pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord."

"I will not return with thee," was the answer of the prophet; "for thou

hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." As Samuel turned to leave, the king, in an agony of fear, laid hold of his mantle to hold him back, but it rent in his hands. Upon this, the prophet declared, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou." And knowing how lightly his words had heretofore been regarded by the king, he adds the solemn assurance, "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent." Saul had gloried in his exploits, as though he were the deliverer of his people. The prophet rebukes this pride by reminding the haughty monarch that God was the strength of Israel.

Even now Saul fears only personal disgrace and the loss of his kingdom. He is far more disturbed by the alienation of Samuel than by the displeasure of God. He entreated Samuel to pardon his transgressions, as if the prophet had authority to reverse the divine sentence against him. He knew that the people had greater confidence in Samuel than in himself. Should another king be immediately anointed by divine command, he felt that his own case was hopeless. Should Samuel denounce and forsake him, he feared an immediate revolt among the people.

As a last resort, Saul entreated the prophet to honor him before the elders and the people by publicly uniting with him in the worship of God. Samuel remained, but only as a silent witness of the service. Without humility or repentance, Saul's worship could not be accepted of the Lord.

An act of justice, stern and terrible, was yet to be performed. Samuel must publicly vindicate the honor of God, and rebuke the course of Saul. He commands that the king of the Amalekites be brought before him. Above all who had fallen by the sword of Israel, Agag was responsible as the upholder of the debasing heathenism of his people, and the instigator of their revolting cruelties; it was just that upon him should fall the heaviest penalty. He came at the prophet's command, in the pride of royalty, flattering himself that he

could overawe the servant of God, and that all danger of death was past. Samuel's words dispelled his assurance: "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be made childless among women." "And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." This done, Samuel returned to his home at Ramah, Saul to his at Gilgal. The prophet and the king were never to meet again.

Samuel was a man of great tenderness of spirit, and strong affections, as is evinced by the anguish which he felt when commanded to declare the divine sentence against Saul. Yet when required to execute justice against the wicked king of Amalek, he performed the unwelcome task unflinchingly. He would maintain his fidelity to God, however great the sacrifice of personal feeling.

How wide the contrast between the conduct of Samuel and the course pursued by the king of Israel. To serve his own purpose, Saul could be exceedingly cruel; but when divinely commissioned to destroy utterly a rebellious people, he smites only the lesser criminals, and spares the one upon whom the curse of God especially rested. In his pride of heart he flattered himself that he was more merciful than his Maker. By his course of action he declared the divine requirement unjust and cruel.

The case of Saul should be a lesson to us, that God's word is to be respected and obeyed. All the crimes and calamities of ancient Israel resulted from their neglect to heed the instructions of their divine Ruler. Here is our danger. We must give diligent heed to what the Lord has spoken, even in apparently small matters. God requires his people not merely to assent to his word, but to obey it with all the heart. To comply with the Lord's instructions when it is compatible with our own interests, and to disregard them when this best suits our purpose, is to pursue the course of Saul. Pride in our own achievements or a stubborn adherence to our own will, renders the most exalted profession or the most splendid service odious in the sight of God.

September 14, 1882

Obedience Better Than Sacrifice

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." These words of reproof, addressed to the king of Israel by Samuel the prophet, contain a lesson that should be pondered by the people of God in every age. The sacrificial offerings of ancient times were of themselves of no value in the sight of God. Those who presented sacrifice before the Lord must have a true sense of its import, acknowledging their lost condition as sinners, and accepting the death of Christ in their behalf. They must repent of their transgressions of God's law, and exercise faith in Jesus as the only one who could remove their guilt. When the offering of a sacrifice was substituted for true, willing, glad service to God, when it was regarded as having any virtue or merit in itself, or when the type was exalted above the object typified, then it became displeasing to the Lord.

Had Saul presented an offering of the greatest value, from his own flocks and herds, obeying in every particular the requirements of the law, yet in a spirit of self-sufficiency, and without true penitence, his offering would have been rejected. But when he offered the spoils of Amalek, upon which the divine curse had been pronounced, how utterly abhorrent must have been his course in the sight of a holy God. He had presumed, in the presence of all Israel, to show contempt for the authority of his Maker.

"To obey is better than sacrifice." This lesson is of special importance at the present time, when the claims of God's law are urged upon our attention. The light now shining from the sacred word reveals the fact that an alien power has tampered with the statutes of Jehovah. The papacy, "the man of sin," has attempted to change the times and laws of divine appointment. The

Creator of the heavens and the earth commanded, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." This command was enforced by the example of its Author, proclaimed with his own voice, and placed in the very bosom of the decalogue. But the papal power has removed this divine ordinance, and substituted a day which God has not sanctified, and upon which he did not rest, the festival so long adored by heathens as the "venerable day of the sun."

In all this, Satan is the master spirit. He has no particular regard for Sunday, but he desires that his will shall be obeyed, rather than the will of God. It was Satan that incited Adam and Eve to transgress the command of their Maker, and he has continued this work even to our own day. We see the success of his attacks upon the law of God, in the wide-spread disregard for the ancient Sabbath of Jehovah, and the well-nigh universal veneration for the institution of heathenism and papacy. And we see the terrible results, in the skepticism which everywhere prevails. The Sabbath was instituted in Eden, as a memorial of creation. It points men directly to the true God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Thus it stands as a mighty barrier against idolatry, atheism, and infidelity. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, not one of these evils could have gained a foot-hold in our world. There could not have been an infidel nor an idolater.

Even the political regulations given to Moses when he was in secret council with Jehovah, contain important lessons for the people of every age. But the law proclaimed from Sinai in the hearing of assembled Israel, and written by the finger of God, is obligatory upon all men to the close of time.

When God commissioned Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, he did not leave it to Saul's judgment to destroy or keep alive as he should see fit. When he forbade our first parents to eat of the tree of knowledge, he did not leave it to them to eat or not to eat, as they pleased. When he commanded men to keep holy the seventh day, he did not make it optional with them to

obey if convenient, and if not to sanctify a day of their own choosing.

Many endeavor to evade the claims of the fourth commandment by urging that the law of God was given to the Jews exclusively; that the seventh day of the week is the Jewish, while the first day is the Christian Sabbath. This distinction is not recognized in the Scriptures. There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. It was by Christ that the worlds were made. By Christ the law was proclaimed from Sinai. Hence, Christ is, in the fullest sense, as he declares himself to be, "Lord of the Sabbath." He made the day sacred to himself, on which to receive the worship of angels and of men.

How dare any, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, trample upon its requirements? Saul stated, as an excuse for his transgression, that he "feared the people." Are there not many in our day, even among the professed ministers of Christ, who could give no better reason for their course? Though the word of God is plain, they dare not offend the prejudices or arouse the fears of their hearers; therefore they let them go on unwarned in their violation of God's law. In the day of final judgment the excuse of Saul will avail for them no more than it availed for him.

"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Rebellion originated with Satan. Notwithstanding the exalted position which he occupied among the heavenly host, he became dissatisfied

because he was not accorded supreme honor. Hence he questioned God's purposes and impugned his justice. He bent all his powers to allure the angels from their allegiance. The fact that he was an archangel, glorious and powerful, enabled him to exert a mighty influence. His complaints against God's government, at first met with no favor; yet being urged again and again, they were finally accepted by those who had before been loyal and happy subjects of the King of Heaven. There was not the shadow of justification or excuse for disaffection; but envy and jealousy, once cherished, gained a power that paralyzed reason and destroyed honor and loyalty. As the result, Satan and all his sympathizers were cast out of Heaven.

In his rebellion, Satan showed contempt for the authority of God, and virtually trampled upon every precept of his law. He is the grand prototype of all transgressors. To indulge unbelief, ingratitude, apostasy, defiance of God, or enmity against him, is but to repeat the course which Satan pursued in Heaven. Rebellion against God is as directly due to Satanic influence as is the practice of witchcraft. Like witchcraft, it exerts a bewitching, deceptive power almost impossible to break. Those who set themselves against the government of God have entered into an alliance with the arch-apostate, and he will not lightly lose his prey. All his power and cunning will be exercised to captivate the senses and mislead the understanding of his victims. Everything appears to them in a false light. Under his bewitching spell they can, like our first parents, see only the great benefits to be received by transgression. To achieve the desired object, they will stop at no means, however great the danger to another or the sin to themselves.

No stronger evidence can be given of Satan's delusive power than that many who are thus led by him deceive themselves with the belief that they are in the service of God. The Jewish scribes and elders in the days of Christ professed great zeal for the honor of God, and yet they rejected his Son. Jesus gave them the most conclusive evidence that he was the Promised One.

Upon one occasion, the Spirit witnessed so powerfully to his claims that the hearts of all who were in the synagogue responded to the gracious words that proceeded from his lips. Here was the turning-point with that company. As Christ's divinity flashed through humanity, their spiritual sight was quickened. A new power of discernment and appreciation came upon them, and the conviction was almost irresistible that Jesus was the Son of God. But Satan was at hand to arouse doubts, unbelief, and pride. They steeled their hearts against the Saviour's words. As they yielded to the control of Satan, they were fired with uncontrollable rage against Jesus. With one accord they would have taken his life, had not angels interposed for his deliverance.

The same spirit still exists in the hearts of those who set themselves to follow their own perverted judgment in opposition to the will of God. The struggle between truth and error will reveal the same pride and stubbornness, and the same unreasoning hatred against the advocates of truth, as was displayed by the unbelieving Jews.

He who could cause all the glories of earthly empires to pass before Christ in his hour of temptation, exerts a wizard-like power upon the minds of all who do not implicitly trust and obey God. It is this moral infatuation which steels their hearts against the influence of the Holy Spirit. It was this that led Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to rebel against the authority of Moses. Satan deluded them with the idea that they were opposing only a human leader, a man like themselves. But in rejecting God's chosen instrument, they rejected Christ, their invisible leader. They insulted the Spirit of God; and judgments followed close upon their sin. They were deceived by Satan, but by their own consent; because they placed themselves in his power.

Thus was it with Saul. He had the most decisive evidence that Samuel had been divinely appointed and inspired. It was in opposition to all the dictates of reason and sound judgment, that he ventured to disregard the command of God through the prophet. His fatal presumption must be

attributed to this Satanic sorcery, which made him blind to the sin, and reckless of its consequences. Saul had manifested great zeal to suppress idolatry and witchcraft, decreeing that all found guilty of these practices should be punished with death. Yet the prophet shows him that in his disobedience to the divine command he had been actuated by the same spirit of opposition to God, and had been as really inspired by Satan, as though he had practiced sorcery. And, further, when reproofed, he had added stubbornness to rebellion. Instead of confessing his sin, and humbly seeking pardon, he rejected reproof, and hardened his heart in transgression. He could have offered no greater insult to the Spirit of God, had he openly united with idolaters.

It is a perilous step to slight the reproofs and warnings of God's word or of his Spirit. Many, like Saul, yield to temptation until they become blind to the true character of sin. They flatter themselves that they have had some good object in view, and have done no wrong, in departing from the Lord's requirements. Thus they do despite to the Spirit of grace until its pleading voice is no longer heard, and they are left to the delusions which they have chosen.

November 2, 1882

My Health Restored

For two months my pen has been resting; but I am deeply grateful that I am now able to resume my writing. The Lord has given me an additional evidence of his mercy and loving-kindness by again restoring me to health. By my recent illness I was brought very near to the grave; but the prayers of the Lord's people availed in my behalf.

About two weeks before our camp-meeting in this State, the disease from which I had been suffering was checked, yet I gained little strength. As the time for the meeting drew near, it seemed impossible that I could take any part in it. There was but little prospect that I could even go upon the ground. I prayed much over the matter, but still remained very feeble, unable to endure any taxation. A severe cough troubled me night and day. The pain in my left lung was so great that I could not lie upon that side. I was very weak, both in body and mind. My courage and energy seemed paralyzed. I was unable even to exercise faith. In my suffering condition I could only fall helpless into the arms of my Redeemer, and there rest.

When the first Sabbath of the meeting came, I felt that I must be upon the camp-ground, for I might there meet the Divine Healer. In the afternoon I lay upon a lounge under the large tent, while Eld. Waggoner addressed the people, presenting the signs that show the day of God very near. At the close of his discourse, I decided to rise to my feet, hoping that if I thus ventured out by faith, doing all in my power, God would help me to say a few words to the people. As I began to speak, the power of God came upon me, and my strength was instantly restored.

I had hoped that my feebleness might gradually pass away, but had

looked for no immediate change. The instantaneous work wrought for me was unexpected. It cannot be attributed to imagination. The people saw me in my feebleness, and many remarked that to all appearance I was a candidate for the grave. Nearly all present marked the change which took place in me while I was addressing them. They stated that my countenance change and the deathlike paleness gave place to a healthful color. I testify to all who read these words, that the Lord has healed me. Divine power has wrought a great work for me, whereof I am glad. I was able to labor every day during the meeting, and several times spoke more than one hour and a half. My whole system was imbued with new strength and vigor. A new tide of emotions, a new and elevated faith, took possession of my soul.

During my sickness I learned some precious lessons,--learned to trust where I cannot see, while unable to do anything, to rest quietly, calmly, in the arms of Jesus. We do not exercise faith as we should. We are afraid to venture upon the word of God. In the hour of trial, we should strengthen our souls with the assurance that God's promises can never fail. Whatever he has spoken, will be done.

While I was lying upon my sick-bed, a message came by telegraph from Dr. Kellogg, "We are praying for Sister White's restoration." From friends in Oakland, and other places, the assurance came, "We are praying for you." My brethren and sisters, God has heard your prayers, Eld. Waggoner, with the members of my family, and other friends, often bowed at my bedside, and prayed earnestly for me. Sometimes the thought would come to my mind that I was too weak to have this exercise in my room; but I felt that in prayer was my only hope, and I could not give it up. In my conscious hours, those earnest petitions were a great comfort to me.

Before my sickness, I thought that I had faith in the promises of God; yet I find myself surprised at the great change wrought in me, so far exceeding my expectations. I am unworthy of this manifestation of the love

of God. I have reason to praise God more earnestly, to walk in greater humility before him, and to love him more fervently than ever before. I am placed under renewed obligation to give to the Lord all that there is of me. I must shed upon others the blessed radiance which he has permitted to shine upon me.

I do not now expect to be lifted above all infirmities and tribulations, and to have an unruffled sea on the journey Heavenward. I expect trials losses, disappointments, and bereavements; but I have the Saviour's promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We must not count it a strange thing if we are assaulted by the enemy of all righteousness. Christ has promised to be a present help in every time of need, but he has not told us that we shall be exempt from trials. On the contrary, he has plainly informed us that we shall have tribulation. To be tried and tested is a part of our moral discipline. Here we may learn the most valuable lessons, and obtain the most precious graces, if we will draw near to God, and endure all in his strength.

My sickness has taught me my own weakness, and my Saviour's patience and love, and his power to save. When passing sleepless nights, I have found hope and comfort in considering the forbearance and tenderness of Jesus toward his weak, erring disciples, and remembering that he is still the same,--unchangeable in mercy, compassion, and love. He sees our weakness, he knows how we lack faith and courage; yet he does not cast us off. He is pitiful and of tender compassion toward us.

I may fall at my post before the Lord shall come; but when all that are in their graves shall come forth, I shall if faithful, see Jesus, and be made like him. Oh, what joy unspeakable, to see him whom we love,--to see him in his glory who so loved us that he gave himself for us,--to behold those hands once pierced for our redemption, stretched out to us in blessing and welcome! What will it matter though we toil and suffer here, if we may only attain to the resurrection of life! We will patiently wait till our time of trial

ends, and then we shall raise the glad shout of victory.

December 7, 1882

Importance of Right Associations

Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. The extent to which we yield to that influence will be determined by the degree of intimacy, the constancy of the intercourse, and our love and veneration for the one with whom we associate. It is only by acquaintance and association with Christ, that we can become like him, the one faultless example.

Communion with Christ--how unspeakably precious! Such communion it is our privilege to enjoy, if we will seek it, if we will make any sacrifice to secure it. When the early disciples heard the words of Christ, they felt their need of him. They sought, they found, they followed him. They were with him in the house, at the table, in the closet in the field. They were with him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from his lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to him as servants to their master, to learn their duty. They served him cheerfully, gladly. They followed him, as soldiers follow their commander, fighting the good fight of faith. "And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Let all put the question to their own hearts, Have we been seeking the friendship and applause of the world, rather than the presence of Christ and a deeper knowledge of his will? Examine your own hearts, judge your own course. Consider what associates you are choosing. Do you seek the company of the wise, or are you willing to choose worldly associates, companions who fear not God, and obey not the gospel? Are your recreations such as to impart moral and spiritual vigor? Will they lead to purity of thought and action?

Many parents are disregarding the most sacred claims of God, by their neglect to consecrate themselves and their children to him. Many are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. They fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. They will be deceived, deluded, to their eternal ruin, unless they arouse, and with penitence and deep humiliation, return unto the Lord.

The pride, self-indulgence, impiety, and iniquity that surround us, have an evil influence upon us. Few realize the importance of shunning, so far as possible, all associations unfriendly to religious life. In choosing their surroundings, few make their spiritual prosperity the first consideration.

Parents flock with their families to the cities, because they fancy it easier to obtain a livelihood there than in the country. The children, having nothing to do when not in school, obtain a street education. From evil associates, they acquire habits of vice and dissipation. The parents see this, but because it will require a sacrifice to correct their error, they stay where they are, until Satan gains full control of their children. Better sacrifice any and every worldly consideration that to imperil the precious souls committed to your care. They will be assailed by temptations, and should be taught to meet them; but it is your duty to cut off every influence, to break up every habit, to sunder every tie, that keeps you from the most free, open, and hearty committal of yourselves and your family to God.

Instead of the crowded city, seek some retired situation where your children will be, so far as possible, shielded from temptation, and there train and educate them for usefulness. The prophet Ezekiel thus enumerates the causes that led to Sodom's sin and destruction: "Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." All who would escape the doom of Sodom, must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city.

Who will heed the counsel of the True Witness, to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eye-salve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eye-salve is that spiritual discernment which will enable us to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing the senses. Sin does not appear repulsive to those who are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life," is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying, "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry peace and safety, while Heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure-loving, consider these warnings as idle tales, and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world, and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction, the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But these scoffers perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.

It is God who holds in his hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; he will not always be trifled with. Already his judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.

Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger, and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty, and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls.

Let no one put aside the warning, and say, "It does not mean me. I will not be disturbed by this excitable message." It is the evil servant who says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." Professedly a servant of Christ, he may not, in words, deny that the Lord is soon to come; but his actions show that he puts off that day to a distant period. He guiltily presumes-on the supposed delay; he becomes careless, and his works testify his unbelief. He adopts the maxims and conforms to the practices of the world.

As soon as the evil servant begins to lose the spirit and power of the message, he manifests his unbelief. He smites his fellow-servants. He is ready to pass censure on those who are better than himself. "The poison of asps is under their lips." His course is downward. Ere long he may be found "eating and drinking with the drunken"--uniting with worldlings in their gatherings for pleasure, and, to all intents and purposes, one with them. Such is the condition of very many among us today.

In the instruction given by our Saviour to his disciples are words of admonition especially applicable to us: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Watch, pray, work--this is the true life of faith. "Pray always;" that is, be ever in the spirit of prayer, and then you will be in readiness for your Lord's coming.

The Christian life is a warfare. The apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah,

no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated? A religious life once presented difficulties, and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with the powers of darkness.

The path to Heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed, if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom, and to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?

January 4, 1883

The Old Year and the New

Already has the new year been ushered in; yet before we greet its coming, we pause to ask, What has been the history of the year that with its burden of records has now passed into eternity? The admonition of the apostle comes down the lines to every one of us, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." God forbid that at this important hour we should be so engrossed with other matters as to give no time to serious, candid, critical self-examination! Let things of minor consequence be put in the background, and let us now bring to the front the things which concern our eternal interests.

Christian brethren, as Christ's ambassador I entreat you to inquire into the character of your thoughts, tempers, purposes, words, and works during the past year. What has been the nature of your experience? Compare the records of your religious life with the Bible standard, and pass judgment upon yourselves. Have the fruits of righteousness testified that you are in the faith, or have the fruits that you have borne, witnessed against you? This is a subject worthy of earnest, careful thought. Be thorough and impartial in your examination of the past year's record. Do you see the defects in your character, and are you compelled to admit that you have made no decided advance in overcoming these unholy traits? Remember that if not overcome, these will surely separate you from the presence of a pure, holy, sin-hating God, and close the doors of the heavenly mansions against you.

How many have, in the past year, cherished heart-burnings and bitterness toward their brethren and sisters in the church? How many have thought and spoken unkindly of those who, like themselves, profess to be followers of Jesus? We may think we had an excuse for this; but is there any

provocation of sufficient weight to excuse us in harboring unkindness and malice in our hearts? Said Jesus, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." If we do not in our daily life exemplify these principles, we cannot be accepted before God. We must earnestly seek his grace to kill every fiber of the root of bitterness, and must let the love of Jesus take possession of our souls and reveal itself in our words and works, or we are not of Christ but of the wicked one.

The Church militant is not the church triumphant, and earth is not Heaven. The church is composed of erring, imperfect men and women, who are but learners in the school of Christ, to be trained, disciplined, educated for this life, and for the future, immortal life. No one of us can in our own strength represent the character of Christ; but if Jesus lives in the heart, the spirit dwelling in him will be revealed in us; all our lack will be supplied. Who will seek at the beginning of this new year to obtain a new and genuine experience in the things of God? Make your wrongs right as far as possible. Confess your errors and sins one to another. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be put away; let patience, long-suffering, kindness, and love become a part of your very being; then whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report will mature in your experience. Another year with its spotless record is before us; what shall that record be?

As a people we have not realized the work which should have been done in the last days of the old year, and much of it is left undone. The excitement of the Christmas holiday is now in the past, and what has been the record that has passed up to God? As we have professed to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, have our hearts been filled with gratitude for the infinite gift of God's dear Son? Have our thoughts and affections been such as God can accept? Has Jesus been revered and honored? Has he been made prominent in our thoughts and plans? and have our gifts flowed into his treasury? Is it not true that in many instances Christ and his claims have been forgotten in

the feasting and merriments, and that the honor due to him has been given to man? Have not the thoughts, the labor, and the means been diverted from the proper object, and turned into a channel to please, honor, and exalt the human, rather than the divine?

I have felt most keenly our danger as a people on these occasions. I have feared that selfishness would be strengthened, that idolatry would be encouraged, and the love of God be crowded from our hearts; that the record borne to the heavenly courts would show that Christ was made of less consequence than earthly friends. I have feared that feasts and social gatherings would prove to be a snare of Satan to divert the mind from Christ and his great sacrifice in our behalf; that the very associations which should lead us to contemplate the work of redemption would be lost sight of in the observance of worldly customs, and that there would be less thought of Jesus and the mansions he has gone to prepare for those who love him, than upon common occasions.

I see no objection to placing even in our churches a Christmas or New Year tree bearing fruit in gifts and offerings for the cause of God. We may thus take advantage of the occasion to turn the customary gifts of the season into the right channel. And such a holiday celebration is a useful lesson to our children, teaching them to bestow their gifts in a manner to honor their Redeemer. But when we devote our means and labor to feasting ourselves, we fail to render to God that honor which is his due.

I have resolved from this time to make Christ first and last and best in everything. I will not sanction feasts made to celebrate birthday or marriage anniversaries, but will bend all my energies to lift up Jesus among the people. I will seek to impress upon the minds of my brethren and sisters the great necessity of preparation of heart, by confession and humiliation, to be accepted of God and acknowledged as his dear children. My heart has ached as I have seen men honored, while Jesus was neglected and almost

forgotten,--liberal gifts for earthly friends, but poor and meager offerings for him to whom we owe our all.

Christ opened before us the bright path of peace, of joy, of Heaven; and what have we done for him on these occasions when every word and act should express our gratitude for his wondrous love? How stands the record of the past Christmas? Have we given to Jesus all that there is of us? Have we denied self that we might show our affection for our best friend? Have we made a record that we shall not be ashamed to meet in the day of final accounts? If all realized as they should the shortness of time, the backslidings of our people, the perils which beset our pathway, the deceptions of Satan, and his victories over unguarded souls, there would be no feasting, no mirthful gatherings to pay honor to the human; but there would be a great humbling of heart before God, and earnest prayer for pardoning and sanctifying grace.

Peter, who once denied his Lord, was afterward forgiven by our Saviour, and entrusted with the work of feeding the flock of God. Yet when condemned to death, and about to suffer for Christ's sake, the apostle begged that he might not be crucified in the same position as his Lord and Master, but that he might be nailed to the cross with his head downward. He felt that it was too great an honor for him to be put to death in the same manner as his Saviour whom he had denied. Would it not be well if our consciences were more sensitive? if we could possess more of the same spirit of contrition and humility? At a time when we are professedly celebrating Christ's birth, should we not keep self in the background? Would it not be more appropriate to abase self and to exalt Jesus?

The perfection of our Saviour's character awakens the admiration of angels and of men. Here is an exhaustless theme for thought. The brightest and most exalted of the sons of the morning heralded his glory at creation, and announced his birth with songs of gladness. They veil their faces before

him as he sits upon his throne; they cast their crowns at his feet, and sing his triumphs as they behold his resplendent glory. Our souls are cold and dull because we do not dwell upon the matchless charms of our Redeemer. If we occupy our thoughts in contemplating his love and mercy, we shall reflect the same in our life and character; for by beholding, we become changed. Oh, the mysteries of redemption! Only by exalting Jesus and abasing self can we celebrate aright the birth of the Son of God.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, there is need of an impartial examination of our hearts to dispel the pleasing illusions of self-love. Our condition is helpless and hopeless unless infinite mercy is granted us daily, and pardon is written against our names in the heavenly records. Those only who see and feel their spiritual necessities will go to Jesus for that help which they so much need, and which he only can give. He alone can cleanse us from all sin. He alone can place upon us the robe of righteousness.

What fruit have we borne during the year that is now past? What has been our influence upon others? Whom have we gathered to the fold of Christ? The eyes of the world are upon us. Are we living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men? Do we follow the example of Jesus in self-denial, in meekness, in humility, in forbearance, in cross-bearing, in devotion? Will the world be compelled to acknowledge us to be the servants of Christ? What is our past record? What will be our future record? If we cannot without pain trace the workings of our own hearts and review the record of our lives, how can we stand before the Judge of all the earth, who is infinitely pure and holy, and who will determine our cases by the unerring standard of his perfect law?

Shall we not in this new year seek to correct the errors of the past? It behooves us individually to cultivate the grace of Christ, to be meek and lowly of heart, to be firm, unwavering, steadfast in the truth; for thus only can we advance in holiness, and be made fit for the inheritance of the saints

in light. Let us begin the year with an entire renunciation of self; let us pray for clear discernment, that we may understand our Saviour's claims upon us, and that we may always and everywhere be witnesses for Christ.

Our time and talents belong to God, to be used for his honor and glory. It should be our earnest, anxious effort to let the light shine through our life and character to illumine the pathway Heavenward, that souls may be attracted from the broad road to the narrow way of holiness. Oh, that the followers of Christ had less desire to devote labor, time, and money, to feasts and celebrations in honor of earthly friends, and a greater desire to honor Jesus! I entreat you to bring to him your gifts and offerings, and withhold not yourselves. Strong men are needed in the church, successful workers in the Lord's vineyard, men and women who will labor that the church may be transformed to the image of Christ, rather than conformed to the customs and practices of the world. We have everything to gain or to lose. Let us see that we are on the side of Christ--the gaining side; that we are making sure work for Heaven.

"Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"

"Strong in the strength which God supplies Through his eternal Son."

January 11, 1883

Tests of Christian Character

"He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk, even as He walked." "And if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Conformity to Jesus will not be unobserved by the world. It is a subject of notice and comment. Yet the Christian may not be conscious of the great change; for the more closely he resembles Christ in character, the more humble will be his opinion of himself. Those who have the deepest experience in the things of God, are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. They have the humblest thoughts of self, and the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ. They feel that the lowest place in his service is too honorable for them.

Moses did not know that his face shone with a brightness painful and terrifying to those who had not, like himself, communed with God. Paul had a very humble opinion of his own advancement in the Christian life. He says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." He speaks of himself as the "chief of sinners." Yet Paul had been highly honored of the Lord. He had been taken, in holy vision, to the third heaven, and had there received revelations of divine glory which he could not be permitted to make known.

John the Baptist was pronounced by our Saviour the greatest of prophets. Yet what a contrast between the language of this man of God and that of many who profess to be ministers of the cross. When asked if he was the Christ, John declares himself unworthy even to unloose his Master's sandals. When his disciples came with the complaint that the attention of the people was turned to the new Teacher, John reminded them that he himself had claimed to be only the forerunner of the Promised One. To Christ, as the

bridegroom, belongs the first place in the affections of his people. "The friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all." "He that hath received His testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true."

It is such workers that are needed in the cause of God today. The self-sufficient, the envious and jealous, the critical and fault-finding, can well be spared from his sacred work. God is not straitened for men or means. He calls for workers who are true and faithful, pure and holy; for those who have felt their need of the atoning blood of Christ and the sanctifying grace of his Spirit.

When we see those who profess the faith firm in principle, fearless in duty, zealous in the cause of God, yet humble and lowly, gentle and tender, patient toward all, ready to forgive, manifesting love for souls for whom Christ died, we do not need to inquire, Are they Christians? They give unmistakable evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of him. When men reveal the opposite traits, when they are proud, vain, frivolous, worldly-minded, avaricious, unkind, censorious, we need not be told with whom they are associating, who is their most intimate friend. They may not believe in witchcraft, but notwithstanding this, they are holding communion with an evil spirit.

To this class I would say, "Glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

When the Pharisees and Sadducees flocked to the baptism of John, that fearless preacher of righteousness addressed them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." These men were actuated by unworthy motives in coming to John. They were men of poisonous principles and corrupt practices. Yet they had no sense of their true condition. Filled with pride and ambition, they would not hesitate at any means to exalt themselves and strengthen their influence with the people. They came to receive baptism at the hand of John that they might better carry out these designs.

John read their motives, and met them with the searching inquiry, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Had they heard the voice of God speaking to their hearts, they would have given evidence of the fact, by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. No such fruit was seen. They had heard the warning as merely the voice of man. They were charmed with the power and boldness with which John spoke; but the Spirit of God did not send conviction to their hearts, and as the sure result bring forth fruit unto eternal life. They gave no evidence of a change of heart. Without the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, John would have them understand that no outward ceremony could benefit them.

None are farther from the kingdom of Heaven than self-righteous formalists, filled with pride at their own attainments, while they are wholly destitute of the spirit of Christ; while envy, jealousy, or love of praise and popularity controls them. They belong to the same class that John addressed as a generation of vipers, children of the wicked one. They serve the cause of Satan more effectively than the vilest profligate; for the latter does not disguise his true character; he appears what he is.

God requires fruits meet for repentance. Without such fruit, our profession of faith is of no value. The Lord is able to raise up true believers among those who have never heard his name. "Think not to say within

yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

God is not dependent upon men who are unconverted in heart and life. He will never favor any man who practices iniquity. "And now the ax is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

Those who laud and flatter the minister, while they neglect the works of righteousness, give unmistakable evidence that they are converted to the minister and not to God. We inquire, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Was it the voice of the Holy Spirit or merely the voice of man which you heard in the message sent from God? The fruit borne will testify to the character of the tree.

No outward forms can make us clean; no ordinance, administered by the saintliest of men, can take the place of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God must do its work upon the heart. All who have not experienced its regenerating power are chaff among the wheat. Our Lord has his fan in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. In the coming day, he will discern "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

The spirit of Christ will be revealed in all who are born of God. Strife and contention cannot arise among those who are controlled by his Spirit. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." The church will rarely take a higher stand than is taken by her ministers. There is need of a converted ministry and a converted people. Shepherds who watch for souls as they that must give account will lead the flock on in paths of peace and holiness. Their success in this work will be in proportion to their own growth in grace and knowledge of the truth. When the teachers are sanctified, soul, body, and spirit, they can impress upon the people the importance of such sanctification.

The Lord has not closed Heaven against his people, but their own course of continual backsliding has separated them from him. Pride, and love of the world, live in the heart. Few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. The general opinion is that the church is flourishing, and that peace and prosperity are in all her borders.

The warnings of God's word, and the influence of his Spirit, have alike been neglected. The result is apparent in the deplorable condition of the church. Impurity is today wide-spread, even among those who profess to be followers of Christ. Passion is unrestrained; the animal propensities are gaining strength by indulgence, while the moral powers are constantly becoming weaker. Many are eagerly participating in worldly, demoralizing amusements which God's word forbids. Thus they sever their connection with God, and rank themselves with the pleasure-lovers of the world. The sins that destroyed the antediluvians and the cities of the plain exist today--not merely in heathen lands, or with the avowed unbeliever, but among professors of Christianity. Base passions defile the mind and corrupt the soul. Some who are in the vilest iniquity have borrowed the livery of Heaven, that they may serve Satan more effectively. If God should present these sins before us as they appear in his sight, we would be filled with shame and terror.

And what has caused this alarming condition? Many have accepted the theory of religious truth, who have not been converted to its principles. There are few indeed who feel true sorrow for sin; who have deep, pungent convictions of the depravity of the unregenerate nature. The heart of stone is not exchanged for a heart of flesh. Few are willing to fall upon the Rock, and be broken.

No matter who you are, or what your life has been, you can be saved only in God's appointed way. You must repent; you must fall helpless on the

Rock, Christ Jesus. You must feel your need of a physician, and of the one only remedy for sin, the blood of Christ. This remedy can be secured only by repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the work is yet to be begun by many who profess to be Christians. Like the Pharisees of old, they feel no need of a Saviour. They are self-sufficient, self-exalted. Said Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The blood of Christ will avail for none but those who feel their need of its cleansing power.

What surpassing love and condescension, that when we had no claim upon divine mercy, Christ was willing to undertake our redemption! But our great Physician requires of every soul unquestioning submission. We are never to prescribe for our own case. Christ must have the entire control of will and action, or he will not undertake in our behalf.

Many are not sensible of their condition and their danger; and there is much in the nature and manner of Christ's work averse to every worldly principle, and opposed to the pride of the human heart. Jesus requires us to trust ourselves wholly to his hands, and confide in his love and wisdom.

We may flatter ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our moral character has been correct, and we need not humble ourselves before God, like the common sinner. But we must be content to enter into life in the very same way as the chief of sinners. We must renounce our own righteousness, and plead for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us. We must depend wholly upon Christ for our strength. Self must die. We must acknowledge that all we have is from the exceeding riches of divine grace. Let this be the language of our hearts, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of

Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it.

God spared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for our offenses, and raised him again for our justification. Through Christ we may present our petitions at the throne of grace. Through him, unworthy as we are, we may obtain all spiritual blessings. Do we come to him, that we may have life?

Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. What we need is experimental religion. How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and his love? The psalmist tells us--not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but--"Taste and see that the Lord is good." Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

Many believe in the wrath of God, but put forth no earnest efforts to escape it. They believe in Heaven, but make no sacrifice to obtain it. They believe in the value of the soul, and that ere long its redemption ceaseth forever; yet they neglect precious opportunities to make their peace with God. They read the Bible, but its threatenings do not alarm or its promises win them. They approve things that are excellent, yet they follow the way in which God has forbidden them to go. They know a refuge, but do not avail themselves of it. They know a remedy for sin, but do not use it. They know the right, but have no relish for it. All their knowledge will but increase their condemnation. They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good.

To become a disciple of Christ is to deny self and follow Jesus through evil as well as good report. Few are doing this now. Many prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so; but what will be done in the end thereof? What will be the decision when their work, with all its results, shall be brought in review before God?

The watchmen are responsible for the condition of the people. If they open the door to pride, envy, doubt, and other sins, there will be strife, hatred, and every evil work. Jesus, the meek and lowly One, asks an entrance as our guest, but many are afraid to bid him enter. He has spoken to us in both the Old and the New Testament; he is speaking to us still by his Spirit and his providence. His instructions are designed to make men true to God, and true to themselves.

Jesus took upon himself man's nature, that he might leave a pattern for humanity, complete, perfect. He proposes to make us like himself, true in every purpose, feeling, and thought--true in heart, soul, and life. This is Christianity. Our fallen nature must be purified, ennobled, consecrated by obedience to the truth. Christian faith will never harmonize with worldly principles; Christian integrity is opposed to all deception and pretense. The man who cherished the most of Christ's love in the soul, who reflects the Saviour's image most perfectly, is, in the sight of God, the truest, most noble, most honorable man upon the earth.

January 18, 1883

Christian Unity

"I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Union is the strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God, by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord's people.

The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time, to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are Judgment-bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. With what care should we seek so to present the truth that others by beholding its beauty and simplicity may be led to receive it. If our characters testify of its sanctifying power, we shall be a continual light to others,--living epistles, known and read of all men. We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord, and strife.

That union and love might exist among his disciples, was the burden of our Saviour's last prayer for them prior to his crucifixion. With the agony of the cross before him, his solicitude was not for himself but for those whom he should leave to carry forward his work in the earth. The severest trials awaited them; but Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit

of bitterness and division. Hence he prayed:

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

That prayer of Christ embraces all his followers, to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of his people; he is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken his church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent's heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive his love. He has pledged himself to be our helper.

When Christ ascended to Heaven, he left the work on earth in the hands of his servants, the under-shepherds. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

In sending forth his ministers, our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them he communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness. The work of Christ's servants is not merely to preach the truth; they are to watch for souls, as they that must render account to God. They are to reprove, rebuke, exhort with long-suffering and doctrine.

All who have been benefited by the labors of God's servant, should, according to their ability, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love.

There is nothing selfish or narrow in the religion of Christ. Its principles are diffusive and aggressive. It is represented by Christ as the bright light, as the saving salt, as the transforming leaven. With zeal, earnestness, and devotion, the servants of God will seek to spread far and near the knowledge of the truth; yet they will not neglect to labor for the strength and unity of the church. They will watch carefully lest opportunity be given for diversity and division to creep in.

There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have original plans and methods of labor. They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress, and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. Some are watching their fellow-laborers and anxiously endeavoring to point out their errors, when they should rather be earnestly seeking to prepare their own souls for the great conflict before them. The Saviour bids them, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master, if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth. Every living Christian will be a disinterested worker for God. The Lord

has given us a knowledge of his will, that we may become channels of light to others. If Christ is abiding in us, we cannot help working for him. It is impossible to retain the favor of God, and enjoy the blessing of a Saviour's love, and yet be indifferent to the danger of those who are perishing in their sins. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Paul urges the Ephesians to preserve unity and love: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The apostle exhorts his brethren to manifest in their lives the power of the truth which he had presented to them. By meekness and gentleness, forbearance and love, they were to exemplify the character of Christ and the blessings of his salvation. There is but one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith. As members of the body of Christ, all believers are animated by the same spirit and the same hope. Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world, and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course. Paul's instructions were not written alone for the church in his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us. What are we doing to preserve unity in the bonds of peace?

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. "They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people; and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Those primitive Christians were few in numbers, without wealth or honor, yet they exerted a mighty influence. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evil-doers wherever their character and their doctrines were known. For this

cause they were hated by the wicked, and persecuted even unto death.

The standard of holiness is the same today as in the days of the apostles. Neither the promises nor the requirements of God have lost aught of their force. But what is the state of the Lord's professed people as compared with the early church? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the gospel? Alas, "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

The Lord planted his church as a vine in a fruitful field. With tenderest care he nourished and cherished it, that it might bring forth the fruits of righteousness. His language is, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" But this vine of God's planting has inclined to the earth, and entwined its tendrils about human supports. Its branches are extended far and wide, but it bears the fruit of a degenerate vine. The Master of the vineyard declares. When I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes.

The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon his church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen away from that which she had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come gradually, and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid, her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed, and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church.

Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: "Ye are yet carnal, for whereas

there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God's word. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given.

Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and courtesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren. Diligent heed should be given to the instructions of God's word. Let every manifestation of animosity or unkindness be checked, let every root of bitterness be removed. When trouble arises between brethren, the Saviour's rule should be strictly followed. All possible effort should be made to effect a reconciliation, but if the parties stubbornly persist in remaining at variance, they should be suspended till they can harmonize.

Upon the occurrence of trials in the church, let every member examine his own heart to see if the cause of trouble does not exist within. By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious longing for honor or position, a lack of self-control, by the indulgence of passion or prejudice, by instability or lack of judgment, the church may be disturbed, and her peace sacrificed.

Difficulties are often caused by the venders of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds, and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying, "Report, and we will report it." This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle, or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church. (To be Concluded)

January 25, 1883

Christian Unity

Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from Heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality, and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits.

We should seek for true goodness, rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren.

Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation, and malice among God's people. We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights are invaded, when there is no real cause for such feelings. Those whose love for self is stronger than their love for Christ and his cause, will place their own interests first, and resort to almost any expedient to guard and maintain them. When they consider themselves injured by their brethren, some will even go to law, instead of following the Saviour's rule. Even many who appear to be conscientious Christians are hindered by pride and self-esteem from going privately to those they think in error, that they may talk the matter over in the spirit of Christ, and pray for one another. Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies, and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ

afresh, and putting him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church, they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority.

Paul writes to the Galatians: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. He greatly desired that the false teachers might be separated from the church, but their influence had affected so many of the believers that it seemed hazardous to take action against them. There was danger of causing strife and division which would be ruinous to the spiritual interests of the church. He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love. He declared that all the requirements of the law setting forth our duty to our fellow-men are fulfilled in love to one another. He warned them that if they indulged hatred and strife, dividing into parties, and like the brutes biting and devouring one another, they would bring upon themselves present unhappiness and future ruin. There was but one way to prevent these terrible evils, and that was, as the apostle enjoined upon them, to "walk in the Spirit." They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. When Christians contend, Satan comes in to take control. How often has he succeeded in destroying the peace and harmony of churches. What fierce controversies, what bitterness, what hatred, has a very little matter started! What hopes have been blasted, how many families have been rent asunder by discord and contention!

Paul charged his brethren to beware lest in trying to correct the faults of others, they should commit sins equally great themselves. He warns them that hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and envyings are as truly the works of the flesh as are lasciviousness, adultery, drunkenness, and murder, and will as surely close the gate of Heaven against the guilty.

Christ declares, "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Whoever by willful deception or by a wrong example misleads a disciple of Christ, is guilty of a great sin. Whoever would make him an object of slander or ridicule is insulting Jesus. Our Saviour marks every wrong done to his followers.

How were those punished who in olden time made light of what God had chosen as sacred to himself? Belshazzar and his thousand lords profaned the golden vessels of Jehovah, and praised the idols of Babylon. But the God whom they denied was a witness of the unholy scene. In the midst of their sacrilegious mirth, a bloodless hand was seen tracing mysterious characters upon the palace wall. Filled with terror, king and courtiers heard their doom pronounced by the servant of the Most High.

Let those who delight to trace words of calumny and falsehood against the servants of Christ remember that God is a witness of their deeds. Their slanderous touch is not profaning soulless vessels, but the characters of those whom Christ has purchased by his blood. The hand which traced the characters upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace, keeps faithful record of every act of injustice or oppression committed against God's people.

Sacred history presents striking examples of the Lord's jealous care for the weakest of his children. During the journeying of Israel in the wilderness, the weary and feeble ones who had fallen behind the body of the people,

were attacked and slain by the cowardly and cruel Amalekites. Afterward Israel made war with the Amalekites and defeated them. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Again the charge was repeated by Moses just before his death, that it might not be forgotten by his posterity: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God.... Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it."

If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must he regard those who, professing to be his people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in his cause. Satan has great power over those who yield to his control. It was the chief priests and elders--the religious teachers of the people--that urged on the murderous throng from the Judgment Hall to Calvary. There are hearts today among the professed followers of Christ, inspired by the same spirit that clamored for the crucifixion of our Saviour. Let the workers of evil remember that to all their acts there is one witness, a holy, sin-hating God. He will bring all their works into Judgment, with every secret thing.

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work! Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do, if we will work in Christ's name,

and with a loving, tender spirit.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Here, again, our duty is plainly set before us. How can the professed followers of Christ so lightly regard these inspired injunctions? Not long since I received a letter describing a circumstance in which a brother had manifested indiscretion. Although it occurred years ago, and was a very small matter, hardly worthy of a second thought, the writer stated that it had forever destroyed her confidence in that brother. If that sister's life should show, upon review, no greater errors, it would be indeed a marvel, for human nature is very weak. I have been and am still fellowshiping as brethren and sisters those who have been guilty of grave sins, and who even now do not see their sins as God sees them. But the Lord bears with these persons, and why should not I? He will yet cause his Spirit so to impress their hearts that sin will appear to them as it appeared to Paul, exceedingly sinful.

We know but little of our own hearts, and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us, and which we should manifest toward one another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals, like ourselves. Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been over-borne by temptation, and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error; what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from Bible history that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither did he cast off his servants. When they repented, he graciously forgave them, and revealed to them his presence, and wrought through them. Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others. We should give heed to the instruction of the

apostle: "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We may fall under temptation, and need all the forbearance which we are called to exercise toward the offender. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The apostle adds a caution to the independent and self-confident: "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself... Every man shall bear his own burden." He who considers himself superior in judgment and experience to his brethren, and despises their counsel and admonition, evinces that he is in a dangerous delusion. The heart is deceitful. He should test his character and life by the Bible standard. God's word sheds an unerring light upon the pathway of man's life. Notwithstanding the many influences which arise to divert and distract the mind, those who honestly seek God for wisdom will be guided into the right course. Every man must at last stand or fall for himself, not according to the opinion of the party that sustains or opposes him, not according to the judgment of any man, but according to his real character in the sight of God. The church may warn, counsel, and admonish, but it cannot compel any to take a right course. Whoever persists in disregarding the word of God must bear his own burden,--answer to God for himself, and suffer the consequences of his own course.

The Lord has given us in his word definite, unmistakable instructions, by obedience to which we may preserve union and harmony in the church. Brethren and sisters, are you giving heed to these inspired injunctions? Are you Bible-readers, and doers of the word? Are you striving to fulfill the prayer of Christ, that his followers might be one? "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." "Finally, brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

February 1, 1883

Brotherly Love

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The more closely we resemble our Saviour in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom he died. Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. It is impossible to estimate the power of such an example. Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries, nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church. Peace and prosperity can be enjoyed only as meekness and love are in active exercise.

In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul sets forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

No matter how high his profession, he whose heart is not imbued with love for God and for his fellowmen, is not a disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith, and even have power to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality, but should he from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God.

In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if destitute of the gold of love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.

The apostle proceeds to specify the fruits of love: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind. Charity envieth not." The divine love ruling in the heart exterminates pride and selfishness. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." The purest joy springs from the deepest humiliation. The strongest and noblest characters rest upon the foundation of patience and love, and trusting submission to the will of God.

Charity "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." The heart in which love rules, will not be filled with passion or revenge, by injuries which pride and self love would deem unbearable. Love is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favorable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.

Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of others; but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair fame of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.

"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Love not only bears with others' faults, but cheerfully submits to whatever suffering or inconvenience such forbearance makes necessary. This love "never faileth." It can never lose its value; it is the attribute of Heaven. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people, enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins, we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another. Let each ask himself, Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long, and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!

Paul writes to the Colossians: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful." "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

The fact that we are under so great obligation to Christ, places us under the most sacred obligation to those whom he died to redeem. We are to manifest toward them the same sympathy, the same tender compassion and unselfish love, which Christ has manifested toward us. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections.

Our Saviour taught his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." A great blessing is here asked upon conditions. We ourselves state these conditions. We ask that the mercy of God toward us may be measured by the mercy which we extend to others. Christ declares that this is the rule by which the Lord will deal with us: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive

not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Wonderful terms! but how little are they understood or heeded. One of the most common sins, and one that is attended with most pernicious results, is the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit. How many will cherish animosity or revenge, and then bow before God and ask to be forgiven as they forgive. Surely, they can have no true sense of the import of this prayer, or they would not dare to take it upon their lips. We are dependent upon the pardoning mercy of God every day and every hour; how then can we cherish bitterness and malice toward our fellow-sinners! If, in all their daily intercourse, Christians would carry out the principles of this prayer, what a blessed change would be wrought in the church and in the world! This would be the most convincing testimony that could be given to the reality of Bible religion.

God requires more of his followers than many realize. If we would not build our hopes of Heaven upon a false foundation, we must accept the Bible as it reads, and believe that the Lord means what he says. He requires nothing of us that he will not give us grace to perform. We shall have no excuse to offer in the day of God if we fail to reach the standard set before us in his word.

We are admonished by the apostle: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to

that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." The apostle admonishes his brethren, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that after having professed the gospel they should not conduct themselves as did the Gentiles, but should show by their daily deportment that they had been truly converted.

"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Once they were corrupt, degraded, enslaved by lustful passions; they were drugged by worldly opiates, blinded, bewildered, and betrayed by Satan's devices. Now that they had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, there must be a decided change in their life and character.

The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness, and to have one's name enrolled upon the

church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and his disciples trod,--the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice. (To be Concluded)

February 8, 1883

Brotherly Love

"Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Man by wicked works alienated himself from God, but Christ gave his life that all who would, might be freed from sin and re-instated in the favor of the Creator. It was the anticipation of a redeemed, holy universe that prompted Christ to make this great sacrifice. Have we accepted the privileges so dearly purchased? Are we followers of God as dear children, or are we servants of the prince of darkness? Are we worshipers of Jehovah, or of Baal? of the living God, or of idols?

No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and his attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as he is revealed in his word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in his place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of his throne. He is a God of love, of pity, and tender compassion. Thus he is represented in his Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore, and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God.

If we are following Christ, his merits, imputed to us, come up before the Father as sweet odor. And the graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance, pervading our life, will have power to soften and

subdue hard hearts, and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked, and many churches rendered powerless. Those who know least of devotion, who are least connected with God, are the ones who will most eagerly seek the highest place. They have no sense of their weakness and their deficiencies of character. Unless many of our young ministers shall feel the converting power of God, their labors will be a hindrance rather than a help to the church. They may have learned the doctrines of Christ, but they have not learned Christ. The soul that is constantly looking unto Jesus will see his self-denying love and deep humility, and will copy his example. Pride, ambition, deceit, hatred, selfishness, must be cleansed from the heart. With many, these evil traits are partially subdued, but not thoroughly uprooted from the heart. Under favorable circumstances they spring up anew, and ripen into rebellion against God. Here lies a terrible danger. To spare any sin is to cherish a foe that only awaits an unguarded moment to cause our ruin.

Ministers should see that their own hearts are sanctified through the truth, and then labor to secure these results for their converts. It is pure religion that ministers and people need. Those who put away iniquity from their hearts, and stretch out their hands in earnest supplication unto God will have that help which he alone can give them. A ransom has been paid for the souls of men, that they may have an opportunity to escape from the thralldom of sin, and obtain pardon, purity, and Heaven. God hears the cry of

the lowly and contrite. Those who frequent the throne of grace, offering up sincere, earnest petitions for divine wisdom and power, will not fail to become active, useful servants of Christ. They may not possess great talents, but with humility of heart, and firm reliance upon Jesus, they may do a good work in bringing souls to Christ. They can reach men through God. Ministers of Christ should ever feel that a sacred work engages all their souls, their efforts should be for the edification of the body of Christ and not to exalt themselves before the people. And while Christians should esteem the faithful minister as Christ's ambassador, they should avoid all praise of the man.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope. Those who are eagerly studying how they may secure the pre-eminence, should study rather how they may gain that wisdom which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." He who has Christ formed within, the hope of glory, will "show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

Peter exhorts the believers: "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and

ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

When the right way is so plainly marked out, why do not the professed people of God walk in it? Why do they not study and pray and labor earnestly to be of one mind? Why do they not seek to cherish compassion for one another, to love as brethren, instead of rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing? Who does not love life and desire good days? yet how few comply with the conditions, to refrain the tongue from evil, and the lips from speaking guile. Few are willing to follow the Saviour's example of meekness and humility. Many ask the Lord to humble them, but are unwilling to submit to the needful discipline. When the test comes, when trials or even annoyances occur, the heart rebels, and the tongue utters words that are like poisoned arrows or blasting hail.

Evil-speaking is a two-fold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife, reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. How miserable is the tale-bearer, the surmiser of evil! He is a stranger to true happiness.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." Grace and peace rest upon those who refuse to join in the strife of tongues. When venders of scandal are passing from family to family, those who fear God will be chaste keepers at home. The time that is so often worse than wasted in idle, frivolous, and malicious gossip, should be given to higher and nobler objects. If the professed followers of Jesus would indeed become missionaries for God, visiting the sick and afflicted, and laboring patiently and kindly for the erring--in short, if they would copy the Pattern--the church would have prosperity in all her borders.

The sin of evil-speaking begins with the cherishing of evil thoughts. Guile includes impurity in all its forms. An impure thought tolerated, an

unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. "Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith, and with all the heart. Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices.

By faith and prayer all may meet the requirements of the gospel. No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act, before passion can dominate over reason, or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." Cry unto the Lord, tempted soul. Cast yourself, helpless, unworthy, upon Jesus, and claim this very promise. The Lord will hear. He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and he will help in every time of temptation.

Have you fallen into sin? Then without delay seek God for mercy and pardon. When David was convicted of his sin, he poured out his soul in penitence and humiliation before God. He felt that he could endure the loss of his crown, but he could not be deprived of the favor of God. Mercy is still extended to the sinner. The Lord is calling to us in all our wanderings, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." The blessing of God may be ours, if we will heed the pleading voice of his Spirit. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

February 15, 1883

The Love of Christ

Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of his Father's displeasure which made his cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of his Father's wrath that broke his heart. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon him, and forced from his pale and quivering lips the anguished cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus had united with the Father in making the world. Amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God, blind and deluded men alone remain unfeeling. The chief priests and elders revile God's dear Son while in his expiring agonies. Yet inanimate nature groans in sympathy with her bleeding, dying Author. The earth trembles. The sun refuses to behold the scene. The heavens gather blackness. Angels have witnessed the scene of suffering until they can look on no longer, and hide their faces from the horrid sight. Christ is in despair! He is dying! His Father's approving smile is removed, and angels are not permitted to lighten the gloom of the terrible hour. They could only behold in amazement their loved Commander suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law.

Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb. Bright hope did not present to him his coming forth from the tomb a conqueror, and his Father's acceptance of his sacrifice. The sin of the world with all its terribleness was felt to the utmost by the Son of God. The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty, which was death, were all that he could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted

to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of his Father that he could not be reconciled to his Son. The fierce temptation that his own Father had forever left him, caused that piercing cry from the cross "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like the pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt even by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup even to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the near future, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord into thy hands I commit my spirit." He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are heard by the

amazed spectators the dying words of the Man of Calvary, "It is finished."

Nature sympathized with the sufferings of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, and the terrific darkness, proclaimed that it was the Son of God that died. There was a mighty earthquake. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they beheld the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of the rocks. The mocking and jeering of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way in the darkness to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God?"

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished!" Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is finished." The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had been thus far carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! what amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. And oh! what is man that such a price should be paid for his redemption?

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man's stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian's heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-

worship cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man's redemption.

All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to redeem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.

Christ has shown that his love was stronger than death. Even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness his love for perishing sinners increased. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and appear as if frozen in the cause of God. But here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotions. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imagination can never fully reach, so that we can comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless love of the Saviour, should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And we

may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the portion of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ?

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, the evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright hope. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the history of the humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not stir the soul and affect the life any more, nor awaken deeper interest than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures. Others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others for his dear sake have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs.

But bodily pain was only a small part of the agony of God's dear Son. The sins of the world were upon him, and also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffered the penalty of the law. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father

had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And he was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that Christ was in his hands, and that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son, and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God, why need he die? God could save him from death.

Christ yielded not in the least degree to the torturing foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the enterprise of everlasting life every other sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been despised by many. The heart's devotions have been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice, and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels awaiting to execute his commands.

Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful men "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is love that no language can express. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

March 22, 1883

Deceitfulness of Riches

Some who profess to believe the truth are lacking in discernment, and fail to appreciate moral worth. Persons who boast much of their fidelity to the cause, and talk as though they think they know all that is worth knowing, are not humble in heart. They may have property, and this is sufficient to give them influence with some, but it will not raise them one jot in favor with God. Money has power and sways a mighty influence. Excellence of character and moral worth are often overlooked, if possessed by the poor man. But what does God care for money? for property? The cattle upon a thousand hills are his. The world and all that is therein are his. The inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers before him. Men and property are but as the small dust of the balance. He is no respecter of persons.

Men of property often look upon their wealth and say, "By my wisdom have I gotten me this wealth." But who gave them power to get wealth? God has bestowed upon them the ability which they possess, but instead of giving him the glory they take it to themselves. He will prove them and try them, and will bring their glorifying to the dust; he will remove their strength, and scatter their possessions. Instead of a blessing, they will realize a curse. An act of wrong or oppression, a deviation from the right way, should no sooner be tolerated in a man who possesses property than in a man who has none. All the riches that the most wealthy ever possessed are not of sufficient value to cover the smallest sin before God; they will not be accepted as a ransom for transgression. Repentance, true humility, a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, alone will be accepted of God. And no man can have true humility before God unless the same is exemplified before others. Nothing less than repentance, confession, and forsaking of sin is acceptable to God.

Many rich men have obtained their wealth by close deal, by advantaging themselves and disadvantaging their poorer fellow-men, or their brethren; and these very men glory in their shrewdness and keenness in a bargain. But the curse of God will rest upon every dollar thus obtained, and upon the increase of it on their hands. Consider the force of our Saviour's words, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Those who possess the ability to acquire property need to be constantly on the watch, or they will turn their acquisitiveness to bad account. Thus many fall into temptation, overreach, receive more for a thing than it is worth, and sacrifice the generous, benevolent, noble principles of their manhood for sordid gain.

Many who profess to be followers of Christ, so love the world and the things that are in the world that they have been corrupted by its spirit and influence; the divine has disappeared from their characters, and the Satanic has crept in, transforming them to serve the purposes of Satan, to be instruments of unrighteousness. Then in contrast with these men are the industrious, honest poor men, who stand ready to help those who need help, who would rather suffer themselves to be disadvantaged by their wealthy brethren than to manifest so close and acquisitive a spirit as they manifest; men who esteem a clear conscience, and right, even in little things, of greater value than riches. They are so ready to help others, so willing to do all the good in their power, that they do not amass wealth; their earthly possessions do not increase. If there is a benevolent object to call forth means or labor, they are the first to be interested in and respond to it and frequently do far beyond their real ability, and thus deny themselves some needed good, to carry out their benevolent purposes.

Because these men can boast of but little earthly treasure, they may be looked upon as deficient in ability, in judgment, and in wisdom. They may be counted of no special worth, and their influence may not be esteemed by men; yet how does God regard these poor wise men? They are regarded

precious in his sight, and although not increasing their treasure upon earth, they are laying up for themselves an incorruptible treasure in the heavens, and in doing this they manifest a wisdom as far superior to that of the wise, calculating, acquisitive professed Christian, as the divine and Godlike is superior to the earthly, carnal, and Satanic. It is moral worth that God values. A Christian character unblotted with avarice, possessing quietness, meekness, and humility, is more precious in his sight than the most fine gold, even the golden wedge of Ophir.

Wealthy men are to be tested more closely than they ever yet have been. If they stand the test and overcome the blemishes upon their character, and as faithful stewards of Christ render to God the things that are his, it will be said to them, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Mark the parable of the unjust steward: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

If men fail to render to God that which he has lent them to use to his glory, and thus rob him they will make an entire failure. He has lent them means which they can improve upon by losing no opportunity to do good, and thus they may be constantly laying up treasure in Heaven. But if, like the man who had one talent, they hide it, fearing that God will get that which their talent gains, they will not only lose the increase which will finally be awarded the faithful steward, but also the principal which God gave them to

work upon. Because they have robbed God, they will not have laid up treasure in Heaven, and they lose their earthly treasure also. They have no habitation on earth, and no Friend in Heaven to receive them into the everlasting habitation of the righteous.

Christ declares, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"--cannot serve God and your riches too. "The Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him." Mark the words of Christ to them: "Ye are they who justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men [which is riches acquired by oppression, by deception, by overreaching, by fraud, or in any other dishonest manner] is abomination in the sight of God." Then Christ presents the two characters, the rich man who was clothed with purple and fine linen, and who fared sumptuously every day, and Lazarus, who was in abject poverty, and loathsome to the sight, and who begged the few crumbs which the rich man despised. Our Saviour shows his estimate of the two. Although Lazarus was in so deplorable and mean a condition, he had true faith, true moral worth, which God saw, and which he considered of so great value that he took this poor, despised sufferer, and placed him in the most exalted position, while the honored and wealthy ease-loving rich man was thrust out from the presence of God, and plunged into misery and woe unutterable. God did not value the riches of this wealthy man, because he had not true moral worth. His character was worthless. His riches did not recommend him to God, nor have any influence to secure his favor.

By this parable Christ would teach his disciples not to judge or value men by their wealth, or by the honors which they received of others. Such was the course pursued by the Pharisees, who, while possessing both riches and worldly honor, were valueless in the sight of God; and more than this, were despised and rejected of him,--cast out from his sight as disgusting to

him because there was no moral worth or soundness in them. They were corrupt, sinful, and abominable in his sight. The poor man, despised by his fellow-mortals, and disgusting to their sight, was valuable in the sight of God because he possessed moral soundness and worth, thus qualifying him to be introduced into the society of refined, holy angels, and to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ.

In Paul's charge to Timothy he warns him of a class who will not consent to wholesome words, and who place a wrong estimate on riches. He says: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Paul in this letter to Timothy would impress upon his mind the necessity of giving such instruction as should remove the deception which so easily steals upon the rich, that because of their riches they are superior to those who are in poverty; that because of their ability to acquire they are superior in wisdom and judgment--in short, that gain is godliness. Here is a fearful deception. How few heed the charge which Paul commissioned Timothy to make to the rich! How many flatter themselves that their acquisitiveness is godliness! Paul declares, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Although rich persons may devote their whole lives to the one object of getting riches, yet as they brought nothing into the world, they can carry nothing out. They must die and leave that which cost them so much labor to obtain. They staked their all, their eternal interest, to obtain this property, and have lost both worlds.

Paul shows what risks men will run to become rich. But many are determined to be rich; this is their study; and in their zeal eternal considerations are overlooked. They are blinded by Satan, and make themselves believe that it is for good purposes they desire this gain; they strain their consciences, deceive themselves, and are constantly coveting riches. Such have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. They have sacrificed their noble, elevated principles, given up their faith for riches, and if not disappointed in their object, they are disappointed in the happiness which they supposed riches would bring. They are entangled, perplexed with care; they have made themselves slaves to their avarice, and compelled their families to endure the same slavery, and the advantages they reap are "many sorrows." "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

April 5, 1883

Christ's Triumph for Us

At the birth of Christ, Satan saw the plains of Bethlehem illuminated with the brilliant glory of a multitude of heavenly angels. He heard their song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." The prince of darkness saw the amazed shepherds filled with fear as they beheld the illuminated plains. They trembled before the exhibitions of bewildering glory which seemed to entrance their senses. The rebel chief himself trembled at the proclamation of the angel to the shepherds, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He had met with good success in devising a plan to ruin men, and he had become bold and powerful. He had controlled the minds and bodies of men from Adam down to the first appearing of Christ. But now Satan was troubled and alarmed for his kingdom and his life.

The song of the heavenly messengers proclaiming the advent of the Saviour to a fallen world, and the joy expressed at this great event, Satan knew boded no good to himself. Dark forebodings were awakened in his mind as to the influence this advent to the world would have upon his kingdom. He queried if this was not the coming One who would contest his power and overthrow his kingdom. He looked upon Christ from his birth as his rival. He stirred the envy and jealousy of Herod to destroy Christ by insinuating to him that his power and his kingdom were to be given to this new king. Satan imbued Herod with the very feelings and fears that disturbed his own mind. He inspired the corrupt mind of Herod to slay all the children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under, which plan he thought would succeed in ridding the earth of the infant king.

But against his plans, Satan sees a higher power at work. Angels of God protected the life of the infant Redeemer. Joseph was warned in a dream to flee into Egypt, that in a heathen land he might find an asylum for the world's Redeemer. Satan followed him from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to manhood, inventing means and ways to allure him from his allegiance to God, and overcome him with his subtle temptations. The unsullied purity of the childhood, youth, and manhood, of Christ which Satan could not taint, annoyed him exceedingly. All his darts and arrows of temptation fell harmless before the Son of God. And when he found that all his temptations prevailed nothing in moving Christ from the steadfast integrity, or marring the spotless purity of the youthful Galilean, he was perplexed and enraged. He looked upon this youth as an enemy that he must dread and fear.

That there should be one who walked the earth with moral power to withstand all his temptations, who resisted all his attractive bribes to allure him to sin, and over whom he could obtain no advantage to separate from God, chafed and enraged his satanic majesty.

The childhood, youth, and manhood of John, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to do a special work in preparing the way for the world's Redeemer, were marked with firmness and moral power. Satan could not move his integrity. When the voice of this prophet was heard in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," Satan was afraid for his kingdom. He felt that the voice, sounding forth in trumpet tones in the wilderness, caused sinners under his control to tremble. He saw that his power over many was broken. The sinfulness of sin was revealed in such a manner that men became alarmed; and some, by repentance of their sins, found the favor of God, and gained moral power to resist his temptations.

He was on the ground at the time when Christ presented himself to John

for baptism. He heard the majestic voice resounding through Heaven and echoing through the earth like peals of thunder. He saw the lightnings flash from the cloudless heavens, and heard the fearful words from Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He saw the brightness of the Father's glory overshadowing the form of Jesus, thus pointing out in that crowd the One whom he acknowledged as his Son with unmistakable assurance. The circumstances connected with this baptismal scene had aroused the most intense hatred in the breast of Satan. He knew then for a certainty that unless he could overcome Christ, from thenceforth there would be a limitation of his power. He understood that the communication from the throne of God signified that Heaven was more directly accessible to man.

As Satan had led man to sin, he had hoped that God's abhorrence of sin would forever separate him from man, and break the connecting link between Heaven and earth. The opening heavens, in connection with the voice of God addressing his Son, was like a death-knell to Satan. He feared that God was now to unite man more fully to himself, and give power to overcome his devices. And for this purpose Christ had come from the royal courts to the earth. Satan was well acquainted with the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven as the Son of God, the beloved of the Father. And that he should leave Heaven, and come to this world as a man, filled him with apprehension for his safety. He could not comprehend the mystery of this great sacrifice for the benefit of fallen man. He knew that the value of Heaven far exceeded the anticipation and appreciation of fallen man. The most costly treasures of the world, he knew, would not compare with its worth. As he had lost through his rebellion all the riches and pure glories of Heaven, he was determined to be revenged by causing as many as he could to undervalue Heaven, and to place their affections upon earthly treasures.

It was incomprehensible to the selfish soul of Satan that there could exist benevolence and love for the deceived race so great as to induce the Prince of Heaven to leave his home and come to a world marred with sin and seared

with the curse. He had knowledge of the inestimable value of eternal riches that man had not. He had experienced the pure contentment, the peace, exalted holiness, and unalloyed joys of the heavenly abode. He had realized, before his rebellion, the satisfaction of the full approval of God. He had once a full appreciation of the glory that enshrouded the Father, and knew that there was no limit to his power.

Satan knew what he had lost. He now feared that his empire over the world was to be contested, his right disputed, and his power broken. He knew, through prophecy, that a Savior was predicted, and that his kingdom would not be established in earthly triumph and with worldly honor and display. He knew that ancient prophecies foretold a kingdom to be established by the Prince of Heaven upon the earth, which he claimed as his dominion. This kingdom would embrace all the kingdoms of the world, and then his power and his glory would cease, and he would receive his retribution for the sins he had introduced into the world, and for the misery he had brought upon man. He knew that everything which concerned his prosperity was pending upon his success or failure in overcoming Christ with his temptations in the wilderness. He brought to bear upon Christ every artifice and force of his powerful temptations to allure him from his allegiance.

It is impossible for man to know the strength of Satan's temptations to the Son of God. Every temptation that seems so afflicting to man in his daily life, so difficult to resist and overcome, was brought to bear upon the Son of God in as much greater degree as his excellence of character was superior to that of fallen man.

Christ was tempted in all points like as we are. As man's representative, he stood the closest test and proving of God. He met the strongest force of Satan. His most wily temptations Christ has tested and conquered in behalf of man. It is impossible for man to be tempted above what he is able to bear

while he relies upon Jesus, the infinite Conqueror.

April 5, 1883

Calls to the Camp-Meetings

From Washington Territory and from the East come urgent requests that I attend the camp-meetings. I am compelled to say, I cannot attend camp-meetings this season, either East or West. I am now engaged in important writing that I have for six years been trying to accomplish. Year after year I have broken away from this work to attend camp-meetings. In these meetings I have felt the condition of our people and have labored most earnestly in their behalf, not sparing myself. When I had gone the round of the camp-meetings, I found myself so worn and exhausted that I could not take hold of my writing with success.

The last two summers I was brought very near to the gates of death, and as I felt that it might please the Lord to let me rest in the grave, I had most painful regrets that my writings were not completed. In the providence of God my life is spared, and my health once more restored. I thank the Lord for his mercy and loving-kindness to me. I have felt ready to go east or west, if my duty were made plain; but in answer to my prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the answer comes to me, "Rest in peace until the Lord bids you go."

I have not been idle. Since the Lord raised me up at the camp-meeting in Healdsburg, I have visited Santa Rosa, Oakland, San Francisco, Petaluma, Forestville, and Ukiah, and have labored in Healdsburg, frequently speaking on the Sabbath and on Sunday evening. In four weeks I gave ten discourses, traveled two hundred miles, and wrote two hundred pages. This was too much for my strength. After laboring Sabbath and Sunday I was unable to write on Monday. I was weary in all my work. I now speak only once each week, and can accomplish considerably more writing.

My brethren who urge me to attend camp-meeting and to visit them are anxiously inquiring, When shall we have Vol. 4, Spirit of Prophecy? I can now answer them, In a few weeks my work on this book will be completed. But there are other important works that require attention as soon as this shall be finished. I am now more than fifty years old. You are not ignorant of the manner of my labors among you. I have taxed my physical and mental powers to the utmost, and I cannot flatter myself that there are yet before me many years of labor. I may fall at my post at any moment. While I have physical and mental ability, I will do the work which is most needed by our people. The Lord has provided me good assistants. I have when traveling labored at great disadvantage. I have written in the depot, on the cars, under my tent at camp-meeting, often speaking until exhausted and then rising at three o'clock in the morning and writing from six to fifteen pages before breakfast. I dare not longer pursue this course. I cannot now endure taxing labor as in earlier years.

My good brethren send their urgent calls, with promises to pay my fare and to pay me for my time; this is all I expect of them, it is all they are able to do. But they have little idea of the expense incurred by these journeys. To accomplish the amount of writing that I do, I find it necessary to employ several helpers, the best that I can obtain. I have paid their traveling expenses, to the amount of hundreds of dollars. In my absence I pay them for their time, to do what they can, but they necessarily work at great disadvantage. Traveling is expensive. I cannot take my helpers where I go, and should I do so I could not furnish them with work while I am engaged in labor in camp-meetings.

It has been most difficult to obtain the right kind of assistants as copyists and as house-keepers. Cheap and inefficient help would cause me so much perplexity that I could do but little in any capacity. In the providence of God I am now in every respect the most favorably situated that I have ever been

during my pilgrimage life. I enjoy the peace of Jesus, and will do what I can. In my husband's death I was deprived of an able helper; but the Lord is good, and I am grateful for his mercy, his care, and his tender love.

It would give me great pleasure to meet my dear brethren and sisters in camp-meeting. I feel the love of Jesus burning in my soul. I love to talk this out and to write it out. My prayers shall be, that God may bless you at your camp-meetings, and that your souls may be refreshed by his grace. If God bids me leave my writing to attend these meetings or to speak to the people in different places, I hope to hear and obey his voice. Healdsburg, Cal., March 26, 1883.

April 12, 1883

The Working of Satan

The holy Scriptures inform us that, in the last days, Satan will work with power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. To those who do not love the truth he even appears as an angel of light. These words are fulfilled in the deceptions and false teachings of the present time. Spiritualists make the path to hell most attractive. Spirits of darkness are clothed by these deceptive teachers in pure robes of Heaven, and they have power to deceive those not fortified with Bible truth.

Vain philosophy is employed in representing the path to hell as a path of safety. With the imagination highly wrought, and voices musically tuned, they picture the broad road as one of happiness and glory. Ambition holds before deluded souls, as Satan presented to Eve, a freedom and bliss for them to enjoy which they never conceived was possible. Men are praised who have traveled the broad path to hell, and after they die are exalted to the highest positions in the eternal world. Satan, clothed in robes of brightness, appearing like an exalted angel, tempted the world's Redeemer without success. But as he comes to man robed as an angel of light he has better success. He covers his hideous purposes, and succeeds too well in deluding the unwary who are not firmly anchored upon eternal truth.

Riches, power, genius, eloquence, pride, perverted reason, and passion, are enlisted as Satan's agents in doing his work in making the broad road attractive, strewing it with tempting flowers. But every word they have spoken against the world's Redeemer will be reflected back upon them, and will one day burn into their guilty souls like molten lead. They will be overwhelmed with terror and shame as they behold the exalted One coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Then shall the bold

defier, who lifted himself up against the Son of God, see himself in the true blackness of his character. The sight of the inexpressible glory of the Son of God will be intensely painful to those whose characters are stained with sin. The pure light and glory emanating from Christ will awaken remorse, shame, and terror. They will send forth wails of anguish to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

Spiritualists claim superior light and power. They have opened the door and invited the prince of darkness in, and have made him their honored guest. They have allied themselves to the powers of darkness which are developing in these last days in signs and wonders, that if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. Spiritualists claim that they can do greater miracles than Christ did. Satan made the same boasts to Christ. Because the Son of God had linked himself to the weakness of humanity, to be tempted in all points like as man should be tempted, Satan triumphed over him, and taunted him. He boasted of his superior strength, and dared him to open a controversy with him.

Spiritualists are increasing in numbers. They will come to men who have the truth as Satan came to Christ, tempting them to manifest their power, and work miracles, and give evidence of their being favored of God, and of their being the people who have the truth. Satan said to Christ, "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones that they be made bread." Herod and Pilate asked Christ to work miracles when he was on trial for his life. Their curiosity was aroused, but Christ did not work a miracle to gratify them.

Spiritualists will press the matter to engage in controversy with ministers who teach the truth. If they decline, they will dare them. They quote Scripture, as did Satan to Christ. "Prove all things," say they. But their idea of proving is to listen to their deceptive reasonings, and attend their circles.

But in their gatherings the angels of darkness assume the forms of dead friends, and communicate with them as angels of light.

Their loved ones will appear in robes of light, as familiar to the sight as when they were upon the earth. They will teach them, and converse with them. And many will be deceived by this wonderful display of Satan's power. The only safety for the people of God is to be thoroughly conversant with their Bibles, and be intelligent upon the reasons of our faith in regard to the sleep of the dead.

Satan is a cunning foe. And it is not difficult for the evil angels to represent both saints and sinners who have died, and make these representations visible to human eyes. These manifestations will be more frequent, and developments of a more startling character will appear as we near the close of time. We need not be astonished at anything in the line of deceptions to allure the unwary, and deceive, if possible, the very elect. Spiritualists quote, "Prove all things." But God has, for the benefit of his people who live amid the perils of the last days, proved this class, and given the result of his proving.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

John, upon the Isle of Patmos, saw the things which should come upon the earth in the last days. Revelation 13:13; 16:14: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go

forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The apostle Peter distinctly points out the class which will be manifested in these last days.

2 Peter 2:10-14: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas, angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children."

God, in his word, has placed his stamp upon the heresies of spiritualism as he placed his mark upon Cain. The godly need not be deceived if they are students of the Scriptures and obedient to follow the plain path marked out for them in the word of God.

The boastful spiritualist claims great freedom, and in smooth, flowery language seeks to fascinate and delude unwary souls to choose the broad path of pleasure and sinful indulgence, rather than the narrow path and the straight way. Spiritualists call the requirements of God's law bondage, and say those who obey them live a life of slavish fear. With smooth words and fair speeches they boast of their freedom, and seek to cover their dangerous heresies with the garments of righteousness. They would make the most revolting crimes be considered as blessings to the race.

They open before the sinner a wide door to follow the promptings of the carnal heart, and violate the law of God, especially the seventh commandment. Those who speak these great swelling words of vanity, and who triumph in their freedom in sin, promise those whom they deceive the enjoyment of freedom in a course of rebellion against the revealed will of God. These deluded souls are themselves in the veriest bondage to Satan and are controlled by his power, and yet promising liberty to those who will dare to follow the same course of sin that they themselves have chosen.

The Scriptures are indeed fulfilled in this, that the blind are leading the blind. For by whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. These deluded souls are under the most abject slavery to the will of demons. They have allied themselves to the powers of darkness and have no strength to go contrary to the will of demons. This is their boasted liberty. By Satan they are overcome and brought into bondage, and the great liberty promised to those they deceive is helpless slavery to sin and Satan.

We are not to attend their circles, neither are our ministers to engage in controversy with them. They are of that class specified whom we should not invite into our houses, or bid them God speed. We have to compare their teachings with the revealed will of God. We are not to engage in an investigation of spiritualism. God has investigated this for us, and told us definitely that a class would arise in the last days who would deny Christ who has purchased them with his own blood. The character of spiritualists is so plainly described that we need not be deceived by them. If we obey the divine injunction, we shall have no sympathy with spiritualists, however smooth and fair may be their words.

The beloved John continues his warning against seducers: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the

Father: (but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also)."

In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, he exhorts to be on guard, and not depart from the faith. He speaks of Christ's coming as an event to immediately follow the work of Satan in spiritualism in these words: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

In the epistle of Paul to Timothy, he foretells what will be manifested in the latter days. And this warning was for the benefit of those who should live when these things should take place. God revealed to his servant the perils of the church in the last days. He writes, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron."

The faithful Peter speaks of the dangers to which the Christian church would be exposed in the last days, and more fully describes the heresies which would arise and the blaspheming seducers who would seek to draw away souls after them. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Here God has worked out for us the proof of the class mentioned. They have refused to acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and they have no more reverence for the eternal Father than for his Son, Jesus Christ. They

have neither the Son nor the Father. And like their great leader, the rebel chief, they are in rebellion against the law of God, and they despise the blood of Christ.

We may rejoice in every condition of life, and triumph under all circumstances, because the Son of God came down from Heaven and submitted to bear our infirmities, and to endure sacrifice and death in order to give to us immortal life. He will ever bear the marks of his earthly humiliation in man's behalf. While the redeemed host and the pure angelic throng shall do him honor and worship him, he will carry the marks of one that has been slain. The more fully we appreciate the infinite sacrifice made in our behalf by a sin-atoning Saviour, the more closely do we come into harmony with Heaven.

We have characters to form here. God will test us and prove us by placing us in positions to develop the most enduring strength, purity, and nobility of soul, with perfect patience on our part, and entire trust in a crucified Saviour. We shall meet with reverses, affliction, and severe trials, for these are God's tests. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and purge his people as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The cross of Christ is all covered with reproach and stigma, yet it is the hope of life and exaltation to man. No one can comprehend the mystery of godliness so long as he is ashamed to bear the cross of Christ. None will be able to discern and appreciate the blessings which Christ has purchased for man at infinite cost to himself, unless they are willing to joyfully sacrifice earthly treasures that they may become his followers. Every self-denial and sacrifice made for Christ enriches the giver, and every suffering and reproach endured for his dear name increases the final joy and immortal reward in the kingdom of glory.

April 19, 1883

Church Festivals

Professed Christians engage in feastings and in scenes of amusement which degrade the religion of Jesus Christ. It is impossible for those who find pleasure in church socials, festivals, and numerous gatherings for pleasure, to have ardent love and sacred reverence for Jesus. His words of warning and instruction have no weight upon their minds. Should Christ come into the assembly of those who were absorbed in their plays and frivolous amusements, would the solemn melody of his voice be heard in benediction, saying, "Peace be to this house?" How would the Saviour of the world enjoy these scenes of gaiety and folly?

Christians and the world unite, one in heart and one in spirit, in these festal occasions. The Man of sorrows, who was acquainted with grief, would find no welcome in these places of amusement. The lovers of pleasure and luxury, the thoughtless and the gay are collected in these rooms, and the glitter and tinsel of fashion are seen everywhere. The ornament of crosses of gold and pearl, which represent a Redeemer crucified, adorn their persons. But the one whom these highly-prized jewels represent, finds no welcome, no room. His presence would be a restraint upon their mirth and their sensual amusements, and would remind them of neglected duty, and bring to their remembrance hidden sins which caused that sorrowful countenance, and made those eyes so sad and tearful.

The presence of Christ would be positively painful in these gatherings for pleasure. Surely, none could invite him there, for his countenance is marred with sorrows more than the sons of men, because of these very amusements which put God out of mind, and make the broad road attractive to the sinner. The enchantments of these exciting scenes pervert reason, and

destroy reverence for sacred things. Ministers who profess to be Christ's representatives frequently take the lead in these frivolous amusements. "Ye are," says Christ, "the light of the world." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

In what manner is the light of truth shining from that thoughtless, pleasure-seeking company? Professed followers of Jesus Christ who indulge in gaiety and feasting cannot be partakers with Christ of his sufferings. They have no sense of his sufferings. They do not care to meditate upon self-denial and sacrifice. They find but little interest in studying the marked points in the history of the life of Christ upon which the plan of salvation rests, but imitate ancient Israel who ate and drank and rose up to play. In order to copy a pattern correctly we must carefully study its design. If we are indeed to overcome as Christ overcame, that we may mingle with the bloodwashed, glorified company before the throne of God, it is of the highest importance that we become acquainted with the life of our Redeemer and deny self as did Christ. We must meet temptations and overcome obstacles, and through toil and suffering, in the name of Jesus, overcome as he overcame.

The great trial of Christ in the wilderness on the point of appetite was to leave man an example of self-denial. This long fast was to convict men of sinfulness of the things in which professed Christians indulge. The victory which Christ gained in the wilderness was to show man the sinfulness of the very things in which he takes such pleasure. The salvation of man was in the balance, and to be decided by the trial of Christ in the wilderness. If Christ was a victor on the point of appetite, then there was a chance for man to overcome. If Satan gained the victory through his subtlety, man was bound by the power of appetite in chains of indulgence which he could not have moral power to break. Christ's humanity alone could never have endured this test, but his divine power combined with humanity gained in behalf of man an infinite victory. Our representative in this victory raised humanity in the

scale of moral value with God.

Christians, who understand the mystery of godliness, who have a high and sacred sense of the atonement, who realize in the sufferings of Christ in the wilderness a victory gained for them, would see such marked contrast between these things and the church gatherings for pleasure and the indulgence of appetite, as would turn them in disgust from these scenes of revelry. Christians would be greatly strengthened by earnestly and frequently comparing their lives with the true standard, the life of Christ. The numerous socials, festivals, and picnics, to tempt the appetite to over-indulgence, and the amusements which lead to levity and forgetfulness of God, can find no sanction in the example of Christ, the world's Redeemer, the only safe pattern for man to copy if he would overcome as Christ overcame.

We present the faultless pattern to all Christians. Says Christ, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." The light of Heaven is to be reflected through Christ's followers to the world. This is the Christian's life-work to direct the minds of sinners to God. The Christian's life should awaken in the hearts of worldlings high and elevated views of the purity of the Christian religion. This will make believers the salt of the earth, the saving power in our world; for a well-developed Christian character is harmonious in all its parts.

We tremble for the youth of our day, because of the example that is given them by those who profess to be Christians. We cannot close the door of temptation to the youth, but we can educate them that their words and

their actions may have a direct bearing upon their future happiness or misery. They will be exposed to temptation. They will meet foes without and foes within, but they can be instructed to stand firm in their integrity, having moral principle to resist temptation. The lessons given our youth by world-loving professors are doing great harm. The festal gatherings, the gluttonous feasts, the lotteries, tableaux, and theatrical performances, are doing a great work that will bear a record with its burden of results to the Judgment.

All these inconsistencies, sanctioned by professed Christians under a garb of Christian beneficence, to collect means to pay church expenses, have their influence with the youth to make them lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They think if Christians can encourage and engage in these lotteries and scenes of festivities, and connect them with sacred things, why may not they be safe in taking an interest in lotteries, and engaging in gambling to win money for special objects.

It is Satan's studied plan to clothe sin with garments of light to hide its deformity, and make it attractive. And ministers and people professing righteousness unite with the adversary of souls to help him in his plans. Never was there a time when every member of the church should feel his responsibility to walk humbly and circumspectly before God as at the present. Vain philosophy, false creeds, and infidelity, are on the increase. And many who bear the name of Christ's followers are, through pride of heart, seeking popularity, and are drifting away from the established landmarks. The plain commands of God in his word are discarded because they are so plain and old-fashioned, while vain and vague theories attract the mind and please the fancy. In these scenes of church festivities, there is a union with the world that the word of God does not justify. Christians and worldlings are united in them.

But the apostle inquires:

"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

When we are able to comprehend the temptations and victories of the Son of God while in severe conflict with Satan, we shall have a more correct idea of the greatness of the work before us in overcoming. Satan knew that if he failed, his case was hopeless. If he succeeded, he had gained a victory over the entire race, and his life and kingdom he thought would be established.

In professedly Christian gatherings, Satan throws a religious garment over delusive pleasures and unholy revelings to give them the appearance of sanctity, and the consciences of many are quieted because means are raised by these to defray church expenses. Men refuse to give for the love of Christ; but for the love of pleasure, and the indulgence of appetite for selfish consideration they will part with their money.

Is it because there is not power in the lessons of Christ upon benevolence, and in his example, and the grace of God upon the heart, to lead men to glorify God with their substance, that such a course must be resorted to in order to sustain the church? The injury sustained to the physical, mental, and moral health in these scenes of amusement and gluttony, is not small. And the day of final reckoning will show souls lost through the influence of these scenes of gaiety and folly.

It is a deplorable fact that sacred and eternal considerations do not have that power to open the hearts of the professed followers of Christ to make free-will offerings to sustain the gospel as the temptation of feasting and general merriment. It is a sad reality that these inducements will prevail when sacred and eternal things will have no force to influence the heart to engage in works of benevolence.

The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses made no grand feast, and he did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement. Neither did he institute lotteries or anything of this profane order to obtain means to erect the tabernacle of God in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring their offerings. Moses was to accept gifts of every man that gave willingly from his heart. But the free-will offerings came in so great abundance that Moses proclaimed it was enough. They must cease their presents; for they had given abundantly, more than they could use.

Satan's temptations succeed with the professed followers of Christ on the point of indulgence of pleasure and appetite. Clothed as an angel of light he will quote Scripture to justify the temptations he places before men to indulge the appetite, and in worldly pleasures which suit the carnal heart. The professed followers of Christ are weak in moral power, and are fascinated with the bribe which Satan has presented before them, and he gains the victory. How does God look upon churches that are sustained by such means? Christ cannot accept these offerings, because they were not given through their love and devotion to him, but through their idolatry of self. But what many would not do for the love of Christ, they will do for the love of delicate luxuries to gratify the appetite, and for love of worldly amusements to please the carnal heart.

May 10, 1883

Power and Humility of Jesus

Jesus, to obtain a little season of repose, and for the benefit of his disciples, proposed that they should go with him into a desert place and rest awhile. There were suitable places for such retirement beyond the sea from Capernaum, and they entered a boat and made their way thither. But some who were searching for Jesus saw him depart from the shore, and the anxious people gathered together watching the slowly receding boat. The news spread from city to city that Jesus was crossing the sea; and many who were eager to see and hear him flocked to the place where it was thought that his boat would land, while others followed him over the water in boats. So when Jesus and his disciples landed they found themselves in the midst of a multitude of people, pressing forward on all sides to meet them.

Jesus, perceiving all this, beckons to Peter, who is in his boat on the sea, to come nigh. The disciple obeys the signal, and comes to shore. Jesus presses through the throng, and steps into the boat, bidding Peter to thrust out a little from the land. He now sits in the rocking boat of the fisherman, and, in full sight and hearing of the crowd, finishes the long and toilsome day by speaking precious truths to them. The Son of God, leaving the royal courts of Heaven, takes not his position upon David's throne; but from the swaying seat of a fisherman's boat, speaks the words of eternal wisdom which are to be immortalized in the minds of his disciples and given to the world as the legacy of God.

As the sun was setting, Jesus saw before him five thousand people besides women and children, who had been all day without food. He inquired of Philip concerning the probability of obtaining bread for so large a number, that they might not return to their homes unrefreshed nor faint by the way.

This he did to test the faith of his disciples, for he himself was at no loss how to provide food. He who would not work a miracle to satisfy his own hunger in the wilderness, would not allow the multitude to suffer for lack of food. Philip looked over the sea of heads and thought how impossible it would be to obtain sufficient food to satisfy the wants of such a crowd. He answered that two hundred penny-worth of bread would not be nearly enough to divide among them so that each one might have a little. Jesus inquired how much food could be found among the company. He was told that Andrew had discovered a lad who had with him five barley loaves, and two small fishes. But this was nothing among so many, and they were in a desert place, where no more could be obtained.

Jesus commanded that this meager store should be brought to him. This being done, he directed his disciples to seat the people upon the grass in parties of fifty, and one hundred, to preserve order, and that all might witness the miracle he was about to do. This marshaling of five thousand people into companies, was at length satisfactorily accomplished, and they were all seated in the presence of the Saviour. He then took the loaves and fishes, and, having given thanks, distributed them to the disciples and to the multitudes, in quantities sufficient to satisfy their appetites.

The people had arranged themselves in the required order wondering what was to be done, but their amazement knew no bounds when the problem was solved, and they beheld food portioned out to that vast assembly from the slender store scarcely sufficient for a score of persons. The food did not diminish, as Jesus handed it to his disciples, who in their turn served the people. As often as they returned to him for a fresh supply, it was furnished them. After all had been satisfied, he directed the disciples to gather up the fragments that nothing might be lost; and the broken fragments filled twelve baskets.

During this remarkable feast, there was much earnest reflection among

those who were so miraculously served. They had followed Jesus to listen to words such as had never before fallen upon their ears. His teachings had sunk into their hearts. He had healed their sick, had comforted their sorrow, and, at last, rather than send them away hungering, he had fed them bounteously. His pure and simple doctrine laid hold of their minds, and his tender benevolence won their hearts. While eating the food he had provided for them, they decided that this was indeed the Messiah. No other one could do so mighty a miracle. No human power could create from five barley loaves and two small fishes, food sufficient to feed thousands of hungry people. His teachings and work of healing had already nearly convinced them of his divinity, and this miracle crowned their growing conviction with entire belief.

They decided that this was the Prince of Life, the promised Deliverer of the Jews. They perceive that he makes no effort to win the applause of the people. In this he is essentially different from the chief priests and rulers, who are ambitious for titles and the honor of men. They fear that he will never claim his right as King of Israel and take his place on David's throne in Jerusalem. But they decide that what he will not assume for himself, they will claim for him. They need no greater evidence of his divine power nor will they wait for any further proof. They quietly consult among themselves, and arrange to take him by force, and bear him upon their shoulders, proclaiming him the King of Israel. The disciples unite with the people in declaring that the throne of David is the rightful inheritance of their Master. Let the arrogant priests and rulers be humbled, and compelled to yield honor to Him who comes clothed with the authority of God. They begin to devise means to accomplish their purpose; but Jesus discerns their plans, which, if followed out, would defeat the very work he designs to do, and put a period to his instruction and deeds of mercy and benevolence.

Already the priests and rulers look upon him as one who has turned the hearts of the people from them to himself. Already they so dread his growing

influence among them that they seek to take his life. He knows that violence and insurrection would be the result of his exaltation as Israel's king. He did not come into the world to set up a temporal kingdom; his kingdom, as he had stated, was not of this world. The multitude do not perceive the dangers arising from the movement they contemplate; but the calm eye of divine wisdom discovers all the hidden evils. Jesus sees that it is time to change the current of feeling among the people. He calls his disciples to him and directs them to immediately take the boat and return to Capernaum, leaving him to dismiss the people. He promises to meet them that night or on the following morning. The disciples are loth to submit to this arrangement. They are ambitious that Jesus should receive his true merits, and be lifted above the persecutions of the priests and rulers. The favored moment seems to have arrived, when, by the unanimous voice of the people, Christ can be elevated to his true dignity.

They cannot feel reconciled that all this enthusiasm shall come to naught. The people were assembling from all quarters to celebrate the passover at Jerusalem. They were all anxious to see the great Prophet whose fame had spread through all the land. This, to the faithful followers of Jesus, seemed the golden opportunity to establish their beloved Master as Israel's king. It seemed, in the glow of this new ambition, a very hard thing for them to go away by themselves and leave their Master alone upon the desolate shore, surrounded by high and barren mountains.

They remonstrate against this arrangement; but Jesus is firm in his decision, and commands them to follow his directions with an authority that he had never before assumed toward them. They obey in silence. Jesus then turns to the multitude, and perceives that they are thoroughly decided to force him into becoming their king. Their movements must be checked at once. The disciples had already departed, and he now, standing before them with a grand dignity, dismisses them in so firm and decisive a manner that they dare not disobey his commands. The words of praise and exaltation die

upon their lips. Their steps are stayed as they are in the very act of advancing to seize him, and the glad and eager looks fade from their countenances. There were men of strong minds and firm determination in that throng, but the kingly bearing of Jesus, and his few quiet words of authority, quelled the tumult in a moment and frustrated all their designs. Like meek, submissive children, they obey the command of their Lord, submitting humbly, and without question, to a power that they recognize as above all earthly authority.

Jesus looked upon the retreating multitude with yearning compassion. He felt that they were as scattered sheep without a shepherd. The priests who should have been teachers in Israel, were but machines for performing unmeaning ceremonies and repeating the law they did not themselves understand nor practice. When he was left alone he went up into the mountain, and, for many hours, bent in supplication before the Father with bitter agony and tears. Not for himself were those earnest prayers, but for man, depraved and lost but for redeeming grace. It was for man that the Son of God wrestled with his Father, asking that the poor sinful creature might turn from his guilt to the light of salvation.

The Saviour knew that his days of personal effort for men upon earth were numbered. He who read the hearts of men knew that comparatively few would accept him as their Redeemer, acknowledging themselves lost without his divine aid. The Jews were rejecting the very help that God had sent to save them from utter ruin. They were fastening the chains that bound them in hopeless night. They were bringing upon themselves the certain wrath of God for their blind and obstinate wickedness. Hence the grief of Jesus, and his tears and strong cries for his mistaken people, who spurned his love that would save them from the retribution of their sins. Deep emotion shakes that noble form as he keenly realizes the doom of the people he has come to save. In every trial and emergency, Jesus went to his Heavenly Father for help, and, in those secret interviews, received strength for the work that lay before

him. Christians should follow the example of their Saviour, and seek in prayer the strength that will enable them to endure the trials and duties of life. Prayer is the Christian's defense, the safeguard of his integrity and virtue.

May 17, 1883

Labor at the Camp-Meetings

As the importance of our camp-meetings is yearly increasing, it is constantly becoming of greater consequence to adopt such plans of working as shall secure the best possible results. We should remember that union is strength. A serious mistake has sometimes been made, in the attempt to attend as many meetings as possible during the camp-meeting season. The forces were divided, and, of course, weakened, and the efforts made were comparatively feeble. Here is given occasion for the triumph of our enemies, who regard these as our best efforts, and so represent them. If it is necessary to hold fewer general meetings, for want of laborers, let there be a sufficient force where meetings are held, so that the labor and responsibility shall be shared by several men, instead of falling chiefly upon one. God does not design that any of his servants shall labor to exhaustion.

At our large gatherings more attention should be given to organizing our forces, and enlisting, not ministers only, but all who have an experience, making them feel that they have a responsibility to bear. Wise generalship is needed at the very outset of our meetings to engage all our working forces, that the interest of the meeting, outside of the preaching services, may be maintained.

There has often been more preaching at our camp-meetings than was really necessary. Wisdom and economy should be exercised in this direction as well as in every other. Ministers should not feel that everything depends on their efforts in presenting doctrinal or even practical discourses. They must have a firmer reliance upon Jesus, our mighty helper; they must encourage in their own hearts a faith that will not falter under any circumstances. In short, they must depend more upon Christ's presence, and

less upon their own personal efforts.

There is a serious waste of vital energy in long sermons. If our ministers would preach short discourses, right to the point, and then educate the brethren and sisters to work, and lay the burden upon them, the ministers themselves would be saved from exhaustion, the people would gain spiritual strength by the effort put forth, and the result would be tenfold greater than now is seen. Too heavy burdens, both in preaching and in the transaction of business, have rested upon the few who labor in word and doctrine. These men should preserve their strength and vigor, and keep their minds stayed upon God, that human infirmities may not affect their judgment or mar the solemn, dignified, holy character which should mark all their deliberations.

While our leading ministers do too much, our lay brethren and sisters do too little. The rich experience which the latter might gain in earnest, personal labor, is lost to them because they fail to bear the burdens which they can and should bear. They should seek to do all that it is in their power to do, not feeling that they are working for the minister or the Conference, and that they should receive remuneration, but as working for God, unselfishly laboring to make the meeting a success. In so doing they will bring a blessing to their own souls, and will also become a channel of light and blessing to others.

Our ministers must become educators as well as preachers. They should teach the people not to depend upon them, but upon Christ. The minister who preaches two hours when he should not exceed one, would far better serve the cause of God by devoting that extra hour to earnest, careful thought in studying how to direct others, how to teach them to work. Attention should especially be given to teaching the people to labor in the meetings held among the tents' companies. None who come to the meetings should be content to leave it without a deeper religious experience than when they came upon the ground. The people are perishing because they do not put to

use the talents which God has given them.

Our brethren and sisters come to camp-meeting hoping to receive the blessing of the Lord; yet it is often the case that they do not know just what to do to make the meeting a benefit to themselves or to others. Many do not realize but that the only object for which they came is merely to hear preaching. Therefore they do not strive for the blessing of God, they do not from the very commencement of the meeting feel the necessity of confessing their sins, and striving for the earnest of the Spirit. They do not know that the success of the meeting depends largely upon themselves, and therefore do not feel the burden of the work. The very first effort of ministers should be to set them in the way of working for themselves. Let the minds and hearts of the people be enlisted in the work. Let all be taught what they must do to open the door of the heart to Jesus, that they may receive him gladly.

The necessity of a real heart-work for every member of the body must be pressed upon them. The labor should be directed right to the one end,--a more complete putting away of idols, a deeper consecration, a stronger faith, and more earnest personal effort for the salvation of others. Fear should be aroused in every heart because there is so little vital godliness among us; fear lest God will say, "He is joined to his idols; let him alone."

My brethren, there should be a different kind of labor from what we have yet seen in our camp-meetings. There should be more prayer and weeping, and more confession of sin to God and to one another. Let the indifference be broken up, let the complaining and fault-finding cease, and the time heretofore worse than wasted in this manner be spent in prayers of living faith for the refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Let us arouse as one man, and unitedly call upon God to send down his grace upon the souls of his people, and to revive his work in the midst of the years.

Every tent's company should be set to work for themselves; and they

should also be united in larger divisions, with suitable men appointed in each to help to the utmost of their ability, the ones placed under their charge. Men should not be chosen for this work who have so much sermonizing to do, to exhibit themselves, that they are no help to the people. The leaders appointed should be carefully taught how to labor to secure the best results. The wisest generalship is in seeing, not how much we can do ourselves, but how much we can lead the people to do. This is the education which they need in order to grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. They must be taught, not so much by long sermons as by personal effort, how to secure the blessing of God, the true conversion.

Our camp-meeting should be as a training-school to our younger ministers. Here is the very place for them to be educated as to the best manner of labor. They should learn that all their duty is not comprised in preaching. They need to know how to conduct wisely the social meetings, how to teach the people to work, that there be no idlers in the vineyard of the Lord. While preaching is one of God's instrumentalities, there are other agencies that must be set in operation to prepare the way of the Lord. The church must be made to feel her accountability before the Lord will revive his work.

The preacher himself, must be alive; he must have the earnestness of the Spirit; he must labor through Christ; he must make direct appeals; he must sound the alarm to careless and world-loving professors, though they should be displeased because their ears tingle with the close application of the truth,--"Thou art the man." It is too late to daub with untempered mortar. There must be plain and faithful dealing. The people must be aroused to do the work which God enjoins upon them, to take up the stumbling-blocks and clear out the rubbish, that the Spirit of God may come in. The guilt as well as the danger of backsliding must be faithfully pointed out. Follow up the word with personal effort. General appeals are often made with little effect. Come close to hearts, stirring up all to act a part. Let not one day be lost. Engage

every influence that can be commanded. Give the people something to do. See that none are idling about, seeing, hearing, and telling some new thing.

The Lord calls upon his people to repent and to do their first works. He admonishes them to examine themselves, whether they are in the faith, whether their hopes are well founded, whether they are not petting and excusing defects of character, when they should be going on to perfection. The worldliness in the church, which is the great cause of spiritual death, is attributable to the influence of selfish, ease-loving members. The progress of this deadly malady must be checked. The surgeon's knife cuts deep when it is necessary to remove festering, pestilent matter; so the word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, must be made to cut to the heart, or the evil will never be removed. When the plain testimony is given, some will say, My hope is gone; I have no religion; I give it all up. Those who really want to be Christ's will receive reproof, put away their sins, and take their stand on the side of Jesus. If any have no real desire for the truth, because it must purify the soul, their withdrawal is not to be regretted. The fewer we have of such the better.

What we need, what we cannot do without, is the Spirit of God to work with our efforts. All pampering of self must be at an end. There must be an earnest longing, a soul-hunger, for the presence of the Lord. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

It is a case of life or death with us. We have been stricken with spiritual paralysis, and every one needs the help of the great Physician. He alone can reach our case. He is only waiting to be invited by us with earnest heart, with sincere desire, If any at the close of the convocation meeting still feel that they are not blessed, the fault is with themselves. God is no respecter of persons or of places. It cannot be because of any reluctance on the part of the great Physician that they are passed by. They did not prepare the way for him. Perhaps they neglected to make humble confessions to those whom they

had injured. They have not put away the idols from the soul-temple. They have a work to do to repent of their self-indulgence, of the favorite sins which they are not ready to surrender. Nothing is wanting but a preparation of heart, and earnest, believing prayer, to bring Jesus to our side as a mighty helper. He longs to come. He is only waiting for us to prepare the way, and he will come. When he walked in his humiliation, a man among the children of men, he delighted in doing good to the bodies and souls of all who sought him and trusted him. So he will now verify his promises to his people, if they will do what he has enjoined in his word to prepare the way for his blessing.

May 17, 1883

The Church's Great Need

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work at our camp-meetings. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow his blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us his blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God's Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the word. But when the Spirit's power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God's word, with the manifestations of his Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our camp-meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home will be prepared to exert a healthful influence in the churches.

The old standard-bearers knew what it was to wrestle with God in prayer and to enjoy the outpouring of his Spirit. But these are passing off from the stage of action; and who are coming up to fill their places? How is it with the rising generation? are they converted to God? Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come.

There are persons in the church who are not converted, and who will not unite in earnest, prevailing prayer. We must enter upon the work

individually. We must pray more, and talk less. Iniquity abounds, and the people must be taught not to be satisfied with a form of godliness without the spirit and power. If we are intent upon searching our own hearts, putting away our sins, and correcting our evil tendencies, our souls will not be lifted up unto vanity; we shall be distrustful of ourselves, having an abiding sense that our sufficiency is of God.

We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they represent. But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement. The unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encourage the presence of evil angels, and open the way for the accomplishment of Satan's devices.

The adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts of men; but he is a keen observer, and he marks the words; he takes account of actions, and skillfully adapts his temptations to meet the cases of those who place themselves in his power. If we would labor to repress sinful thoughts and feelings, giving them no expression in words or actions, Satan would be defeated; for he could not prepare his specious temptations to meet the case. But how often do professed Christians, by their lack of self-control, open the door to the adversary of souls! Divisions, and even bitter dissensions which would disgrace any worldly community, are common in the churches, because there is so little effort to control wrong feelings, and to repress every word that Satan can take advantage of. As soon as an alienation of feeling arises, the matter is spread before Satan for his inspection, and the opportunity given for him to use his serpent-like wisdom and skill in dividing and destroying the church. There is great loss in every dissension.

Personal friends of both parties take sides with their respective favorites, and thus the breach is widened. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Criminations and recriminations are engendered and multiplied. Satan and his angels are actively at work to secure a harvest from seed thus sown. Worldlings look on, and jeeringly exclaim, "Behold how these Christians hate one another. If this is religion, we do not want it." And they look upon themselves and their irreligious characters with great satisfaction. Thus they are confirmed in their impenitence, and Satan exults at his success.

The great deceiver has prepared his wiles for every soul that is not braced for trial and guarded by constant prayer and living faith. As ministers, as Christians, we must work to take the stumbling-blocks out of the way. We must remove every obstacle. Let us confess and forsake every sin, that the way of the Lord may be prepared, that he may come into our assemblies and impart his rich grace. The world, the flesh, and the Devil must be overcome. We cannot prepare the way by gaining the friendship of the world, which is enmity with God; but by his help we can break its seductive influence upon ourselves and upon others. We cannot individually or as a body secure ourselves from the constant temptations of a relentless and determined foe; but in the strength of Jesus we can resist them. From every member of the church a steady light may shine forth before the world, so that they shall not be led to inquire, What do these people more than others? There can be and must be a withdrawal from conformity to the world, a shunning of all appearance of evil, so that no occasion shall be given for gainsayers. We cannot escape reproach; it will come; but we should be very careful that we are not reproached for our own sins or follies, but for Christ's sake.

There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out his Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his

power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out his presence from the assemblies of his people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim his promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

We are in the great day of atonement, when our sins are, by confession and repentance, to go beforehand to judgment. God does not now accept a tame, spiritless testimony from his ministers. Such a testimony would not be present truth. The message for this time must be meat in due season to feed the church of God. But Satan has been seeking gradually to rob this message of its power, that the people may not be prepared to stand in the day of the Lord.

In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of the investigative judgment. The cases of the righteous dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment is to be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. In the typical service, when the work of atonement was performed by the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the people were required to afflict their souls before God, and confess their sins, that they might be atoned for and blotted out. Will any less be required of us in this antitypical day of atonement, when Christ in the sanctuary above is pleading in behalf of his people, and the final, irrevocable decision is to be pronounced upon every case?

What is our condition in this fearful and solemn time? Alas, what pride is prevailing in the church, what hypocrisy, what deception, what love of dress, frivolity, and amusement, what desire for the supremacy! All these sins have clouded the mind, so that eternal things have not been discerned. Shall we not search the Scriptures, that we may know where we are in this world's history? Shall we not become intelligent in regard to the work that is being accomplished for us at this time, and the position that we as sinners should occupy while this work of atonement is going forward? If we have any regard for our souls' salvation, we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out.

We must no longer remain upon the enchanted ground. We are fast approaching the close of our probation. Let every soul inquire, How do I stand before God? We know not how soon our names may be taken into the lips of Christ, and our cases be finally decided. What, oh, what will these decisions be! Shall we be counted with the righteous, or shall we be numbered with the wicked?

Let the church arise, and repent of her back-slidings before God. Let the watchmen awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. It is a definite warning that we have to proclaim. God commands his servants, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." The attention of the people must be gained; unless this can be done, all effort is useless; though an angel from heaven should come down and speak to them, his words would do no more good than if he were speaking into the cold ear of death. The church must arouse to action. The Spirit of God can never come in until she prepares the way. There should be earnest searching of heart. There should be united, persevering prayer, and through faith a claiming of the promises of God. There should be, not as in ancient times, a clothing of the body with sackcloth, but a deep humiliation of soul. We have not the first reason for

self-congratulation and self-exaltation. We should humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. He will appear to comfort and bless the true seekers.

The work is before us; will we engage in it? We must work fast, we must go steadily forward. We must be preparing for the great day of the Lord. We have no time to lose, no time to be engaged in selfish purposes. The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the light before others? God has left to every man his work; every one has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the peril of our souls.

O my brethren, will you grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause it to depart? Will you shut out the blessed Saviour, because you are unprepared for his presence? Will you have souls to perish without the knowledge of the truth, because you love your ease too well to bear the burden that Jesus bore for you? Let us awake out of sleep. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

May 31, 1883

Martin Luther--His Character and Early Life

Through all the ages of papal darkness and oppression, God's care was over his cause and his people. Amid opposition, conflict, and persecution, an all-wise providence was still at work in the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. Satan exercised his power to hinder the work of God, by destroying the workmen; but as soon as one laborer was imprisoned, or slain, another was raised up to fill the vacancy. Despite all the opposing powers of evil, angels of God were doing their work, heavenly messengers were searching out men to stand as light-bearers amid the darkness. Notwithstanding the wide-spread apostasy, there were honest souls who had given heed to all the light which shone upon them. In their ignorance of God's word they had received the doctrines and traditions of men, but when the word was placed within their reach, they earnestly studied its pages, and in humility of heart they wept and prayed for a knowledge of God's will. With great joy they accepted the light of truth, and eagerly sought to impart light to their fellow-men.

Through the labors of Wickliffe, Huss, and kindred workers, thousands of noble witnesses had borne testimony to the truth; yet at the beginning of the sixteenth century the darkness of ignorance and superstition still rested like a pall upon the church and the world. Religion was made to consist in a round of ceremonies, many of them borrowed from heathenism, and all devised by Satan to lead the minds of the people away from God and the truth. The worship of images and relics was still maintained. The Scriptural ordinance of the Lord's Supper was supplanted by the idolatrous sacrifice of the Mass. Popes and priests claimed the power to forgive sins, and to open and close the gates of Heaven to all mankind. Senseless superstitions and rigorous exactions had taken the place of the true worship of God. The lives of popes and clergy were so corrupt, their proud pretensions so blasphemous,

that good men trembled for the morality of the rising generation. With iniquity prevailing in the high places of the church, it seemed inevitable that the world would soon become as wicked as were the antediluvians or the inhabitants of Sodom.

The gospel was withheld from the people. It was regarded as a crime to own or read the Scriptures. Even the higher classes found it difficult to obtain a glimpse of the word of God. Satan well knew that if the people were permitted to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, his deceptions would speedily lose their power. Hence it was his studied effort to shut the Scriptures away from the people, and to prevent their minds from becoming enlightened by the truths of the gospel. But a day of religious light and freedom was about to dawn upon the world, and all the efforts of Satan and his hosts were powerless to prevent its coming.

Foremost among those who were called for God to break the chains of popery, and lead the church into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Though, like others in his time, he did not see every point of faith as clearly as we see it today, yet he earnestly desired to know the will of God, and joyfully received the truth as it was made plain to his understanding. Zealous, ardent, devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Scriptures of truth, Luther was the man for his time; and through him God accomplished a great work for the emancipation of the church, and the enlightenment of the world.

Like the first heralds of the gospel, Luther sprung from the ranks of poverty. His father earned by daily toil as a miner the means to educate his son. He intended him for a lawyer; but God designed to make him a builder upon the great temple rising so slowly through the centuries.

Luther's father was a man of strong and active mind, and great force of character, honest, resolute and straightforward. His life was characterized by

stern integrity; he was true to his convictions of duty, let the consequences be what they might. His sterling good sense led him to regard the monastic system with distrust. He was highly displeased when Luther, without his consent, entered a monastery; and it was two years before the father was reconciled to his son, and even then his opinions remained the same.

Luther's parents were strictly conscientious, earnest, and zealous in the performance of their parental duties, seeking to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Yet with their firmness and strength of character they sometimes erred by exercising too great severity. Their government was one of law and authority. The mother especially manifested too little love in the discipline of her sensitive son. While she gave him faithful instruction in Christian duty, as she understood it, the austerity and even harshness of her training led him to cherish erroneous views of a religious life. It was the influence of these early impressions that led him in later years to choose the life of a monk supposing it to be a life of self-denial, humiliation, and purity, and therefore pleasing to God.

The life of Luther from his earliest years was one of privation, hardship, and severe discipline. The effect of this training was seen in his religious character throughout his life. Luther himself, though conscious that in some respects his parents had erred, found in their discipline much more to approve than to condemn.

The prevailing sin of parents at the present day lies in the indulgence of their children. The youth are weak and inefficient, with little physical stamina or moral power, because of the neglect of parents to train them in childhood to habits of obedience and industry. The foundation of character is laid at home: no after influence from any earthly source can wholly counteract the effect of parental discipline. If firmness and decision were mingled with love and tenderness in the training of the young, we would see youth coming up, like Luther, qualified for lives of usefulness and honor.

At an early age Luther was sent to school, where he was treated with a harshness and even violence that he had not been subject to at home. So great was the poverty of his parents that he was obliged to obtain his food by singing from door to door, and he often suffered from hunger. The gloomy, superstitious ideas of religion then prevailing filled him with fear. He would lie down at night with a sorrowful heart, looking forward with trembling to the dark future, and in constant terror at the thought of God as a stern, unrelenting judge, a cruel tyrant, rather than a kind heavenly Father. There are few youth at the present day who would not have become disheartened under so many and so great discouragements; but Luther perseveringly pressed forward toward the high standard of moral and intellectual excellence which he had determined to attain.

He thirsted for knowledge, and the earnest and practical character of his mind led him to desire the solid and useful rather than the showy and superficial. At the age of eighteen he entered the University of Erfurth. His situation was now more favorable and his prospects brighter than in his earlier years. His parents having by thrift and industry acquired a competence, were able to render him all needed assistance. And the influence of judicious friends had somewhat lessened the gloomy effects of his former training. He now diligently applied himself to the study of the best authors, enriching his understanding with their most weighty thoughts, and making the wisdom of the wise his own. A retentive memory, a vivid imagination, strong reasoning powers, and energetic application to study, soon won for him the foremost rank among his associates.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." That fear dwelt in the heart of Luther, enabling him to maintain his steadfastness of purpose, and leading him to deep humility before God. He had an abiding sense of his dependence upon divine aid, and he did not fail to begin each day with prayer, while his heart was continually breathing a petition for guidance and

support. "To pray well," he often said, "is the better half of study."

While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. He had before heard fragments of the Gospels and epistles at public worship, and he thought that they were the whole of God's word. Now for the first time he is looking upon the whole Bible. With mingled awe and wonder he turns the sacred pages; with quickening pulse and throbbing heart he reads for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim, "Oh, if God would give me such a book for my own!" Angels of Heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God flashed upon the sacred pages, revealing the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner takes hold upon him, as never before.

An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God, led him at last, after many severe conflicts, to enter a cloister, and devote himself to a monastic life. Here he was subjected to the meanest service, being required to act as door-keeper and sweeper, and to beg from house to house. He was at an age when respect and appreciation are most eagerly craved, and these menial offices were deeply mortifying to his natural feelings; but he patiently endured it all, believing that it was a necessary humiliation because of his sins. This discipline was fitting him to become a mighty workman upon God's building.

Every moment that could be spared from his daily duties, he diligently employed in study, robbing himself of sleep, and grudging even the moments spent in eating his coarse, humble food. Above everything else he delighted in the study of God's word. And he often repaired to the Bible which he had found chained to the convent wall. As his convictions of sin deepened with the study of the Scriptures, he sought by his own works to obtain pardon and peace. He led a most rigorous life, endeavoring to crucify the flesh by fastings, watchings, and scourgings. He shrank from no sacrifice to become

holy and gain Heaven. As the result of the painful discipline which he imposed upon himself, he lost all strength, and suffered from fainting spasms, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. But with all his efforts, his burdened soul found no relief. He was at last driven to the verge of despair.

When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the word of God to Luther's mind, and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. "Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in him, in the righteousness of his life, in the sacrifice of his death. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favor. Love him who has first loved you." Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul.

Oh that there were seen in this day, so deep abhorrence of self, so great humiliation of soul before God, and so earnest a faith when light is given, as were manifested by Martin Luther! True conviction of sin is now rarely experienced; superficial conversions abound, and Christian experience is dwarfed and spiritless. And why is this? Because of the false and fatal education given by parents to their children, and by ministers to their people. The young are indulged in their love of pleasure, and left unrestrained to pursue a course of sin; thus they lose sight of filial obligation, and having learned to trample upon the authority of their parents, they are prepared to trample upon the authority of God. And the people, in like manner, are allowed, unwarned to unite in the sinful pursuits and pleasures of the world, until they lose sight of their obligations to God, and of his claims upon them. They are assured of divine mercy, but permitted to forget divine justice. They expect salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, without rendering

obedience to the law of God. Hence they have no true conviction of sin, and without this there can be no true conversion.

Luther searched the Scriptures with untiring interest and zeal, and at last found therein the way of life clearly revealed. He learned that it is not to the pope, but to Christ, that men are to look for pardon and justification. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Christ is the only propitiation for sin; he is the complete and all-sufficient sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world, securing the pardon of all who will believe on him as God hath appointed. Jesus himself declares, "I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Luther sees that Christ Jesus came into the world, not to save people in their sins, but to save them from their sins; that the one only way whereby the sinner can be saved is by repentance toward God, because of the transgression of his law, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, both for the pardon of sin and for grace to lead a life of obedience.

Thus he was led to perceive the fallacy of the papal doctrine, that salvation is obtained by punishments and penances, and that men must through hell reach Heaven. He learned from the precious Bible that he who is not cleansed from sin by Christ's atoning blood, can never be cleansed by the fires of hell; that the doctrine of purgatory is but a cunning device of the father of lies, and that the present life is the only period for probation granted to man in which to prepare for the society of the pure and holy.

June 7, 1883

Luther at Wittenberg

After two years in the cloister, Luther was consecrated to the priest's office, and a year later he was called to a professorship in the University of Wittenberg. Here he applied himself diligently to the study of the ancient languages, especially Greek and Hebrew, that he might study the word of God in the original tongues. He began to lecture upon the Bible; and the book of Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles, were opened to the understanding of crowds of eager listeners. From all parts of Germany and even from foreign countries, students flocked to the university.

Staupitz, the friend and superior of Luther, urged him to ascend the pulpit, and preach the word of God. But Luther hesitated, feeling himself unworthy to speak to the people in Christ's stead. It was only after a long struggle, that he yielded to the solicitations of his friends.

The pulpit in which he first preached was an old rostrum made of rough planks, in a dilapidated chapel propped on all sides to keep it from falling. Here the Reformation preaching was entered upon. When Jesus came to earth, he was cradled in a manger. And the gospel was not first proclaimed in imposing churches, but from the swaying seat of a fisherman's boat, and upon the mountain side, in the plain, and by the highway.

Already Luther was mighty in the Scriptures; and the grace of God rested upon him. His surpassing eloquence delighted and captivated his auditors; the clearness and power with which he presented the truth convinced their understanding, and his deep fervor touched their hearts. The little chapel could not contain the crowds that sought admission, and he was called to preach in the parish church. So wide-spread had his reputation now

become that Frederic the Wise, the Elector of Saxony, came to Wittenberg to hear him.

Luther was still a true son of the papal church, and had no thought that he would ever be anything else. In the providence of God he decides to visit Rome. He pursues his journey on foot, lodging at the monasteries on the way. He passes the Alps, and descends into the plain of Italy, and is filled with wonder as he goes. Visiting a convent in Lombardy, he sees the splendor of the apartments, the richness of the dresses, the luxury of the table, the extravagance everywhere. With painful misgivings he contrasts this scene with the self-denial and hardship of his own life. His mind is becoming perplexed.

At last he beholds in the distance the seven-hilled city. With deep emotion he prostrates himself upon the earth, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!" He enters the city, visits the churches, listens to the marvelous tales repeated by priests and monks, and goes through all the forms and ceremonies required. Everywhere he looks upon scenes that fill him with astonishment and horror. He sees that the same iniquity exists among the higher clergy as among the lower. He hears the indecent jokes from prelates, and is filled with horror at their awful profanity, even during Mass. As he mingles with the monks and citizens, he meets dissipation, debauchery. Turn where he will, in the place of sanctity he finds profanation. "It is incredible," he says, "what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome. If there be a hell, Rome is built above it. It is an abyss whence all sins proceed."

The heart-sickening depravity and blind superstition which he saw on every side led him to press more closely to Christ. On his knees one day Luther was ascending the stairway to St. Peter's, when a voice like thunder seemed to say to him, "The just shall live by faith!" He sprang upon his feet in shame and horror, and fled from the scene of his folly. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before

the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. The truth of God had enlightened his understanding. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed to the Satanic delusions of the papacy. When he turned his face from Rome, he had turned away also in heart, and from that time the separation grew wider, until he severed all connection with the Romish church.

At the age of twenty-nine Luther received at the University of Wittenberg, the degree of doctor of divinity. Now he was at liberty to devote himself, as never before, to the Scriptures that he loved. He had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the word of God, not the sayings and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible. He had been called as a shepherd to feed the flock of God, that were hungering and thirsting for the truth.

Luther's feet were now planted upon the true foundation,--"the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the sacred Scriptures. At the sound of these words Rome trembled. They struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation.

In the providence of God, Luther was now to stand as the reformer of the church. He sought to turn the minds of his students away from the sophistries of philosophers and theologians, to the eternal truths set forth by prophets and apostles. He fearlessly attacked the speculative infidelity of the school-men, and opposed the philosophy and theology which had so long held a controlling influence upon the minds of the people. He saw, as we see today, the danger of exalting human theories and speculations above the revealed truths of God's word. He denounced such studies as not only worthless but pernicious, declaring, that, "the writings of the prophets and

the apostles are more certain and sublime than all the sophisms and theology of the schools." "Within my heart," he adds, "reigns alone, and must alone reign, faith in my Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the thoughts that occupy me day and night."

With deep earnestness he declared his faith in Christ as the basis of his hope,--the beginning and the end, the foundation and crowning glory of the plan of salvation. He was listened to with wonder as he spoke of that faith to the students in the university and to the crowded congregations in the church. He was steadily and surely drawing the minds of pupils and hearers away from trust in men, however high their claims, away from self-righteousness, to Christ.

The burden of his preaching was, "Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to despair of your own work and cry unto him, Lord Jesus thou art my righteousness and I am thy sin. Thou hast taken on thee what was mine, and given to me what was thine. What thou wast not, thou becamest, that I might become what I was not."

Thus fearlessly and firmly Luther presented those great truths which the apostles of Christ had proclaimed with such power. The voice of Paul, sounding down through the centuries, spoke through Luther, exposing superstitions, refuting error, and uprooting heresy.

Priests and prelates, the professed expositors of divine truth, were perverting the Scriptures by their misstatements and prevarications; wresting the word of God to make it sustain their errors and traditions. They sedulously withheld the Bible from the people, well knowing that should they search it for themselves, their faith would be fixed upon Christ, and not upon pope and priests. The light shining forth from God's word would lead the mind directly away from the Romish faith.

Such had been the experience of Luther. As he saw the terrible apostasy and corruption of the church, he determined to be a faithful steward of God's word, to dispense to others its holy teachings in their purity and simplicity. He knew that unless the people could be led to receive the word of God as their rule of life, there could be no hope of reform. He therefore presented the Scriptures to his hearers as the oracles of God, a divine communication as verily addressed to them as though they heard the voice of God speaking to them from Heaven. With great earnestness he urged upon them the importance of gaining for themselves a knowledge of the sacred word. The Bible was written by holy men under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, and the aid of that same Spirit was indispensable to an understanding of its teachings. It should be studied in humility and in faith, with unwavering confidence in its supreme authority, and with earnest prayer for divine aid. Only in pursuing such a course could the searcher hope to discern spiritual things. Were the word of God thus studied, it would exert a molding influence upon both the mental and the moral powers, quickening and ennobling the intellect, purifying the soul, thus erecting mighty barrier against the iniquity that was flooding the world.

Luther came not with human ceremonies, traditions, and fables, to impose on the credulity of the people, but with the truth and the power of God to enlighten their understanding, and free their souls from the bondage of superstition and the tyranny of sin. He declared to his hearers that they must individually believe in Christ, if they would receive salvation through him; no priest or pope could take the place of the divine Mediator. Those who came to Jesus as repentant, believing sinners, would find pardon and peace, and would have his righteousness imputed to them. Sanctification is the fruit of faith, whose renewing power transforms the soul into the image of Christ. It was by faith in a crucified Redeemer that souls were saved in the days of the apostles; it was only by the same faith that souls could be saved in the days of Luther. He taught the people that they must exercise repentance toward God, whose holy law they had transgressed, and faith in

Christ, whose blood could atone for their sins. He showed them that all who were truly penitent would pray earnestly for divine aid to battle against their evil propensities, and he also urged upon them the fact that the sincerity of their prayers would be evinced by the energy of their endeavors to render obedience to the law of God.

Precious indeed was the message which Luther bore to the eager crowds that hung upon his words. Never before had such teachings fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through his atoning blood, melted their hearts, and inspired within them an immortal hope. A light was kindled at Wittenberg whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time.

June 14, 1883

The First Blow of the Reformation

The year 1517 marked the beginning new era for the church and the world. It was a period of great excitement in Germany. To replenish her treasuries, the Roman Church had opened a vast market on earth, and made merchandise of the grace of God. Indulgences was the name given to this merchandise. As the dealer entered a town, one went before him, crying, "The grace of God and of the Holy Father is at your gates." And the people welcomed the blasphemous pretender as if he were God himself come down from Heaven to them.

Tetzel, the leader in this infamous traffic, had been convicted of the basest offenses against society and against the law of God; but having escaped the punishment due to his crimes, he was now employed to further the mercenary and unscrupulous projects of the Romish Church. With shameless effrontery he framed the most glaring falsehoods, and related all manner of marvelous tales to deceive an ignorant, credulous, and superstitious people. Had they possessed the word of God, the unerring detector of sin and Satanic delusions, they could not have been thus deceived. It was to keep them under the control of the papacy, that they might swell the power and wealth of her ambitious leaders, that the Bible had been withheld from them.

Tetzel sets up his traffic in the church, and ascending the pulpit, he with great vehemence extols indulgences as the most precious gifts of God. "Draw near," he cries, "and I will give you letters, duly sealed, by which the sins you hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven you." "Even repentance is not indispensable." "But more than all this, indulgences save not only the living but the dead." "The very moment that the money clinks

against the bottom of this chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies to Heaven." With such Heaven-daring blasphemy spoke this agent of Satan.

When Simon Magus offered to purchase of the apostles the power to work miracles, Peter answered him, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." But Tetzel's offer was grasped by eager thousands. Gold and silver flowed into his treasury. A salvation that could be bought with money was more easily obtained than that which required repentance, faith and diligent effort to resist and overcome sin. They could sin as they pleased, and money would purchase their pardon.

The doctrine of indulgences had long been opposed by men of learning and piety in the Romish Church, and there were many who had no faith in pretensions so contrary to both reason and revelation. Yet no bishop dared to lift his voice against the fraud and corruption of this iniquitous traffic. The minds of men were becoming disturbed and uneasy, and they eagerly inquired if God would not work through some instrumentality for the purification of his church.

The traffic in indulgences, subversive as it was of the very foundation principles of the gospel, could not fail to arouse determined opposition on the part of Luther. Though still a papist of the straightest sort, he was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of Tetzel and his associates. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to Luther confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent, and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. In great perplexity, they sought out Tetzel, and informed him that Luther, an Augustine monk, had treated his letters with contempt. The friar was filled with rage. He uttered the most terrible curses, caused fires to be

lighted in the public square, and declared that he had orders from the pope to burn the heretics who should dare to oppose his most holy indulgences.

Luther now enters boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth, fighting not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. His voice is heard from the pulpit, in earnest, solemn warning. He sets before the people the offensive character of sin, and teaches them that it is impossible for man by his own works to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased. It is a free gift. He counsels the people not to buy the indulgences, but to look in faith to their crucified Redeemer. He relates his own painful experience in vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assures his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy unspeakable. He urges them to obtain, if possible, a copy of the Bible, and to study it diligently. It is those who do not learn and obey its sacred truths that are deceived by Satan, and left to perish in their iniquity.

A bold blow had been struck for the Reformation. But Satan was rallying his forces to control the minds of the people and maintain the traffic in the grace of God. He aroused such hatred against Luther that many were ready to silence his opposition, even by taking his life. Thus the great controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness went steadily forward.

About this time the elector Frederic had a dream which made a deep impression upon his mind, and which seemed in a remarkable manner to foreshadow the work of the Reformation. "The feast of All-Saints was at hand, and the elector, having retired to rest, lay musing how he should keep the festival, and was praying for the poor souls in purgatory, and beseeching Divine guidance for himself, his counselors, and his people. Thus engaged,

he fell asleep, and dreamed that a monk, a true son of the apostle Paul, was sent to him; and that all the saints accompanied him, for the purpose of testifying that he was divinely commissioned. They asked of the elector, that the monk might be allowed to write something on the church door at Wittenberg. The monk began to write, and the characters were so large and brilliant that they could be read at a great distance; and the pen he used was so long that its extremity reached even to Rome, and wounded the ears of a lion which was crouching there, and shook the triple crown on the pope's head. All the cardinals and princes ran to support it; and, as the dreamer himself joined in the effort to support the pope's crown, he awoke in great alarm, and angry with the monk who had used his pen so awkwardly. Presently he fell asleep again, and his strange dream continued; the disturbed lion began to roar, and Rome and all the surrounding States ran to make inquiry; and the pope demanded that the monk be restrained, and demanded this especially of the elector, as the monk dwelt in his dominions.

"Once more the elector awoke from his dream, besought God to preserve the holy father, the pope, and slept again. And still his strange dream continued, and he saw all the princes of the empire crowding to Rome, and all striving to break the mysterious pen. Yet the more they endeavored to break it, the stiffer it became; and when they asked the monk where he found it, and why it was so strong, he replied that he secured it from one of his old schoolmasters; that it belonged to a Bohemian goose [John Huss, whose surname in the Bohemian language signifies goose. Huss proclaimed the truth a century before the time of Luther, and when assailed by persecution, he declared: "The wicked have begun by preparing a treacherous snare for the goose. But if even the goose, which is only a domestic bird, a peaceful animal, and whose flight is not very high in the air, has nevertheless broken through their toils, other birds, soaring more boldly toward the sky, will break through them with still greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send forth eagles and keen-eyed vultures."] a hundred years old; and that it was strong because no man could take the pith out of it. Suddenly

the dreamer heard an outcry, and lo, a great number of pens had issued from the long pen of the monk!"

The Festival of All-Saints was an important day for Wittenberg. The costly relics of the church were then displayed before the people, and a full remission of sin was granted to all who visited the church and made confession. Accordingly on this day the people in great numbers flocked to Wittenberg.

On the 31st of October, the day preceding the festival, a monk went boldly to the church, to which a crowd of worshipers was already repairing, and affixed to the door ninety-five propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. That monk was Martin Luther. He went alone; not one of his most intimate friends knew of his design. As he fastened his theses upon the door of the church, he proclaimed himself ready to defend them the next day at the university itself against all opposers.

These propositions attracted universal attention. They were read and re-read and repeated in every direction. Great excitement was created in the university and in the whole city.

By these theses the doctrine of indulgences was fearlessly opposed. It was shown that the power to grant the pardon of sin, and to remit its penalty, had never been committed to the pope, or to any other man. The whole scheme was a farce, an artifice to extort money by playing upon the superstitions of the people, a device of Satan to destroy the souls of all who should trust to its lying pretensions. It was also clearly shown that the gospel of Christ was the most valuable treasure of the church, and that the grace of God, therein revealed, was freely bestowed upon all who should seek it by repentance and faith.

God was directing the labors of this fearless builder, and the work he

wrought was firm and sure. He had faithfully presented the doctrine of grace, which would destroy the assumptions of the pope as a mediator, and lead the people to Christ alone as the sinner's sacrifice and intercessor. Thus was the elector's dream already beginning to be fulfilled. The pen which wrote upon the church door extended to Rome, disturbing the lion in his lair, and jostling the pope's diadem.

The sin-loving and superstitious multitudes were terrified as the sophistries that had soothed their fears were rudely swept away. Crafty ecclesiastics, interrupted in their hellish work of sanctioning crime, and seeing their gains endangered, were enraged, and rallied to uphold the pope.

Luther's theses challenged discussion; but not one dared to accept the challenge. By the grace of God, the blow struck by the monk of Wittenberg shook the very foundation of the papacy, stunned and terrified its supporters, and awakened thousands from the slumber of error and superstition. The questions which he proposed in his theses had in a few days spread throughout Germany, and in a few weeks they had sounded throughout Christendom. Many devoted Romanists, who had seen and lamented the terrible iniquity prevailing in the church, but had not known how to arrest its progress, read the propositions with great joy, recognizing in them the voice of God. They felt that the Lord had graciously set his hand to arrest the rapidly swelling tide of corruption that was issuing from the see of Rome. Princes and magistrates secretly rejoiced that a check was to be put upon the arrogant power from which there was no appeal.

Yet there were some who doubted and feared. The prior of Luther's order, frightened by Tetzl, came to the Reformer in great alarm, saying, "Pray do not bring disgrace upon your order." Luther had great respect for this man, and was deeply affected by his words, but rallying he replied, "Dear father, if the thing is not of God, it will come to naught. If it is, let it go forward."

But the Reformer had more bitter accusers to meet. Some charged him with acting hastily and from impulse. Others accused him of presumption, declaring that he was not directed of God, but was acting from pride and forwardness. "Who does not know," he responds, "that we can seldom advance a new idea without an appearance of pride, and without being accused of seeking quarrels? Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Because they appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of the times in which they lived, and because they brought forward new truths without having first consulted the oracles of the old opinions."

Again he declares: "What I am doing will not be effected by the prudence of man, but by the counsel of God. If the work is of God, who shall stop it? If it is not, who can forward it? Not my will, not theirs, not ours; but thy will, thine, holy Father who art in Heaven."

Luther had been urged on by the Spirit of God to begin his work; but he was not to carry it forward without severe conflicts. The reproaches of his enemies, their misrepresentation of his purposes, and their unjust and malicious reflections upon his character and motives, came in upon him like an overwhelming flood; and they were not without effect. He had felt confident that the leaders in the church, and the philosophers of the nation, would gladly unite with him in efforts for reform. Words of encouragement from those in high position had inspired him with joy and hope. Already in anticipation he saw a brighter day dawning for the church. But encouragement had turned to reproach and condemnation. Many of the dignitaries both of the church and of the State were convicted of the truthfulness of Luther's theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the papal authority, to stop millions of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly curtail the extravagance and luxury of the Romish leaders. Furthermore, to teach the

people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne, and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God, and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom he had sent to enlighten them.

June 21, 1883

Luther's Source of Strength

Luther trembled as he looked upon himself, one man opposed to the mightiest powers of earth. He sometimes doubted whether he had indeed been led of God to array against himself the whole authority of the church. "Who was I," he writes, "to oppose the pope's majesty, before which the kings of the earth and the whole world tremble? No one can know what I suffered in those first two years, and in what dejection and despair I was often plunged."

But he was not left to become utterly disheartened. When human support failed him, he looked to God alone, and learned that he could lean in perfect safety upon that all-powerful arm. Steadfastly the Reformer labored to clear away the rubbish beneath which true faith had been buried for ages. The dust of ancient errors sometimes obscured his own vision, so that he could not see the truth with perfect clearness; but as he pressed resolutely on, rays of light flashed forth from God's word, banishing the darkness of superstition, and filling his soul with the brightness of a purer and holier faith. He rose above despondency; his courage and hope revived. Ere long friends began to rally around him. But he did not forget the Source of his strength. To Spalatin, the elector's chaplain, and a true friend of the Reformation, Luther wrote:

"We cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer. Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in his rich mercy, rightly to understand his word. There is no other interpreter of the word but the Author of that word himself. Even as he has said, 'They shall be all taught of God.' Hope nothing from your study and strength of intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit. Believe one who has made

trial of this matter."

Here we see how Luther came in possession of the truth that waked up the Reformation. It is men of humility and prayer that become mighty men in the Scriptures. They search the word of truth as for hidden treasures. And as they read and pray, and pray and read, they become living channels of light and truth. Here is a lesson of vital importance to those who feel that God has called them to present to others the solemn truths for this time. These truths will stir the enmity of Satan and of men who love the fables that he has devised. In the conflict with the powers of hell, there is need of something more than intellect and human wisdom.

Tetzel, in his rage against Luther, met his theses with antitheses, in which he attempted to defend the doctrine of indulgences, and sustain the power of the pope. Luther advanced with joy to the contest, hoping that the truth, to him so precious, might be revealed to many minds. "Do not wonder," he wrote to a friend, "that they revile me so unsparingly. I hear their revilings with joy. If they did not curse me, I could not be so firmly assured that the cause I have undertaken is the cause of God." Yet Luther loved peace. He possessed a tender, sympathetic heart, and while urged by the Spirit of God to defend the truth, he shrunk from causing strife in the church or in the State. "I tremble, I shudder," said he, "to think that I may be an occasion of discord to such mighty princes."

As Luther, with noble firmness, stood in defense of the gospel, his doctrines spread, and priests and people rallied about him as their standard-bearer. Hard as it was for them to change their opinions, the light of truth was dispelling the darkness of error. Some who secretly rejoiced in the work, took at first no active part in it; but the determined opposition against Luther and the truths he preached, brought these persons to the front, and changed their doubts to the certainty of faith. In the hearts of those who would obey his word, the Lord placed a firmness and decision that nothing could move.

Satan was perseveringly at work to tear down all that God was moving his servants to build up. One of the adversary's ablest instruments was Prierias, the master of the pontifical palace, who also filled the office of censor. The leading men in the Catholic Church were divided as to the true authority for interpreting the Scriptures. A part believed that the authority rested in general councils, as representatives of the church; while another part steadfastly maintained that to the pope alone was granted the power of interpretation, and that no one had a right to explain the Scriptures contrary to his decree. Prierias was among the most zealous supporters of the pope. "Whosoever does not accept and rely upon the teachings of the Roman Church and the Roman pontiff as the infallible rule of faith, and as that from which Holy Scripture itself derives its obligation and authority, is a heretic." Thus spoke the haughty Prierias, and then he proceeded to attack Luther with the spirit of a buffoon and inquisitor, rather than with the spirit of a calm and dignified defender of the church of Christ.

Luther met this opponent with the same fearless firmness which he displayed toward other adversaries. He had given himself to the service of truth, and the Spirit of truth gave him wisdom, strength, and understanding. Prierias had begun his work by laying down certain principles. "Following your example," said Luther, "I also will lay down certain principles. The first is the passage of St. Paul: 'If any one preach unto you another gospel than that is preached, though he be an angel from Heaven, let him be accursed.' The second is from St. Augustine: 'I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures alone the homage of a firm belief that they have never erred: as to others, I do not believe in the things they teach, simply because it is they who teach them.'"

Luther adds: "If you rightly understand these principles, you will also understand that your whole dialogue is overturned." To the insinuations and threats of Prierias he responds in these brave words: "Do you thirst for

blood? I protest that these menaces of yours give me not the slightest alarm. For what if I were to lose my life? Christ still lives; Christ my Lord, and the Lord of all, blessed forever."

It should be remembered that Luther was attacking with determined blows the institutions of ages. This could not be done without exciting hatred and opposition. No arguments against him could be drawn from the word of God; for his feet were firmly planted upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. When his enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the Roman pontiff, Luther met them with the Bible and the Bible alone. Here were arguments which they could not answer. Therefore the slaves of formalism and superstition clamored for his blood, as the Jews had clamored for the blood of Christ.

"He is a heretic," cried these Roman zealots; "it is a sin to allow him to live an hour longer! Away with him at once to the scaffold!" But Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of Heaven were sent to protect him. Many, however, who had received from Luther the precious light, were made the objects of Satan's wrath, and for the truth's sake fearlessly suffered torture and death.

Opposition is the portion of all whom God employs to make an advance move in his work by presenting truth specially applicable to their time. The controversy between Christ and Satan is to increase in intensity to the close of this earth's history. Those who dare to present truths that are not in harmony with the popular churches and with the world, will thereby become the objects of slander, reproach, and falsehood. Many who at first but partially unite with scoffers, finally lend themselves fully to Satan, to oppose and overthrow what God would build up.

There is today the same disposition to substitute the theories and

traditions of men for the word of God as in the days of Christ, of Paul or of Luther. Ministers advance doctrines which have no foundation in the Scriptures of truth, and in place of Bible proof, they present their own assertions as authority. The people accept the minister's interpretation of the word, without earnest prayer that they may know what is truth. There is no safety in depending upon human wisdom and judgment. Said our Savior, "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

All who possess reasoning powers can know for themselves what is truth. Those who pray and search for light, will receive light. The reason why so many are groping their way in the fog of error is, that they take the assertions of men, instead of searching the word of God for themselves. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Worldlings and superficial Christians will accept nothing which interferes with their selfish love of pleasure; hence they are willingly ignorant of the truth which would save their souls. Satan works with all his deceptive art to present pleasing fables before the people, and he takes thousands in his snare.

The advocates of truth in our day should not expect their message to be received with greater favor than was that of the early Reformers. Nay, rather, they should expect greater difficulties and more determined opposition than were experienced by Luther and his fellow-laborers. Satan's hatred for the truth is the same in all ages; but as he sees that his time is short, he makes one last mighty effort, by signs and lying wonders, to deceive and destroy, not merely the unbelieving world, but the great mass of professed Christians who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul declares that the second coming of Christ will be preceded by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be

saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

There was a present truth--a truth at that time of special importance--in the days of Christ, of Paul, of Luther; there is a present truth for the church today. But truth is no more desired by the men of today than it was by the Jews in the time of Christ, or by papists in the days of Luther. Therefore Satan, working now with tenfold greater power, succeeds as of old in blinding the eyes of men and darkening their understanding.

As those who now labor in the cause of reform, experience conflicts and trials, as they find their path hedged in by difficulties, and obstructed by the rubbish of error, let them remember that they are traveling the same road that prophets, apostles, and reformers of every age have traveled before them. Christ himself trod a more thorny path than any of his followers. They may comfort themselves with the thought that they are in good company. One mightier than Satan is their leader, and he will give them strength to be steadfast in the faith, and will bring them off victorious.

June 28, 1883

Luther Summoned to Augsburg

Luther's pen was tracing words of truth that shook the very foundations of the papacy. "Whatever sermons and instructions do not exhibit and make known Jesus Christ, cannot be the daily bread and nourishment of souls. Therefore we must preach Christ alone." What words were these to come from a son of the Roman Church! Christ was exalted above the pope. Christ was lifted up before the people as the Lamb of God, who alone can take away the sin of the world. What marvel that Satan was enraged, and that all the power of the Roman hierarchy was excited against Luther?

The Reformer continues: "What is it to know Christ? and what good will come of it? I answer, To learn and know Christ is to understand what the apostle declares, namely, that Christ is made unto us, of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "To believe is nothing else than feeding on this bread from Heaven."

Concerning the power of the church to remit sin, he writes: "The remission of sin is out of the power of pope, bishop, or priest, or any man living, and rests solely on the word of Christ and on their own faith. A pope or bishop has no more power to remit sins than the humblest priest."

To bring the truth more prominently before the people, Luther prepared theses setting forth the new doctrines, and engaged in public discussion of them with his opponents, at one of the leading universities of Germany. This discussion was listened to with deep interest. Educated young men marked with astonishment the force of Luther's arguments from the Scriptures. They sought out the Reformer, and in private eagerly listened to his explanation of the word of God. They honestly desired to know the truth; therefore the

entrance of God's word gave light to their understanding. The teacher's work was rewarded. When Luther was called to other fields, these young men, with the Bible in their hands, fearlessly proclaimed the words of life. Crowds came together to hear the truth, and many captives were released from the bondage of papal error. These young men became active and useful laborers in the church, and occupied responsible positions in the great work of the Reformation.

Luther saw that the cause of truth had little to hope for from those who had been educated in error, and he felt that its success must depend upon the rising generation. He says: "I have the glorious hope that as even Christ, when rejected of the Jews, turned toward the Gentiles, so we shall see the rising generation receive true theology, which these old men, wedded to their vain and most fantastical opinions, now obstinately reject."

These words of the Reformer contain a truth that should be heeded by those who are still pressing forward in the work of reform. Men are slow to renounce the cherished errors of a life-time. Many resolutely close their eyes, lest they see the light of truth. Oftentimes the clearest evidence from the word of God serves only to excite their hatred and opposition. Now, as in the time of Luther, the hopes of reform rest with the young, whose habits and opinions have not yet become stereotyped, and who therefore more readily yield to right influences. Converted to God, the youth of our time may, like the young men whom Luther instructed, fill an important place in the cause of truth.

The wide spread interest excited by Luther's teachings aroused the fears of the papal authorities, and efforts were at once put forth to quench the dangerous heresy. A letter was written in the pope's name to the elector Frederic, urging him to withdraw his protection from Luther, and intimating suspicion of the elector's fidelity to the church. The Romanists had misjudged the character of the prince with whom they had to deal. Frederic

of Saxony was a devoted servant of the church, but he was also a man of sterling integrity, and he would not sacrifice justice and truth, even to the demands of the pope. To the papal letter he replied, that Luther had uniformly expressed a willingness to defend his doctrines before proper judges, and to submit to their decision if they should be able by the Scriptures to convince him of error.

But the word of God was not the weapon most convenient for Rome to handle. It was the very thing that they did not want brought to light; for they well knew that the truths contained therein would not only condemn their unrighteous course, but would lay their lofty pretensions in the dust. The only weapons which they could safely use were prisons, torture, and death. Ere long Luther receives a summons to appear at Rome to answer at the papal tribunal to the charge of heresy. This command fills his friends with terror.

They know full well the danger that threatens him in that corrupt city, already drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. With indignation they ask among themselves, Shall every man who dares lift his voice against the sins of Rome be silenced by death? Shall we permit this great sacrifice?

Luther's teachings had attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which had awakened and illuminated thousands. A living faith was taking the place of the dead formalism in which the church had so long been held. The people were daily losing confidence in the superstitions of Romanism. The barriers of prejudice were giving way. The word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people so long directed to human forms and human mediators, were now turning, in penitence and faith, to Christ and him crucified.

Luther and his friends knew that he could not hope for justice at Rome. They knew that there would be no safety for him on the journey to Rome, and no safety after his arrival. The Romists had not been sparing in their denunciations of him, and once in their grasp no human power could release him. His friends were unanimous in the desire that he should receive his examination in Germany.

This arrangement was finally effected, and the pope's legate was appointed to hear the case. The instructions communicated by the pontiff to this official were as follows:

"We charge you to compel Luther to appear before you in person; to prosecute and reduce him to submission without delay, as soon as you shall have received this our order, he having already been declared a heretic by our dear brother Jerome, Bishop of Asculan." "If he should return to a sense of his duty, and ask pardon for so great an offense, freely and of his own accord, we give you power to receive him into the unity of the holy mother church." "If he should persist in his stubbornness, and you fail to get possession of his person, we give you power to proscribe him in all places in Germany; to put away, curse, and excommunicate all those who are attached to him, and to enjoin all Christians to shun his society."

The pope goes still farther, and calls upon his legate, in order entirely to root out the pestilent heresy, to excommunicate all, of whatever dignity in church or State except the emperor, who shall "neglect to seize the said Martin Luther and his adherents, and send them to you under proper and safe authority."

Here is displayed the true spirit of Romanism. Not a trace of Christian principle, or even of common justice, is to be seen in the whole document. Luther is at a great distance from Rome; he has had no opportunity to explain

or defend his position; yet before his case has been investigated, he is summarily pronounced a heretic, and in the same day, exhorted, accused, judged, and condemned; and all this by the self-styled holy father, the only supreme, infallible authority in church or State! The spirit of the dragon, "that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," is seen in this transaction. Notwithstanding his cunning, he has in his rage forgotten to be wise.

Augsburg had been fixed upon as the place of Luther's trial, and thither the Reformer went. Serious fears were entertained in his behalf. Threats had been made openly that he would be waylaid and murdered on the way, and his friends begged him not to venture. Staupitz entreated Luther to come and take refuge with him until the storm should subside. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that the whole world is up in arms and combined against the truth. Even so was the crucified Jesus hated. I see not that you have anything else to expect than persecution. Your most prudent course is to leave Wittenberg for a time and come and reside with me. Then let us live and die together."

But Luther would not leave the position where God had placed him. He must continue faithfully to maintain the truth, notwithstanding the storms that were beating upon him. His language was, "I am like Jeremiah, a man of strife and contention; but the more they increase their contentions, the more they multiply my joy. My wife and children are well provided for, my lands and houses and all my goods are safe. They have already torn to pieces my honor and my good name. All I have left is my wretched body; let them have it; they will then shorten my life by a few hours. But as to my soul, they shall not have that. He who resolves to bear the word of Christ to the world, must expect death at every hour."

July 12, 1883

Luther Before the Pope's Legate

Upon arriving at Augsburg, Luther immediately informed the pope's legate that he was in the city. The legate heard the news with joy. He felt assured that the troublesome heretic who was setting the whole world astir was now in his power, and determined that he should not leave Augsburg as he had entered.

The legate's attendant, an Italian courtier of insinuating manners, flattered himself that it would be an easy matter to bring the Reformer to a proper position. He therefore called upon him with professions of great friendship, and gravely gave him instruction in etiquette, thinking thus to inspire him with awe for the great man before whom he was to appear. He urged Luther to accompany him immediately to the presence of the legate; but Luther calmly stated that he must first obtain his safe-conduct.

Irritated at his ill success, the wily Italian exclaimed, "When all men forsake you, where will you take refuge?" "Under Heaven," answered the Reformer, looking reverently upward.

Luther soon received his safe-conduct, and prepared to appear before the legate. On receiving information of the fact, this dignitary was somewhat perplexed to decide what course to pursue with a man of so determined character, and he consulted his friends in regard to the matter. One was decided in the opinion that he should be made to retract; another, that he be arrested and imprisoned. A third boldly advised that he be put out of the way, while a fourth recommended that an attempt be made to win him over by gentleness. It was decided to adopt the last advice as the safest.

At his first interview with the Reformer, the legate was reserved, but civil. He expected Luther to yield every point without argument or question, and waited in silence for him to begin his recantation.

Luther stated that he appeared before the legate in response to the summons of the pope, and at the desire of the Elector of Saxony, and declared himself a humble and obedient son of the holy Christian church. Then he proceeded to the point at issue: "I acknowledge that it was I who published the propositions and theses that are the subject of inquiry. I am ready to listen with all submission to the charges brought against me, and if I am in error, to be instructed in the truth."

The legate commended Luther's humility, and at once made known what was expected of him: "First, you must return to your duty. You must acknowledge your faults, and retract your errors, your propositions, and sermons. Secondly, you must promise to abstain from propagating your opinions. And thirdly, you must engage to be more discreet, and avoid everything that may grieve or disturb the church."

Luther asked to see the credentials of the cardinal, showing his authority to settle the matter. He was refused, and was told that he had only to renounce his errors, and the cardinal would make all right with the church.

Luther then asked to be informed wherein he had erred. With an air of condescension, the cardinal made answer: "Two propositions are put forward by you that you must, before all, retract. First, the treasure of indulgences does not consist of the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace offered to him." If generally received, these propositions would be fatal to the commerce of Rome, overturning the tables of the money-changers, and driving out of the temple those who made merchandise of the grace of salvation.

The legate had promised to abide by the testimony of the Scripture; but notwithstanding this he applied to the constitution of the popes in favor of indulgences. Luther declared that he could not accept such constitutions as sufficient proofs on subjects so important; "for they wrest the Holy Scriptures, and never quote them to the purpose." The legate retorted, "The pope has authority and power over all things." "Save the Scriptures," answered Luther earnestly. "Save the Scriptures!" echoed the legate in derision, and he asserted that the pope was higher than councils, and that all who dared to question his authority would receive their deserts.

Concerning the second proposition, which affirmed the necessity of faith in order to grace, Luther stated that to yield that point would be to deny Christ. Said he, "I cannot, therefore, and I will not yield that point, and, by God's help, I will hold it to the end."

The legate replied angrily, "Whether you will or not, you must this very day retract that article, or else, for that article alone, I will proceed to reject and condemn all your doctrines."

Luther answered, "I have no will but the Lord's. He will do with me what seemeth good in his sight. But had I a hundred heads, I would rather lose them all than retract the testimony I have borne to the holy Christian faith."

"I am not come here to argue with you," answered the prelate. "Retract, or prepare to endure the punishment you have deserved." Thus ended the first interview.

The second conference was held on the following day, and attended by many persons of high position. Before this assembly, Luther read a declaration expressing his regard for the church, his desire for the truth, his

readiness to answer all objections to what he had taught, and to submit his doctrines to the decision of certain leading universities. At the same time he protested against the cardinal's course in requiring him to retract, without having proved him in error.

The legate's response was, "Recant, recant." He overwhelmed Luther with a perpetual torrent of words, giving him no opportunity to reply. The Reformer therefore begged that he might present in writing his answer to the two charges, the one touching indulgences, and the other respecting faith. The request was reluctantly granted.

In the third interview, Luther submitted his answer, in which he showed that his position was sustained by the Scriptures, and firmly declared that he could not renounce the truth. The legate treated Luther's declaration with little short of contempt. He scolded and thundered on incessantly, leaving Luther, as at the preceding interview, no opportunity for reply. With vehement assertions and repeated reference to the papal constitution, he continued to maintain the doctrine of indulgences and to call on Luther to retract.

The Reformer at last declared that if the principle which was claimed as the very foundation of the doctrine of indulgences, could be proved from the papal constitution itself, he would retract. All were startled at this proposition. The friends of Luther were alarmed and embarrassed. The legate and his sustainers could hardly contain their joy. But their rejoicing was quickly turned to confusion. Luther met the cardinal on his own ground, and triumphed completely.

When the wily prelate saw that Luther's reasoning was unanswerable, he lost all self-control, and in a rage cried out: "Retract, or I will send you to Rome, there to appear before the judges commissioned to take cognizance of your case. I will excommunicate you and all your partisans, and all who shall

at any time countenance you, and will cast them out of the church. Full power has been given me for this purpose by the holy apostolic see. Think you that your protectors will stop me? Do you imagine that the pope can fear Germany? The pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany put together."

"Condescend," replied Luther, "to forward the written answer I have given you to Pope Leo X., with my most humble prayers." In a haughty and angry tone, the cardinal replied, "Retract, or return no more."

Luther bowed, and retired with his friends, leaving the cardinal and his supporters to look at one another in utter confusion at the unexpected result of the discussion. The cardinal and the Reformer never met again.

Luther's efforts on this occasion were not without good results. The large assembly present at the conference had opportunity to compare the two men, and to judge for themselves of the spirit manifested by them, as well as of the strength and truthfulness of their position. How marked the contrast! Luther, simple, upright, firm, stood up in the strength of God, having truth on his side; the pope's representative, self-important, overbearing, haughty, and unreasonable, was without a single argument from the word of God, yet vehemently crying, "Retract, or be sent to Rome for punishment." Yet the legate was deeply impressed by his interviews with the Reformer, and he afterward changed his own views, and himself retracted his errors.

Luther remained in Augsburg but a few days after his last meeting with the cardinal. Before leaving the city, however, he drew up a respectful letter to the legate, stating that it was useless for him to prolong his stay, as he had been denied a further hearing unless he should retract. "Thus I again set out in the name of the Lord, desiring to find some place where I may live in peace." He closes by stating that he had committed no crime, and ought therefore to have nothing to fear. This letter was intrusted to his friends, who after his departure delivered it to the legate.

Luther set out from Augsburg at night, on horseback, and accompanied only by a guide furnished him by the magistrate. With many forebodings he secretly made his way through the dark and silent streets of the city. Enemies, vigilant and cruel, were plotting his destruction. Would he escape the snares prepared for him? Those were moments of anxiety and earnest prayer. He reached a small gate in the wall of the city. It was opened for him, and with his guide he passed through without hindrance. Now they were beyond the limits, and putting their horses to a full gallop, they soon left the city far behind them. Satan and his emissaries were defeated. The man whom they had thought in their power was gone, escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

July 19, 1883

Luther's Royal Protector

At the news of Luther's departure from Augsburg, the papal legate was overwhelmed with surprise and anger. He had expected to receive great honor for his wisdom and firmness in dealing with this disturber of the church, but now this hope was disappointed. He gave expression to his wrath in a letter to the elector, bitterly denouncing Luther:

"Since Brother Martin cannot be brought by parental measures to acknowledge his errors, and continue faithful to the Catholic Church, I request your highness to send him to Rome, or to banish him from your territories. Be assured that this complicated, evil-intentioned affair cannot be long protracted, for as soon as I shall have informed our most holy lord of all this artifice and malice, he will bring it to a speedy end." In a postscript he begs the elector not to tarnish with shame his own honor and that of his illustrious ancestors for the cause of a contemptible monk.

The elector sent Luther a copy of this letter, to which the Reformer answered: "Let the reverend legate, or the pope himself, specify any errors in writing; let them bring forward their reasons; let them instruct me, who desire instruction, who beg and long for it, so that even a Turk would not refuse to satisfy me. If I do not retract and condemn myself, when they have proved to me that the passages of Scripture that I have quoted ought to be considered in a different sense from mine; then most excellent elector, let your highness be the first to prosecute and expel me; let the university reject me, and overwhelm me with indignation. I will go farther; I call Heaven and earth to witness; let the Lord Jesus Christ himself reject and condemn me.

"These are not words of vain presumption, but of firm conviction. Let

the Lord deprive me of his grace, and every creature of God refuse to countenance me, if, when I have been shown a better doctrine, I do not embrace it." In closing, he says: "I am still, thanks be to God, full of joy, and praise him that Christ, the Son of God, counts me worthy to suffer in so holy a cause. May he ever preserve your illustrious highness! Amen."

This letter made a deep impression upon the mind of the elector. He had never thought of giving up Luther, an innocent man, to be put to death by the power of Rome. Now he resolved to stand firm in his defense. In answer to the letter of the legate he wrote: "Since Dr. Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you ought to be satisfied. We did not expect that without convincing him of error, you would claim to oblige him to retract. Not one of the learned men in our states has intimated to us an opinion that Martin's doctrine is impious, anti-Christian, or heretical." He declined sending Luther to Rome, or expelling him from his territories. Luther, having seen this letter, exclaimed: "With what joy I read and re-read it; for I know what confidence I may repose in these words, at once so forcible and so discreet." God in his providence had raised up a man in high position to defend his servant.

The elector saw that there was a general breaking down of the moral restraints of society. The extensive and perfect organization of the Romish Church, and her immense outlay of money, time, and labor to secure order and harmony, was no indication of the real virtue and integrity of her members. A great work of reform was needed. All the complicated and expensive arrangements to restrain and punish crime would be unnecessary if the members of the church individually acknowledged and obeyed the requirements of God and the dictates of an enlightened conscience.

He saw that Luther was laboring to secure this object, and he secretly rejoiced that a better influence was making itself felt in the church.

He saw, also, that as a professor in the university, Luther was eminently

successful. All his associates there spoke warmly in his favor. From all parts of Germany flocked students to listen to his teachings. Young men coming in sight of the steeples of Wittenberg for the first time, would stop, and raising their hands toward Heaven, would praise God that he had caused the light of his truth to shine forth from Wittenberg as in former ages from Mount Zion, thence to penetrate to the most remote countries.

Luther is, as yet, but partially converted from the errors of Romanism. But he is forced to battle constantly in defense of the truth which he has already accepted, and in this warfare he is driven for comfort and support to Christ and the Word. And as he compares the holy oracles with papal decrees and constitutions, he is filled with wonder.

"I am reading," he writes to Spalatin, "the decretals of the popes, and let me whisper in your ear, that I know not whether the pope is anti-Christ himself, or whether he is his apostle, so misrepresented and even crucified does Christ appear in them." Yet at this time Luther was still a supporter of the Roman Church, and had no thought that he would ever separate from her communion.

The Reformer continued searching the Scriptures, praying, preaching, and writing. He knew not how soon his work might close, and he be deprived of liberty or even life; but so long as God should will it, he determined to labor for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. The knowledge that precious souls were everywhere receiving the truth, filled him with joy.

It was his work to build in the temple of the Lord. There were living stones buried from sight amid the papal rubbish of false doctrines, forms, and ceremonies, and he must search them out, and lay them on the true foundation. The followers of Christ were not then united as a peculiar and holy people separate from the world. They were mingled with the sons of Belial, and must be separated by the power of divine truth.

Luther was not blinded to his own peril or to the peril of his converts. He knew that the subjects of Prince Immanuel are not called to the enjoyment of ease and honor and riches, of titles and possessions; but to a life of conflict with the prince of darkness; they are to wrestle against principalities and powers, and they must put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand. They are called to endure privation, hardship, imprisonment, torture, and death, even as the Captain of their salvation endured before them. The riches and co-operation of the wicked were subject to his command if he so willed it; but he declares, "My kingdom is not of this world." And again, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." In like manner the servants of Christ have no home, no treasure here. It is only because Jesus reigns, that they are kept from the cruel power of the prince of evil.

Luther's voice as a reformer was no longer confined to Germany. His writings and his doctrine were extending to every nation in Christendom. The work spread to Switzerland and Holland. Multitudes of copies of his writings had found their way to France and Spain, and the truth was working in many hearts, reforming the life, and arousing the understanding to perceive the corruption of Romanism. In England the Reformer's teachings were received as the word of life. In Belgium and Italy also the work was spreading. Thousands were awakening from their death-like stupor to the joy and hope of a life of faith.

In this little moment of calm, Luther works on with renewed hope and courage. His friends urge him to be content with the victories already gained, and to give over the conflict. But he replies, "God does not conduct, but drives me forward. I am not master of my own actions. I would gladly live in peace; but I am cast into the midst of tumult and changes."

The Reformer pressed on in the path in which God was leading him; and

as he continued to defend the truth, it constantly became more clear to his understanding, and he perceived more fully the arrogant assumptions of the papal power. He says: "How hard it is to unlearn the errors which the whole world confirms by its example, and which, by long use, have become to us a second nature. I had for seven years read and hourly expounded the Scriptures with much zeal, so that I knew them almost all by heart. I had also all the first-fruits of the knowledge and faith of my Lord Jesus Christ; that is, I knew that we were justified and saved, not by our works, but by faith in Jesus Christ; and I even openly maintained that it is not by divine right that the pope is chief of the Christian church. And yet... I could not see the conclusion from all this; namely, that of necessity, and beyond doubt, the pope is of the devil; for what is not of God must needs be of the devil." Again, he says: "I do not now give free utterance to my indignation against those who still adhere to the pope, since I, who had for so many years read the Holy Scriptures with so much care, yet held to papacy with so much obstinacy."

The battle went on. Rome was becoming more and more exasperated by the attacks of Luther. And now it was secretly declared by some of his fanatical opponents, that he who should kill Luther would be without sin. One day a stranger with a pistol concealed in his sleeve, approached the Reformer, and inquired why he went thus alone. Luther answered, "I am in the hands of God. He is my help and my shield. What can men do unto me?" Upon hearing these words, the stranger turned pale, and fled away as from the presence of the angels of God.

Rome was bent upon the destruction of Luther; but God was his defense. His doctrines were sounding everywhere; in convents, in cottages, in the castles of the nobles, in the academies, and in the palaces of kings; and noble men were rising on every hand to sustain his efforts.

July 26, 1883

Luther Appeals to Germany

On the 23d day of June, 1520, Luther published an appeal to the emperor and nobility of Germany in behalf of the Reformation of Christianity. In this appeal he declared: "The Romanists have raised three barriers against all reformation. When the temporal power has attacked them, they have denied its authority, and asserted that the spiritual power was superior to it. When any one rebuked them out of the Scripture, they have answered that no one but the pope was able to interpret Scripture. When they have been threatened with a council, the reply has been, No one but the sovereign pontiff has authority to convoke a council."

He writes of the pope: "It is monstrous to see him who is called the vicar of Christ, displaying a magnificence unrivaled by that of any emperor. Is this to represent the poor and lowly Jesus, or the humble St. Peter? The pope, say they, is the Lord of the world! But Christ, whose vicar he boasts himself to be, said, My kingdom is not of this world. Ought the power of the vicar to go beyond that of his Lord?"

Luther writes thus of the universities: "I fear much that the universities will be found to be great gates leading down to hell, unless they take diligent care to explain the Holy Scriptures, and to engrave them in the hearts of our youth. I would not advise any one to place his child where the Holy Scriptures are not regarded as the rule of life. Every institution where the word of God is not diligently studied, must become corrupt."

This appeal was rapidly circulated throughout Germany, and exerted a powerful influence upon the people. The whole nation was roused to rally around the standard of reform. Luther's opponents, burning with a desire for

revenge, now urged on the pope to take decisive measures against him. The pontiff and his courtiers yielded against their better judgment, and it was decreed that Luther's doctrines should be condemned immediately. Sixty days were to be granted the Reformer and his adherents, after which, if they did not recant, they should be all excommunicated.

It was a terrible crisis for the Reformation. For centuries Rome's sentence of excommunication had been swiftly followed by the stroke of death. Luther was not blind to the tempest about to burst upon him, but he stood firm, trusting in Christ to be his support and shield. With a martyr's faith and courage he wrote: "What is about to happen I know not, nor do I care to know. I am assured that He who sits on the throne of Heaven has from all eternity seen the beginning, the progress, and the end of this affair. Let the blow light where it may, I am without fear. Not so much as a leaf falls without the will of our Father. How much rather will he care for us! It is a light thing to die; for the Word which was made flesh hath himself died. If we die with him, we shall live with him; and passing through that which he has passed through before us, we shall be where he is, and dwell with him forever."

When the papal bull reached Luther he said: "I despise it, and resist it, as impious and false. It is Christ himself who is therein condemned. No reasons are given in it; I am cited to appear, not that I may be heard, but that I may recant. Oh that Charles the Fifth would act as a man! Oh that for the love of Christ he would humble these demons! I glory in the prospect of suffering for the best of causes. Already I feel in my heart more liberty; for I now know that the pope is antichrist, and that his chair is for Satan himself."

The whole nation waited with intense interest to see what Luther would do. They were not kept long in doubt. With great energy and boldness, he immediately answered in a discourse which he entitled, "Against the Bull of Antichrist."

Yet the word of the pontiff of Rome still had power. Prisons, torture, and sword were weapons potent to enforce submission. Everything declared that Luther's work was about to close. The weak and superstitious trembled before the decree of the pope, and while there was a general sympathy for Luther, many felt that life was too dear to be risked in the cause of reform.

Amidst the general tumult, Luther remains calm and composed. "Be of good cheer," he says to Spalatin. "It was Christ that begun all this, and he will bring it to its appointed issue, even though my lot may be banishment and death. Jesus Christ is here present; and He that is in us is mightier than he that is in the world."

Luther formally appeals from the authority of the pope to a general council of the Christian church. Having stated his reasons for this step he says: "Wherefore I most humbly beseech the most serene, illustrious, excellent, wise, and worthy lords, Charles, the Roman Emperor, the electors, princes, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, cities, and municipalities of the whole German nation, to adhere to this my protest, and unite with me to resist the antichristian proceedings of the pope, for God's glory, in defense of the church and of the Christian faith, and to uphold the free councils of Christendom; and Christ our Saviour will richly reward them by his everlasting grace. But if there be any who set my entreaties at naught, preferring obedience to the pope, an impious man, rather than to obey God, I do hereby disavow all responsibility on their account, having given a faithful warning to their consciences, and I leave them to the final judgment of God, together with the pope and all his adherents."

His next step was to publicly burn the pope's bull, with the canon laws, the decretals, and certain writings sustaining the papal power. By this action he boldly declared his final separation from the Roman Church. He accepted his excommunication, and proclaimed to the world that between himself and

the pope there must hereafter be war. The great contest was now fully entered upon.

Viewed from a human stand-point, the path of duty and righteousness is not a path of peace and safety. By faith we must follow as the Lord leads us onward. But could we always discern the everlasting arms around and beneath us, there would be no occasion for the exercise of faith. The way of God's choosing may seem dark, yet it is the surest way to the light. In the midst of apparent disaster and defeat, God's providence is working out his purposes.

The eagle of the Alps is sometimes beaten down by the tempest into the narrow defiles of the mountains. Angry storm-clouds shut in this mighty bird of the forest, their dense, dark masses separating her from the sunny heights where she has built her nest. For a time her efforts to escape seem fruitless. She dashes to and fro, beating the air with her strong wings, and waking the echoes of the mountains with her cries. At length, with a scream of triumph, she darts upward, and, piercing the clouds, she is once more in the clear sunlight, with the darkness and tempest far beneath. Ever thus, by mighty efforts, have God's chosen servants urged their way upward, breasting opposition, reproach, and persecution, in their conflicts with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

When the hand of the Lord was upon the prophet Ezekiel in the vision of the valley of dry bones, he was commanded to prophesy to the wind; and in answer to his word, life was restored to the slain, and they stood up before him, an exceeding great army. This figure was presented before the prophet to show him that no work of restoration can be too hard for God to do, and none who trust in him need ever say, as Israel had said, "Our hope is lost."

Like the eagle, Luther had been shut in by dense clouds of superstition and Romish heresy, and he had been beaten about by the fierce tempest of

opposition; but on the wings of a mighty faith he had risen above the storm, and was now grandly free, with the sunlight of Heaven shining upon his soul.

Standing under the broad shield of Omnipotence, Luther was doing a mighty work for God. Amid the war of conflicting opinions, he stood as a guide and a covert to a bewildered and benighted people. The torch of truth, kindled at the altar of God's word, he placed in the hands of princes and peasants, who aided him in his work, dispelling the dense darkness, and awakening all Europe from the slumber of ages.

The mighty conflicts and victories, the great sorrows and special joys, by which individuals and nations are carried forward in the path of reform and salvation, are of too great importance to be permitted to pass from the memory. Such experiences cost the heroes of faith too much to be often repeated in history; they should not be lightly regarded. Those struggles for freedom of conscience, should be a lesson to all, that no truth which involves self-denial and sacrifice will be favorably accepted by the world. A costly effort is required of every soul that will go in an opposite direction from the multitude. All that stand in Christ's name in defense of the truth must have a history of conflicts and sacrifices. They cannot advance in reform, as Christ leads the way, except at the risk of liberty and life.

It is through divine mercy in giving to the world such men as Martin Luther and his co-laborers that we are now free to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. We who are living so near the close of time should emulate the noble example of the great Reformer. Like Luther we should seek a deep and thorough knowledge of the word of God. It should be our highest ambition to stand firm as a rock when the strongholds of truth are assailed by an unbelieving world and an ungodly church. In the near conflict, thousands will be called to imitate Luther's constancy and courage. Now is the time for us to receive education and discipline in the school of Christ. Now is the time to cultivate faith and courage. Let the cry

pass from one to another of the waiting ones, Stand fast. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

God will again move mightily upon chosen servants to make terrible charges upon the hosts of Satan. The men whom he will accept to carry forward his work, to fight his battles, must be men of principle, brave and firm and true. The customs, traditions, and doctrines, even of professedly great and good men, must have no weight, until first brought to the infallible test of the law and the testimony. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." To this test, popes and prelates refused to submit, knowing that it would overthrow at once all their pretended power. It was to maintain this great truth that Luther battled so firmly and fearlessly. His words echo down the line to all the tried and tempted defenders of the truth,--Stand fast. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

The Reformer found in Christ a hiding-place from the storms of opposition, wrath, and hatred that threatened to overwhelm him. In Christ alone was peace and strength and security. Such will be the experience of every Christian. Amid all the changes and agitations of the world, the Rock of our salvation stands firm. It has been assailed by the combined hosts of earth and hell. For centuries have active minds planned, and strong hands labored, to remove this great corner-stone, and lay another foundation for the faith of the world. The papal power most nearly succeeded in this blasphemous work. But God raised up Luther to cry day and night, as he built upon the walls of Zion. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." That great corner-stone, the Rock of Ages, stands today unshaken. Amid all the tumults and conflicts of the world, Christ still offers rest to the weary, and the water of life to the thirsting soul. Through the ages his words come down to us,--"I am the way, the truth and the life."

August 2, 1883

Papal Plots Against Luther

As Luther exalted the word of God, and deposed the human power and authority that had usurped its place, the cry was raised by his enemies that he preached novelties, and that it could not be possible that great and learned men had been in so grave error. To this he answered: "These are not novelties that I preach. But I affirm that the doctrines of Christianity have been lost sight of by those whose special duty it was to preserve them; by the learned, by the bishops. I doubt not, indeed, that the truth has still found an abode in some few hearts, were it only with infants in the cradle. Poor husbandmen and simple children, in these days, understand more of Jesus Christ than the pope, the bishops, or the doctors."

Luther went steadily forward, rejoicing in his freedom from the shackles of Rome. He spoke and wrote as God moved him, not only confirming all that he had hitherto said, but still more decidedly protesting against the errors and abominations of popery. Every word was a living spark, burning away the accumulated rubbish of ages.

Rome was not idle. Her emissaries hastened to Germany to congratulate the new emperor, Charles the Fifth, and by their flatteries, false representations, and protests, influenced him to employ his power against the Reformation. The emperor gave his consent to the public burning of Luther's writings, beyond the limits of the German States.

The pope's ambassadors were warned that such a step would inflame the wound rather than heal it; that the doctrine of Luther was deeply engraved where it could not be obliterated, in the hearts of the German people; and that a few fagots consuming a few sheets of paper would be of little avail,

while it would ill befit the dignity of the emperor. But these scheming Romans were aiming not merely at the productions of Luther's pen, but at Luther himself. "These fires," said they "are not sufficient to purify the pestilential atmosphere of Germany. Though they may strike terror into the simple-minded, they leave the author of the mischief unpunished. We must have an imperial edict sentencing Luther to death."

But they found it no easy matter to accomplish this object. The emperor was not prepared to take this step without the advice of his counselors. "Let us first ascertain," he responded, "what our father, the Elector of Saxony, thinks of the matter. We shall then be prepared to give our answer to the pope." And the papal delegates were obliged to confer with the good elector.

Here flatteries, arguments, and threats alike failed. To their demand that he destroy Luther's writings; and punish the Reformer as he deserved, or deliver him to the papal power, the elector replied that the matter was one of too great importance to be decided hastily, and that his determination in regard to it should be duly communicated to them.

May God help the elector now; for his position is one of great difficulty. He is partially convinced of the truth; but in his circumstances and surroundings a strong pressure is brought to bear against it. On the one side are the emperor, the princes of the empire, and above all the pope, whose power the elector was not yet ready to shake off; on the other side stands a poor monk, Martin Luther; for it is against this one man that all this assault is directed.

For a time it seemed that Satan was about to triumph. But God gave wisdom to Luther's defender; his courage, that had seemed to waver, again grew strong. He was filled with horror at the thought of delivering up to torture and death a man whom he believed to have been raised up of God to accomplish a great work. He saw that justice should be regarded above the

desires of the pope, and he determined to act upon this principle.

The elector now gave the papal ambassadors to understand, "that neither his imperial Majesty nor any one else had yet made it appear to him that Luther's writings had been refuted, or demonstrated to be fit only for the flames; that he demanded, therefore, that Doctor Luther be furnished with a safe-conduct, and permitted to answer for himself before a tribunal composed of learned, pious, and impartial judges."

This was far from what the ambassadors desired. Every such opportunity granted to Luther had resulted in the weakening of the papal power and the strengthening and spread of the Reformation. To bring their arguments in contrast with the doctrines of Luther, which they knew they could not controvert, would prove a losing game to them. Justice and truth were principles which had no place in their system of faith or practice. The arguments which they could use with greatest effect against all opponents were fire and sword. They had expected the elector to yield to their demands, and without delay surrender the obnoxious monk. But Satan's power was circumscribed, and the cruel plots of Rome were frustrated by Him who is the eternal guardian of truth and justice.

Tidings of all that had transpired reached Wittenberg, and the friends of Luther were filled with joy. The Reformer pressed forward in his labors with fresh zeal. His words awoke new hope and courage in the hearts of the fearful and desponding. Luther stayed his soul upon God. His language was, "We see not the hand that is guiding us; we cannot, like Israel of old, look upon the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, and we hear not the voice that spoke to them from the mount. But if we wait upon the Lord, we shall be satisfied that the great Shepherd of Israel has been leading us all the way in the past, and that the path where he leads will be safe for all who follow him, even in the stormy days of trial and conflict." The first assembly of the German States after the accession of Charles the Fifth to the empire,

gathered at Worms on the 6th of January, 1521. Never before had so many princes attended this national council. All were eager to take a part in the first acts of the young emperor's government, and all were ambitious to display their power and grandeur. There were important political questions and interests to be considered by this grand assembly, but all these appeared of little moment when contrasted with the cause of the monk of Wittenberg.

The emperor Charles was placed in a position of great perplexity and embarrassment. On the one hand was the papal legate, urging him to execute the pope's bull; on the other was the elector of Saxony, to whom he was in great degree indebted for his crown, and who entreated him to take no step against Luther until he should have granted him a hearing.

Charles had written to the elector to bring Luther with him to the diet, assuring him that the Reformer should be subjected to no injustice, that he should be protected from all violence, and should be allowed a free conference with one competent to discuss the disputed points.

Upon receiving this letter, the elector was not a little perplexed. Should he take the Reformer to Worms, he might be leading him to the scaffold. The friends of Luther were anxious and troubled; but he himself was calm. His health was at this time much impaired, yet he seemed anxious to appear before the emperor. He wrote to the elector: "If I cannot perform the journey to Worms as a man in good health, I will be carried thither on a litter. For, since the emperor has summoned me, I can regard it only as the cause of God. If they intend to use violence against me, as they probably do, for assuredly it is with no view of gaining information that they require me to appear before them, I commit the matter in the hands of God. He still lives and reigns who preserved the three Israelites in the fiery furnace. If it be not his will to save me, my life is but little worth. Let us only take care that the gospel be not exposed to the insults of the ungodly, and let us shed our blood in its defense rather than allow them to triumph. Who shall say whether my

life or my death would contribute most to the salvation of my brethren? It is not for us to decide. Let us only pray God that our young emperor may not begin his reign by imbuing his hands in my blood. I would rather perish by the sword of Rome. You remember the judgments with which the emperor Sigismund was visited after the murder of John Huss. Expect anything from me but flight or recantation. Fly I cannot; still less can I recant."

The news was quickly circulated at Worms that Luther was to appear before the diet. A general excitement was created. Aleander, the papal legate to whom the care of Luther had been specially intrusted, was alarmed and enraged. On his way to the diet, this official had had opportunity to learn for himself how generally the gospel proclaimed by Luther had been received. He saw that it had found acceptance with the wealthy and learned, as well as with the poor and ignorant. Lawyers, nobles, the inferior clergy, many of the monks, and vast numbers of the common people, had embraced it, and received the Bible only as their standard of faith and practice. The supporters of the new faith were firm and fearless, while the partisans of Rome seemed stricken with terror.

The pride of Aleander had been sorely wounded by the reception accorded him on his journey through Germany. So great had been the change in public sentiment that but little honor or even courtesy was shown the representative of Rome. He arrived at Worms in bitterness of spirit, both because of the insults which he himself had received, and because of the wide-spread defection from popery.

The legate saw that Luther's appearance at Worms would result only in disaster to the papal cause. To institute inquiry into a case in which the pope had already pronounced sentence of condemnation, would be to cast contempt upon the authority of the sovereign pontiff. Aleander set himself to prevent this by every means in his power.

Furthermore he was apprehensive that the eloquent and powerful argument of this man, who had already wrought so great mischief, might result in turning away many of the princes from the cause of the pope. He therefore, in the most urgent manner, remonstrated with Charles against Luther's appearance at Worms. He warned, entreated, and threatened, until the emperor yielded, and wrote to the elector that if Luther would not retract he must leave him behind at Wittenberg. The Reformer was much disappointed that he was forbidden to defend the truth at Worms. Aleander, not content with this victory, labored with all the power and cunning at his command to secure Luther's condemnation. With a persistence worthy of a better cause, he urged the matter upon the attention of princes, prelates, and other members of the assembly, accusing Luther of sedition, rebellion, impiety, and blasphemy. Satan's work bears the same stamp from century to century. The charges against Christ, against Stephen, and against Paul, were the same as the accuser of the brethren now urged against Luther. But in this case his rage brought its own defeat. The vehemence and passion manifested by Aleander, plainly revealed that he was actuated by hatred and revenge rather than by a zeal for religion. It was the prevailing sentiment of the assembly that Luther was innocent.

At this time the pope issued a new bull, and the excommunication which had before been threatened was decidedly pronounced against the Reformer and all who received his doctrines. Thus was broken the last tie that bound Luther to Rome.

August 9, 1883

Aleander's Speech Against Luther

With redoubled zeal, Aleander now urged upon the emperor the duty of executing the papal edicts. Overcome at last by this importunity, Charles bade the legate present his case to the diet. This was just what Aleander had secretly desired. With great care he prepared himself to appear before that august assembly. Rome had few advocates better fitted, by nature and education, to defend her cause. Aleander was not only the representative of the sovereign pontiff, invested with all the outward dignity befitting his exalted position, but he was one of the most eloquent men of his age. The friends of the Reformer looked forward to the result of his speech with some anxiety. The elector absented himself from the assembly, but instructed some of his counselors to be present, and to take notes of the legate's discourse.

There was no little excitement when Aleander, with great dignity and pomp, appeared before the diet. Many called to mind the scene of our Saviour's trial, when Annas and Caiaphas in the judgment-hall of Pilate demanded the death of him "who perverteth the nation."

With all the power of learning and eloquence, Aleander set himself to overthrow the truth. Charge after charge he hurled against Luther as an enemy of the church and the State, the living and the dead, clergy and laity, councils and private Christians. "There are people who tell us," he said, "that Luther is a man of piety. I will not impugn his private character. I will only remind this assembly that it is a common thing for the devil to deceive men under the appearance of sanctity."

A little further on, however, he attacks the Reformer, heaping upon him the most bitter invectives. Then turning to the emperor, he solemnly appeals

to him to withdraw his protection from the monk of Wittenburg: "I beseech your imperial majesty not to do that which could only reflect dishonor upon your name. Meddle not with an affair in which the laity have no right to interpose. Discharge the duty that properly devolves upon you. Let Luther's doctrines be proscribed by your authority throughout the empire; let his writings be everywhere committed to the flames. Shrink not from the path of justice. There is enough in the errors of Luther to warrant the burning of a hundred thousand heretics."

In closing, he endeavors to cast contempt upon the adherents of the new doctrines: "What are all these Lutherans? A motley rabble of insolent grammarians, licentious priests, disorderly monks, ignorant advocates, degraded nobles, misled and perverted plebeians. How greatly superior is the Catholic party in numbers, in intelligence, in power! A unanimous decree of this illustrious assembly will open the eyes of the simple, show the unwary their danger, determine the wavering, and strengthen the weak-hearted."

The advocates of truth have in every age been attacked with just such weapons. The same arguments that were urged against Luther, are urged by our opponents today: "Who are these Sabbatarians? They are unlearned, few in numbers, and of the poorer class. Yet they claim to have the truth, and to be the chosen people of God. They are ignorant and deceived. How greatly superior in numbers and influence are our denominations. How many great and learned men are in our churches. How much more power is on our side." These are the arguments that have a telling influence upon the world. But they are no more conclusive now than in the days of the Reformer.

The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting upon others the light which God permitted to shine upon him; yet he was not to receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this new light has been continually shining upon God's

word, new truths have been constantly unfolding. God is light, and he is ever imparting light to his followers.

Those who refuse to advance as the providence of God leads the way, seek to arrest the progress of those who endeavor to walk in the light. The churches of this generation profess to be holy, but they permit the love of the world to control them. They have united in spirit and fellowship with the workers of iniquity. They choose to depart from the divine commandment, rather than to separate themselves from the friendship and customs of the world. They are joined to the idols they have chosen; and because temporal prosperity and the favor of a sin-loving world are granted them, they deem themselves rich and in need of nothing. Pride, luxury, riches, and popularity are their treasures, and in their spiritual blindness they count these an evidence of the love and favor of God. Was the Romish church in great deception in Luther's day? The Protestant churches are in equally great deception today. They refuse to receive instruction or reproof. Their ministers cry, Peace, peace, and the people love the soothing message. In their willful blindness they believe only that which will not disturb their carnal security. But in every age of the world, God's true people have learned by experience as well as by the word of inspiration that prosperity and learning and worldly honor are no evidence of the favor of God. The life of Christ, the Captain of our salvation, teaches the lesson that on earth the true church cannot enjoy the favor of a wicked world.

The legate's address was three hours in length, and his impetuous eloquence made a deep impression upon the assembly. There was no Luther present, with the clear and convincing truths of God's word, to vanquish the papal champion. No attempt was made to defend the Reformer. There was manifest in the assembly a general impulse to root out the Lutheran heresy from the empire. Rome had enjoyed the most favorable opportunity to maintain the justice of her cause. Her claims had been presented with the utmost skill. The greatest of her orators had spoken in this assembly of

princes. All that Rome could say in her own vindication had been said. Error had presented her strongest arguments. Henceforth the contrast between truth and error would be more clearly seen, as they should take the field in open warfare. The apparent victory was but the signal of defeat. Never from that day would Rome stand as secure as she had stood.

The majority of the assembly were ready to sacrifice Luther to the demands of the pope; but many of them saw and deplored the existing depravity in the church, and desired a suppression of the abuses suffered by the German people in consequence of the extravagances and lies of popery. The legate had presented the papal rule in the light most favorable for Rome. Now the Lord moved upon a member of the diet to give a true delineation of the effects of papal tyranny. With noble firmness Duke George of Saxony stood up in that dignified assembly, and specified with terrible exactness the wrongs, the deceptions, and abominations of Rome, and their dire result. He exposed the utter corruption of her ecclesiastical system and its workings. His speech closed with these words:

"These are but a few of the abuses which cry out against Rome for redress. All shame is laid aside, and one object alone incessantly pursued: money! evermore money! so that the very men whose duty it is to disseminate the truth, are engaged in nothing but the propagation of falsehood; and yet they are not merely tolerated but rewarded; because the more they lie, the larger are their gains. This is the foul source from which so many corrupted streams flow out on every side. Profligacy and avarice go hand in hand. The officials summon women to their house on various pretenses, and endeavor either by threats or presents, to seduce them; and if the attempt fails, they ruin their reputation. Oh! it is the scandal occasioned by the clergy that plunges so many poor souls into everlasting perdition. A thorough reform must be effected. To accomplish that reform, a General Council must be assembled. Wherefore, most excellent princes and lords, I respectfully beseech you to give this matter your immediate attention."

A more able and forcible denunciation of the abuses of Rome could not have been made by Luther himself; and the fact that the speaker was an opponent of Luther, gave greater influence to his words. The assembly proceeded to constitute a committee for the purpose of drawing up a list of popish grievances. The list, when completed, was found to number one hundred and one. The report was presented to the emperor with the earnest request that he would do what was just in so important a matter. "What a loss of Christian souls," said the committee to the emperor, "what injustice, what extortion, are the daily fruits of those scandalous practices to which the spiritual head of Christendom affords his countenance! The ruin and dishonor of our nation must be averted. We therefore very humbly, but very urgently, beseech you to sanction a general reformation, to undertake the work, and to carry it through."

Had the eyes of the assembly been opened, they would have beheld angels of God in the midst of them, shedding beams of light athwart the darkness of error, and opening minds and hearts to the reception of sacred truths. It was the power of the God of truth and wisdom that controlled even the adversaries of the Reformation, and thus prepared the way for the great work about to be accomplished. Martin Luther was not present; but a Greater than Luther had made his voice heard in that assembly.

Charles could not disregard the appeals of the diet, so utterly unexpected both by the legate and himself. He immediately withdrew the edict for the burning of Luther's writings, and ordered that they be delivered into the hands of the magistrates.

The assembly now demanded Luther's appearance before them. "It is unjust," urged his friends, "to condemn Luther without having heard him, and without having ascertained from his own lips that he is the author of those books which it is proposed to burn."

"His doctrine," said his opponents, "has taken so fast hold on men's minds that it is impossible to check its progress, unless we allow him a hearing. There shall be no disputing with him; and in the event of his acknowledging his writings, and refusing to retract them, we will all, with one accord, electors, princes, and states of the holy empire, in firm adherence to the faith of our ancestors, give your majesty our unsparing aid to carry your decrees into full effect."

The legate Aleander is greatly troubled by this proposal. He knows that he has everything to dread from Luther's presence before the diet. He therefore appeals to the princes known to be most favorably disposed toward the pope: "There shall be no disputing with Luther, you say; but how can we be sure that the genius of this audacious man, the fire that flashes from his eyes, the eloquence of his speech, the mysterious spirit that animates him, will not suffice to excite a tumult? Already there are many who revere him as a saint, and his image is everywhere to be seen encircled with rays of glory, like those which surround the heads of the blessed."

And now a Satanic thought enters the mind of this agent of the great adversary, and he adds: "If he must needs be cited to appear, beware, at all events, of pledging the public faith for his safety." Aleander hoped that, should Luther appear at Worms, the Romanists might obtain possession of his person, and silence forever that reproving voice, even before it should utter a word in the assembly.

The priests and Pharisees were actuated by the same spirit in their opposition to Paul. Whenever the apostle's words in vindication of the truth were allowed to influence the people, the cause of the Jewish leaders suffered loss; therefore the same Satanic subtlety was employed to silence Paul's voice. Those Jewish leaders knew, as did Aleander, that if truth were presented before the people, it would appear in so striking contrast to error

that none could fail to see the distinction.

The same motive led the Jews to destroy Stephen. It was the words of truth which the priests and elders could not controvert that inspired those wicked judges with such madness against this man of God that even while his countenance was shining with the glory from Heaven, they dragged him from the judgment-hall, and silenced his eloquence, not with arguments from the law and the prophets, but with stones.

August 16, 1883

Luther's Journey to Worms

Luther at Wittenberg hears of the exciting scenes transpiring in the diet. Soon he receives a note of the articles which he will be required to retract. But, like Daniel of old, he purposes in his heart that he will maintain his fidelity to God. He writes to Spalatin: "Never fear that I will retract a single syllable, since the only argument they have to urge against me is that my writings are at variance with the observances of what they call the Church. If our Emperor Charles sends for me only to retract, my answer shall be that I will remain here, and it will be all the same as though I had been at Worms, and returned again. But if the emperor chooses then to send for me, to put me to death as an enemy to the empire, I shall be ready to obey his summons; for, by Christ's help, I will never abandon his word in the hour of battle. I know that these blood-thirsty men will never rest until they have taken my life. God grant that my death may be laid to the charge of the papists alone!"

Notwithstanding the entreaties, protests, and threats of Aleander, the emperor at last determined that Luther should appear before the diet. He accordingly issued a writ of summons, and also a safe-conduct insuring Luther's return to a place of security. These were borne to Wittenberg by a herald, who was commissioned to conduct the Reformer to Worms.

This was a dark and threatening hour for the Reformation. The friends of Luther were terrified and distressed. But the Reformer remained calm and firm. He was entreated not to risk his life. His friends, knowing the prejudice and enmity against him, feared that even his safe-conduct would not be respected. And it had been reported that the safe-conduct of heretics was not valid.

Luther replied: "The papists have little desire to see me at Worms; but they long for my condemnation and death. No matter. Pray not for me, but for the word of God. My blood will hardly be cold before thousands and tens of thousands, in every land, will be made to answer for the shedding of it. The 'most holy' adversary of Christ, the father, and master, and chief of man-slayers, is resolved that it shall be spilled. Amen! The will of God be done. Christ will give me his Spirit to overcome these ministers of Satan. I despise them while I live; I will triumph over them in death. They are striving hard at Worms to force me to recant. My recantation shall be this: I said formerly that the pope was Christ's vicar; now I say that he is the adversary of the Lord, and the apostle of the devil."

Luther was not to make his perilous journey alone. Besides the imperial messenger, three of his firmest friends determined to accompany him. With deep emotion the Reformer bade farewell to his associates. Turning to Melancthon, he said: "If I never return, and my enemies should take my life, cease not, dear brother, to teach and stand fast in the truth. Labor in my stead, since I can no longer work. If thy life be spared, my death will matter little."

A multitude of students and citizens, to whom the gospel was precious, bade him farewell with weeping as he departed. The imperial herald, in full costume, and bearing the imperial eagle, led the way on horseback, followed by his servant. Next came the carriage in which rode Luther and his friends. Thus the Reformer set out from Wittenberg.

On the journey they saw that the minds of the people were oppressed by gloomy forebodings. At some towns no honors were proffered them. As they stopped for the night at Naumburg, a friendly priest expressed his fears by holding up before Luther the portrait of an Italian reformer who suffered martyrdom for the truth's sake. With trembling voice the priest bade Luther, "Stand fast in the truth, and thy God will never forsake thee."

Upon arriving, the next day, at Weimar, they learned that Luther's writings had been condemned at Worms. In the streets of the city the imperial messengers were proclaiming the emperor's decree, and urging all men to bring the proscribed works to the magistrates. The herald, in alarm, asked Luther if, under the circumstances, he still wished to go on. He answered: "I will go on, though I should be put under interdict in every town."

At Erfurth, Luther was received with honor. Several leagues from the city, the rector of the university, with senators, students, and citizens, met him on horseback, and welcomed him with joyful acclamations. Great numbers of the population thronged the road, and cheered him as he was about to enter the city. All were eager to see the intrepid monk who had dared give battle to the pope. Thus, surrounded by admiring crowds, he entered the city where, in his earlier years, he had often begged a morsel of bread.

He was urged to preach. This he had been forbidden to do; but the herald gave his consent, and the monk whose duty it once was to unclosethe gates and sweep the aisles, now ascended the pulpit, while the people listened, as if spell-bound, to his words.

The bread of life was broken to those hungry souls. Jesus was lifted up before them as above popes, legates, emperors, and kings. Said Luther: "Christ, our Mediator, has overcome. This is the great news! and we are saved by his work, not by our own." "Some perhaps will say, You talk to us much about faith; teach us then how to obtain it. Well, agreed. I will show you how. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Peace be unto you. Behold my hands!' That is to say, Look, O man, it is I, I alone, who have taken away thy sin and redeemed thee, and now thou hast peace, saith the Lord." "Believe the gospel, believe St. Paul, and not the letters and decretals of the popes."

Luther makes no reference to his own perilous position. He does not seek to make himself the object of thought or sympathy. In the contemplation of Christ, he has lost sight of self. He hides behind the Man of Calvary, seeking only to present Christ as the sinner's Redeemer.

As Luther proceeds on his journey he is everywhere regarded with great interest. An eager throng constantly accompanies him. Friendly voices warn him of the purpose of the Romanists. "You will be burned alive," say they, "and your body reduced to ashes, as was that of John Huss." Luther answers, "Though they should kindle a fire whose flames should reach from Worms to Wittenberg, and rise up to heaven, I would go through it in the name of the Lord, and stand before them; I would enter the jaws of the behemoth, break his teeth, and confess the Lord Jesus Christ."

The news of Luther's approach to Worms created great commotion among the supporters of the pope. His arrival might result in the defeat of their cause. An artful plan was at once laid to prevent him from finishing his journey. A troop of horsemen met him on his way with the message that a friendly knight desired him to proceed immediately to his fortress. The emperor's confessor was said to be there, awaiting a conference. His influence with Charles was unbounded, and everything might be harmoniously arranged.

The messenger urged that there be no delay. Luther's friends knew not what course to take, but he did not hesitate for a moment. "I shall go on," he answered, "and if the emperor's confessor has anything to say to me, he will find me at Worms, I repair to the place of summons."

At length Spalatin himself became alarmed for the safety of the Reformer. He heard it reported among the papists at Worms that Luther's safe-conduct would not be respected, and he immediately sent out a

messenger to warn him of his danger. As Luther was approaching the city, a note from Spalatin was handed him, containing these words, "Abstain from entering Worms." Luther, still unshaken, turned his eyes on the messenger, and said, "Go tell your master that though there should be as many devils at Worms as there are tiles on its roofs, I would enter it." And the messenger returned, and repeated the amazing declaration.

Splendid was the reception granted Luther upon his arrival at Worms. The crowd that flocked to the gates to welcome him was even greater than at the public entry of the emperor himself. "God will be my defense," said the Reformer, as he alighted from his carriage.

Yet the news of his arrival was heard with alarm by both friends and foes. The elector feared for Luther's safety, Alexander for the success of his own iniquitous schemes. The emperor immediately convoked his council. "Luther is come," said he, "what must be done?" One of the bishops, a rigid papist, responded, "We have long thought of this matter. Let your majesty rid yourself at once of this man. Did not Sigismund bring John Huss to the stake? One is under no obligation either to give or to observe a safe-conduct in the case of heretics." "Not so," said the emperor, "what we promise we should observe and keep." It was therefore decided that Luther should be heard.

All the city were eager to see the Reformer, and he had enjoyed but a few hours' rest when counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, and citizens flocked eagerly about him. Even his enemies could but mark his firm courageous bearing, the kindly and joyous expression upon his countenance, and the solemn elevation and deep earnestness that gave to his words an irresistible power. Some were convinced that a divine influence attended him; others declared, as had the Pharisees concerning Christ, "He hath a devil."

August 23, 1883

Luther Before the Diet

On the day following his arrival at Worms, Luther was notified to appear in the afternoon before the emperor and the members of the diet. This was the day that he had long desired; but to human appearance there was great danger before him.

On that day came a letter from a courageous knight, whispering in the Reformer's ear the words of an ancient prophet: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help out of Zion; grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all thy counsel."

He added: "O beloved Luther, my venerated father! fear not, and stand firm. The counsel of the wicked has laid wait for you, and they have opened their mouths against you, like roaring lions. But the Lord will arise against them, and put them to flight. Fight, therefore, valiantly the battles of Christ. As for me, I, too, will combat boldly. Would to God that I were permitted to see how they frown. But the Lord will purge his vineyard... May Christ preserve you!"

At the appointed hour a herald appeared to conduct Luther to the presence of the diet. The streets were so thronged as to be impassable, and it was only through back ways and gardens that the Reformer and his attendants reached the town-hall. The roofs and the pavements, above, beneath, on every side, were covered with spectators. When they arrived at the hall, the crowd was so great that the soldiers were obliged to clear a passage. Within the outer inclosure every place was crowded. More than five thousand spectators, German, Spanish, and Italian, thronged the ante-chamber and recesses.

As Luther approached the door which was to admit him to the audience-room and the presence of his judges, an old general, the hero of many battles, touched him upon the shoulder as he passed, and shaking his head said to him kindly, "My poor monk, my poor monk, thou hast a march and a struggle to go through, such as neither I nor many other captains have seen the like in our most bloody battles. But if thy cause be just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name and fear nothing! He will not forsake thee."

The doors are thrown open, and Luther enters. Never had any man appeared in the presence of a more imposing assembly. An emperor whose kingdom extended across both hemispheres; his brother, the archduke; the electors of the empire, most of whose successors were crowned heads; dukes, among whom were those fierce and bloody enemies of the Reformation, the Duke of Alva and his sons; archbishops, bishops, and prelates; the ambassadors of foreign nations; princes, counts, and barons; and the pope's ambassadors,--in all two hundred persons. Such were the judges before whom Martin Luther was to answer for his faith.

A signal victory was won for the truth, by the very fact of Luther's appearance before that princely council. That a man whom the pope had condemned should be judged by another tribunal, was virtually a denial of the pope's supreme authority. The Reformer, placed under ban, and denounced from human fellowship by the pope, had been assured protection, and was granted a hearing, by the highest dignitaries of the nation. The pope had commanded him to be silent; but he was about to speak in the presence of thousands assembled from all parts of Christendom.

In the presence of that powerful and titled assembly, the lowly-born Reformer seemed awed and embarrassed. Some princes who were near him, observing his emotion, approached him kindly and one of them whispered, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Another

said, "When you are brought before kings, it shall be given you, by the Spirit of your Father, what you shall say." Thus the words of Christ were brought by the great ones of earth to strengthen the Reformer in his hour of trial.

Luther was conducted to a position directly in front of the emperor's throne. All eyes were fixed upon the man who had dared with pen and voice to resist the authority of the pope. A deep silence fell upon the crowded assembly. Then an imperial officer arose, and in a clear voice addressed the Reformer thus:

"Martin Luther, his sacred and invincible Majesty has cited you before his throne, acting on the opinion and advice of the States of the holy Roman Empire, to require you to answer two questions; First, Do you acknowledge these writings to have been composed by you?" and the speaker pointed with his finger to about twenty volumes placed on a table in the center of the hall, immediately before Luther. "Secondly, Are you prepared to retract these works and the propositions contained therein, or do you persist in what you have therein advanced?"

The titles of the books having been read, Luther answered. "Most gracious emperor, princes, and lords! his imperial majesty puts to me two questions. As to the first, I acknowledge the books just named to be mine. I cannot deny them. As to the second, whether I will maintain all these or retract them, seeing it is a question of faith and of one's salvation and of the word of God, which is the greatest treasure in Heaven and earth, and deserving at all times our highest reverence, it would be rash and perilous for me to speak inconsiderately, without reflection. I might affirm either more or less than is consistent with truth; in either case I should fall under the sentence of Christ. 'He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.' Therefore I beg of your imperial majesty time for reflection, that I may be able to reply to the question proposed, without prejudice to the word of God or to my own salvation."

In making this request, Luther moved wisely. His course convinced the assembly that he did not act from passion or impulse. Such calmness and self-command, unexpected in one who had shown himself bold and uncompromising, added to his power, and enabled him afterward to answer with a prudence, decision, wisdom, and dignity, which surprised and disappointed his adversaries, and rebuked their insolence and pride.

The different orders of the diet withdrew for consultation, and when again assembled, they agreed to grant the Reformer's request, on condition, however, that his answer be returned by word of mouth, and not in writing.

As Luther was conducted to his lodgings, a rumor was circulated through the city that the pope had triumphed, and the Reformer would be brought to the stake. Both threats and expressions of respect and sympathy greeted him as he made his way through the crowded streets. Many visited him at his lodgings, and declared themselves ready to defend him with their lives. In the midst of the excitement, the Reformer alone was calm. A letter written by him at this time reveals his feelings:

"I have just made my appearance before the emperor and his brother Ferdinand, and been asked whether I would retract my writings. I answered, The books laid before me are mine; but concerning the revocation, I will say what I will do tomorrow. This is all the time I asked, and all they will give. But Christ being gracious to me, I will not retract an iota."

The next day he was to appear before the diet to render his second answer. At times his heart sunk within him as he contemplated the forces that were combined against the truth. His faith faltered as his enemies seemed to multiply before him, and the powers of darkness to prevail. In anguish of spirit he threw himself with his face upon the earth, and poured out those broken, heart-rending cries which none but God can fully interpret. In his

helplessness, his soul fastened upon Christ the mighty deliverer. It was not for his own safety, but for the success of the truth, that he wrestled mightily with God; and he prevailed. He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. Peace returned to his soul, and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uphold and defend the word of God before the rulers of the nation.

As the time for his appearance drew near, he approached a table on which lay the Holy Scriptures, placed his left hand upon the sacred volume, and raising his right hand to Heaven, he vowed to adhere constantly to the gospel, and to confess his faith freely, even though he should be called to seal his testimony with his blood.

August 23, 1883

The Foundation of Character

Never did greater responsibilities await the youth than await them now. Never was it more important that a right mould be given to the character of the rising generation. Upon every youth, God has bestowed varied capabilities, mental, moral, and physical; and he requires that those be cultivated and improved. We are formed for activity; every power of mind and body must be developed, strengthened, and increased by use. No one should feel that he is his own master, and can do as he pleases with his time and his intellect. Time and talents belong to God, and he has intrusted them to us, to be employed for his glory.

Christ has purchased us with an infinite price. All that we are, and all that we possess, is his. His mercy and tenderness have been exercised toward us throughout our life, and he justly claims our gratitude, our reverence, and love. He claims our obedience also. We should respect his laws in every particular. They are given, not to deprive us of any good, but to guide our feet into safe paths,--the paths of peace and happiness.

Furthermore, our love and obedience are due to God as our Creator. He who has bestowed upon us every blessing which we enjoy, he who has formed us, who understands our needs, and who rejoices in the happiness of the creatures he has made,--he is entitled to our implicit faith and ready obedience. To obey God is to accept the guidance of infinite love and wisdom. It is to pursue a course which will ennoble the character and strengthen the intellect, and which alone will prepare us for a life of true enjoyment and real usefulness. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

We are not placed in this world merely to seek the enjoyment of the present life; but, by forming a true and noble character, we are to prepare for the future, immortal life. Dear youth, you have a work to do which no other can do for you. Be determined that you will possess a right character. You cannot receive this as a birthright, you cannot buy it with money, you cannot procure it by fraud; but you may have it, if you will seek it in the right way. A noble character must be formed, must be built up by your own patient, painstaking effort, while you rely in faith upon the merits of Christ your Saviour.

None should look with indifference upon this important matter. We must not leave our character to be formed by circumstances. The farmer who through indolence or neglect leaves his field uncultivated, reaps a harvest of briars and thorns. So the youth who slothfully neglects the cultivation of mind and heart, will possess a deformed, unlovely character. He will not respect himself, and he will not be happy, try hard as he may.

The youth cannot afford to float carelessly along, exposed to the many influences that are ready to draw them away from the truth, from religion, from peace, and happiness, receiving any impression that Satan may choose to make upon the mind. There are stern battles to fight against hereditary and cultivated faults of character and disposition. Satan watches every opportunity to divert the mind from thoughts of God. He seeks to prevent us from searching the heart, from studying the law of God and comparing our life and character with its perfect standard. We must guard against his wiles. We should ever remember that life is short, and if we would attain to that perfection of character which Christ requires of us, every hour of our probation must be wisely improved as a treasure more precious than gold.

The formation of a good character involves hard work and severe self-denial; but it richly repays the effort. It is a resistance of the devil. It is the obtaining of daily victory over selfishness, pride, and folly, and the daily

cultivation of love, mercy, and beneficence.

Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen the evil traits of character, that your influence may be exerted to lead others to a wrong course. Resolve in the strength of God to defeat his purpose. Set your mark high, and conquer self at any cost. Persevering, well-directed labor will succeed.

While excellence of character can never be attained except by your own exertion, do not forget that at every step you need and may obtain help and grace from Christ. He himself passed through all the experience of childhood and youth, and he knows how to sympathize with the young. He will never forsake a soul that trusts in him. He will listen to the prayer of the contrite, and will be a present help in every time of need. Do not, then, become discouraged in your efforts. Labor more earnestly for a symmetrical character than for silver or gold. You will meet with disappointments and discouragements. Your efforts may not be appreciated, your failures may call forth severe censure. But do not yield to discouragement. The Saviour pities your weakness, he reads the desire of your heart, and he marks every sincere effort to do the right.

Then be of good courage. Look in faith to Jesus. Be much in prayer. While you are engaged in your work, at home, or at school, or even while walking in the street, let the heart's silent petitions ascend to God. Have also regular times for prayer, and let them not be neglected. In this course you may be successful in overcoming the evils of your nature; you may enjoy peace, hope, and joy in Christ, and by words and example you may exert an influence to encourage others in the right way.

Do not fear to stand firm for the right under any and all circumstances. Do not think it uncourteous to meet with a decided "No," those who would suggest evil thoughts, or would urge you to any act which God would not approve.

"When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Do they sneeringly call you a coward, tell them that if it is cowardly to fear to do wrong, then you are a coward. The bravery that is evinced in sacrificing principle, for fear of ridicule, is a low, Satanic spirit that you should ever hold in contempt.

"Dare to be a Daniel! Dare to stand alone! Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known!"

August 30, 1883

Luther's Second Answer Before the Diet

When Luther was again ushered into the presence of the diet, his countenance bore no trace of fear or embarrassment. Humble and peaceful, yet grandly brave and noble, he stood as God's witness among the great ones of earth.

The imperial officer now demanded his decision concerning the second question,--whether he was prepared to defend his books as a whole, or desired to retract any part of them.

Luther made his answer in a subdued and humble tone, without violence or passion. His demeanor was diffident and respectful, yet he manifested a confidence and joy that surprised the assembly.

After imploring the indulgence of the diet if by reason of his secluded, monastic life he should neglect any of the customary proprieties of courtly address, he observed that his published works were not all of the same character. In some he had treated of faith and good works with such plainness and Christian simplicity that even his enemies were obliged to confess them not only harmless but profitable. To retract these would be to condemn truths which all parties confessed.

The second class of these works were directed against popery, exposing those who by their teaching and example were corrupting all Christendom, both in body and soul. No one, said he, can deny nor conceal that by the laws and doctrines of the popes the consciences of Christians are held in bondage, burdened and tormented, and that the property and wealth of Christendom, especially of the German nation, are devoured by the incredible rapacity of

Rome. Were I to revoke what I have written on this subject, what should I do but strengthen this tyranny, and open a wider door to so many and great impieties?

The third class of his books were written against individuals who undertook the defense of Romish tyranny, and the overthrow of the doctrines which he had inculcated. Concerning these he said, I freely confess that I have been more violent than was becoming. I do not think myself a saint; but even these books I cannot revoke, because in so doing I should sanction the impieties of my opponents, and they would then take occasion to crush God's people with still greater cruelty.

But, he continued, as I am a mere man, and not God, I will defend myself as did Christ, who said, "If I have spoken evil bear witness against me." By the mercy of God, I implore your imperial majesty, or any one else who can, whoever he may be, to prove to me from the writings of the prophets that I am in error. As soon as I shall be convinced, I will instantly retract all my errors, and will be the first to cast my books into the fire.

What I have just said, I think will clearly show that I have well considered and weighed the dangers to which I am exposing myself; but far from being dismayed by them, I rejoice exceedingly to see the gospel this day as of old a cause of disturbance and disagreement. It is the character and destiny of God's word. Said Christ, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." God is wonderful and awful in his counsels. Let us have a care lest in our endeavors to arrest discords we be found to fight against the holy word of God, and bring down upon our heads a frightful deluge of inextricable dangers, present disaster, and everlasting desolations. Let us have a care lest the reign of the young and noble prince, the Emperor Charles, on whom, next to God, we build so many hopes, should not only commence, but continue and terminate its course, under the most fatal auspices. I might cite examples drawn from the oracles of God. I might speak of Pharaohs, of kings of

Babylon or of Israel, who were never more contributing to their own ruin than when, by measures in appearance most prudent, they thought to establish their authority. God removeth the mountains, and they know not.

In speaking thus, I do not suppose that such noble princes have need of my poor judgment; but I wish to acquit myself of a duty that Germany has a right to expect from her children. And so, commending myself to your august majesty, and your most serene highnesses, I beseech you, in all humility, not to permit the hatred of mine enemies to rain upon me an indignation I have not deserved.

Luther had spoken in German; he was requested to repeat the same words in Latin. The German tongue did not please the emperor, nor was it readily comprehended by the Spanish and Italian courtiers. Though much exhausted by the previous effort, Luther complied with the request, and repeated his speech in Latin with the same clearness and energy as at the first. God in his providence directed in this matter. The minds of many of the princes were so blinded by error and superstition that at the first delivery they did not see the force of Luther's reasoning, but the repetition enabled them to perceive with great clearness the points presented. The Spirit of God set home the truth, and a deep and lasting impression was made. The Reformation had gained a victory which would tell with great power against the papacy.

But those who stubbornly closed their eyes to the light, who were determined not to be convinced of the truth, were enraged at the power of Luther's words. Of this class was the spokesman of the diet. As Luther ceased speaking, this official said angrily, "You have not given any answer to the inquiry put to you. You are not to question the decision of the councils; you are required to return a clear and distinct answer. Will you, or will you not retract?"

Luther answered firmly, "Since your most serene majesty and your high mightiness require of me a simple, clear, and direct answer, I will give one; and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils; because it is as clear as day that they have often erred and contradicted each other. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture or by cogent reasons; if I am not satisfied by the very texts that I have cited; and if my judgment is not in this way brought into subjection to God's word, I neither can nor will retract anything, for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience." Then turning his eyes upon the assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in their hands, he said, "Here I stand, I can do no other. May God help me! Amen!"

So stands this righteous man upon the sure foundation, the prophets and apostles, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Firm and fearless at his post of duty is the great Reformer. Faithful among the faithless, unheeding the storms of malice and revenge, he stands a mighty cedar of Lebanon among the trees of the forest. While the passions and pollutions of the multitude surge around him like waves of the great deep, he stands, a Heaven-sent beacon, to warn the imperiled mariner of the hidden shoal and the rocky shore.

Luther knows not what may be his fate; but he knows that the cause of truth can never fail, and he is ready to die, if need be, knowing that by death he may serve the truth better than by his life. Light from the throne of God illuminated his countenance. His greatness and purity of character, his peace and joy of heart, were manifest to all, as he testified against the power of error, and witnessed to the superiority of that faith that overcomes the world.

When the Reformer ceased speaking, the whole assembly were for a time motionless with amazement. Several of the princes were charmed with his frankness and nobility of soul. The emperor himself, deeply impressed, exclaimed, "The monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage."

The Spaniards and Italians were confounded, and began to ridicule that moral grandeur which their base and unprincipled minds could not comprehend.

The partisans of Rome had been worsted; their cause appeared in a most unfavorable light. They sought to maintain their power, not by appealing to the Scriptures to show Luther the error of his course, but by a resort to threats, Rome's unfailing argument. Said the spokesman of the diet, angrily addressing Luther, "If you do not retract, the emperor and the States of the empire will proceed to consider how to deal with an obstinate heretic."

Luther's friends, who had with great joy listened to his noble defense, trembled at these words; but the doctor himself said firmly, "May God be my helper! for I can retract nothing."

Luther then withdrew, while the princes consulted. When he was called in again, their orator thus addressed him, "Martin, you have not spoken with that humility which befits your condition. The distinction you have drawn as to your works was needless; for if you retracted such as contain errors, the emperor would not allow the rest to be burned. It is absurd to require to be refuted by Scripture, when you have been revising heresies condemned by the General Council of Constance. The emperor therefore commands you to say simply, Yes, or No, whether you mean to affirm what you have advanced, or whether you desire to retract any part thereof."

Luther replied calmly, "I have no other answer to give than that I have already given."

They understood him perfectly. Firm as a rock he stood, while the fiercest billows of worldly power beat harmlessly against him. The simple energy of his words, his fearless bearing, his calm, speaking eye, and the unalterable determination expressed in every word and act, made a deep

impression upon the assembly. There was no longer the slightest hope that he could be induced, either by promises or threats, to yield to the mandate of Rome. The monk had triumphed over the rulers of this world.

Charles the Fifth rose from his seat, and the whole assembly rose at the same time. "The diet will meet again tomorrow morning to hear the emperor's decision," announced the chancellor. There were many in that company actuated by the same spirit which inspired the Pharisees of old. They thirsted for the blood of him whose arguments they could not controvert. Yet Luther, understanding his danger, had spoken to all with Christian dignity and calmness. His words had been free from pride, passion, and misrepresentation. He lost sight of himself, and of the great men surrounding him, and felt only that he was in the presence of One infinitely superior to popes, prelates, kings, and emperors. And Christ, reigning in Luther's heart, spoke through his testimony with a power and grandeur that for the time inspired both friends and foes with awe and wonder. The converting power of God was in that council, impressing the hearts of the chiefs of the empire.

The pope's adherents, feeling that they had been defeated, angrily asked why the chancellor of the diet had not sooner interrupted the guilty monk. Several of the princes openly acknowledged the justice of Luther's cause. Many were convinced of the truth; but with some the impressions received were not lasting. The seed sown had not much deepness of earth, and the heat of opposition caused it to wither away. There was another class who did not at the time express their convictions, but who, having searched the Scriptures for themselves, at a future time declared with great boldness for the Reformation.

The Elector Frederic had looked forward with anxiety to Luther's appearance before the diet, and with deep emotion he listened to his speech. He rejoiced at the doctor's courage, firmness, and self-possession, and was

proud of being his protector. He contrasted the parties in contest; on the one hand the world and the church, in all their pride and power, and on the other a single obscure monk; and he saw the wisdom of popes, kings, and prelates brought to naught by the power of truth. The papacy had sustained a defeat which would be felt among all nations and in all ages.

September 6, 1883

Charles V Against Luther

Aleander, the papal legate, clearly perceived the effect produced by Luther's speech. He feared, as never before, for the security of the Romish power, and resolved to employ every means at his command to effect the Reformer's overthrow. With all the eloquence and diplomatic skill for which he was so eminently distinguished, he represented to the youthful emperor the folly and danger of sacrificing, in the cause of an insignificant monk, the friendship and support of the powerful see of Rome.

His words were not without effect. On the day following Luther's answer, Charles Fifth caused a message to be presented to the diet, announcing his determination to carry out the policy of his predecessors to maintain and protect the Catholic religion. Since Luther had refused to renounce his errors, the most vigorous measures should be employed against him and the heresies he taught. Nevertheless, the safe-conduct granted him must be respected; and before proceedings against him could be instituted, he must be allowed to reach his home in safety.

"I am firmly resolved to tread in the footsteps of my ancestors," wrote the monarch. Thus he took his position, refusing to accept any light in advance of what his fathers had received, or perform any duty that his fathers had not performed.

He seemed to feel that a change of religious views would be inconsistent with the dignity of a great king. There are many at the present day thus clinging to the customs and traditions of their fathers. When the Lord sends them additional light, they refuse to accept it, because, not having been granted to their fathers, it was not received by them. We are not placed

where our fathers were, consequently our duties and responsibilities are not the same as theirs. We shall not be approved of God in looking to the example of our fathers to determine our duty instead of searching the word of truth for ourselves.

Were our fathers engaged in an evil work? We are not to do wickedly because they did. Were they devoted to a good work? We can imitate them only by performing our duty as faithfully as they performed theirs; by heeding the light granted to us as faithfully as they heeded that which shone upon them; in short, by doing as they would have done had they lived in our day, and enjoyed our privileges and opportunities. Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are also accountable for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the sure word of prophecy. The truth that has convinced the understanding or convicted the soul, by whatever means it may have been given, will judge us at the last great day. No one will be condemned because he did not believe that which was never presented to his understanding or urged upon his conscience. Said Christ of the unbelieving Jews: "If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."

The same divine power had spoken through Luther to the emperor and princes of Germany. And as the light shone forth from God's word, his Spirit pleaded for the last time with many in that assembly. Had not this appeal been presented to their understanding, their sin had not been so great. But the truth had stood forth in direct and unmistakable contrast with error; therefore their rejection of it sealed their condemnation.

The emperor decides that he will not step out of the royal path of custom, even to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness. Because his fathers did, he will uphold the papacy, with all its cruelty and corruption.

With this decision, his day of mercy forever ended.

As Pilate, centuries before, had permitted pride and love of popularity to close his heart against the world's Redeemer; as the trembling Felix bade the messenger of truth, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee;" as the proud Agrippa confessed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," yet turned away from the Heaven-sent message,--so had Charles Fifth, yielding to the dictates of worldly pride and policy, refused his last call from God.

Charles had announced his decision in the case of Luther without previous consultation with the diet. This hasty and independent act of the youthful emperor excited the displeasure of that august body. Two opposite parties at once appeared. Several of the pope's adherents demanded that Luther's safe-conduct should not be respected. "The Rhine," they said, "should receive his ashes, as it had received those of John Huss a century ago." In after years it was a cause of regret to Charles that he did not act upon this base proposition. "I confess," he said toward the close of his life, "that I committed a great fault by permitting Luther to live. I was not obliged to keep my promise with him; that heretic had offended a Master greater than I,--God himself. I might and I ought to have broken my word, and to have avenged the insult he had committed against God. It is because I did not put him to death, that heresy has not ceased to advance. His death would have stifled it in the cradle." So great was the darkness which came upon the mind that had willfully rejected the light of truth.

The proposition of the Romanists excited great alarm among the friends of the Reformer. And even one of his inveterate enemies, a duke of Saxony, denounced the infamous suggestion, affirming that the German princes would not tolerate the violation of a safe-conduct. "Such perfidy," he said, "befits not the ancient good faith of the Germans." Other princes also, who were attached to the Roman Church, supported this protest, and the peril that

threatened the life of Luther gradually disappeared.

Two days were spent by the diet in the deliberation upon the proposition of the emperor. Rumors of the designs against Luther were widely circulated, causing great excitement throughout the city. The Reformer had made many friends, who, knowing the treacherous cruelty of Rome toward all that dared expose her corruptions, resolved that he should not be sacrificed. More than four hundred nobles pledged themselves to protect him. Not a few openly denounced the royal message as evincing a weak submission to the controlling power of Rome. On the gates of houses and in public places, placards were posted, some condemning and others sustaining Luther. On one of them were written merely those significant words of the wise man: "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child." The popular enthusiasm in Luther's favor throughout all Germany convinced both the emperor and the diet that any injustice shown him would endanger the peace of the empire, and even the stability of the throne.

There were many who loved and honored the Reformer, and wished to secure his safety, while at the same time they were desirous not to break with the Roman power. Hoping to accomplish this object, the German princes came in a body to the emperor to request time for further efforts for a reconciliation. "I will not depart from what I have determined," said he; "I will authorize no one to have any official communication with Luther." "But," he added, "I will allow the man three days' consideration, during which time any one may exhort him privately as he may think fit."

Many of the Reformer's friends hoped that a private conference would prove successful. But the Elector of Saxony, who knew Luther better, felt assured that he would stand firm. In a letter to his brother, Duke John of Saxony, Frederic expressed his anxiety for Luther's safety, and his own willingness to undertake his defense. "You can hardly imagine," he continued, "how I am beset by the partisans of Rome. If I were to tell you all,

you would hear strange things. They are bent upon his ruin; and if any one evinces the least interest in his safety, he is instantly cried down as a heretic. May God, who forsaketh not the cause of the righteous, bring the struggle to a happy issue."

Frederic maintained a studied reserve toward the Reformer, carefully concealing his real feelings, while at the same time he guarded him with tireless vigilance, watching all his movements and all those of his enemies. But there were many who made no attempt to conceal their sympathy. Princes, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, and common people surrounded Luther's lodgings, entering and gazing upon him as though he were something more than human. Even those who believed him to be in error could not but admire that nobility of soul which led him to peril his life rather than violate his conscience.

September 20, 1883

Proposed Compromise With Luther

No sooner had the consent of the emperor been obtained, than an attempt was made to effect a compromise with Luther. The archbishop of Treves, a staunch Romanist and an intimate friend of the Elector Frederic, undertook the office of mediator. The Reformer was summoned to the residence of this prelate, where were assembled several dignitaries of the church, with secular nobles and deputies, among the rest one Cochlaeus, who was there simply as a spy for the pope's legate.

The spokesman of the company was himself desirous of a reformation in the church, and was therefore favorably disposed toward Luther. With great kindness he addressed the Reformer, assuring him that all the princes present were in earnest to save him, but if he persisted in setting up his own judgment against that of the church and the councils, he would be banished from the empire, and would then have no shelter.

To this appeal Luther made answer: "It is impossible to preach the gospel of Christ without offense. Why, then, should any such fear separate me from the Lord and that divine word which alone is truth? No; rather will I give up body, blood, and life itself."

Again he was urged to submit to the judgment of the emperor, and then he would have nothing to fear. "I consent," said he in reply, "with all my heart, to the emperor, the princes, and even the humblest Christian's examining and judging of my writings; but on one single condition; namely, that they take God's word for their guide. Men have nothing to do but render obedience to that. My conscience is in dependence upon that word, and I am the bounden subject of its authority."

The company soon broke up and withdrew. Two or three remained, however, greatly desiring to accomplish their object. But Luther was firm as a rock. "The pope," said he, "is no judge in things pertaining to the word of the Lord. It is the duty of every Christian to see and understand how to live and die."

The failure of this effort was communicated to the diet by the archbishop of Treves. The surprise of the young emperor was equaled only by his indignation. "It is high time," he said, "to put an end to this business." The archbishop pleaded for two days more, and all the diet uniting in the request, the emperor consented, much against the will of the legate.

Another effort was made to effect a compromise. Cochlaeus was ambitious to accomplish what kings and prelates had failed to do. Dining with Luther at his hotel, he in a friendly manner urged him to retract. Luther shook his head. Several persons at the table expressed their indignation that the papists, instead of convincing Luther by arguments, should seek to control him by force. Cochlaeus then offered to dispute with him publicly, provided he would forego his safe-conduct. A public discussion was what Luther most desired; but he well knew that to forego his safe-conduct would be to imperil his life. The guests suspected that the proposition of Cochlaeus was a stratagem of popery for delivering Luther into the hands of those who sought his destruction, and in their indignation they seized the terrified priest, and hurled him out of doors.

The archbishop of Treves desired another interview, and invited to supper the persons who attended the previous conference, hoping that in the midst of familiar intercourse the parties would be more disposed to a reconciliation. These repeated efforts to move Luther from his steadfastness remind one of Balak conducting Balaam from one point to another, in the vain hope that he might be induced to change the blessing of Israel into a

curse. The bishop succeeded no better than did the king of Moab. Human applause and the fear of man were alike powerless to shake the Reformer's decision. He was sustained by a divine power.

Still another trial was made. Two officials of high rank, one of whom had manifested much affection for Luther, called upon him at his hotel. The elector sent two of his counselors to be present at this interview. The two first mentioned were desirous, at any sacrifice, to prevent the great division that seemed about to rend the church. Earnestly they entreated Luther to commit the matter to their hands, assuring him that it should be settled in a Christian spirit.

"I answer at once," said Luther, "I consent to forego my safe-conduct, and resign my person and my life to the emperor's disposal; but as to the word of God... . Never!" One of Frederic's counselors then stood up and said to the envoys, "Is not that enough? Is not such a sacrifice sufficient?" and after protesting that he would hear no more, he withdrew.

The two envoys did not even yet understand the inflexible firmness of the man with whom they had to deal. Thinking that they could more easily succeed with him alone, they seated themselves by his side, and again urged him to submit to the diet. He met these solicitations as Christ met his great adversary,--with the word of God. Said Luther, "It is written, 'Cursed is he that trusteth in man.'" They pressed him more and more, until Luther, weary and disgusted, arose and signified to them to retire, saying, "I will allow no man to exalt himself above God's word."

At evening they returned with a new proposition,--a general council. They asked him only to consent to the proposition, without entering into details. "I consent," said he, "but on condition that the council decide according to the Holy Scriptures."

Thinking that this would of course be accepted, they hastened joyfully to the archbishop of Treves, and informed him that Dr. Luther would submit his writings to the judgment of a council.

The archbishop was on the point of communicating the glad tidings to the emperor when a doubt crossed his mind. He had found Luther so firm and confident in his faith, that he decided it would be safest to hear the statement from his own lips. He accordingly sent for him.

"Dear Doctor," said the archbishop with much kindness, "my doctors assure me that you consent to submit your cause without reserve to the decision of a council."

"My lord," said Luther, "I can endure anything except to abandon the Holy Scriptures."

The archbishop saw that his messengers had not fully explained the facts. Never would Rome give her consent to a council which should take the inspired word alone for its guide. "Well then," said the venerable prelate, "let me hear your own remedy for the evil."

Luther was silent for a moment. Then he spoke with respect and great solemnity: "I know of none but what is found in the counsel of Gamaliel: 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God!' Let the emperor, the electors, and the States of the empire, return that answer to the pope."

The archbishop was at last convinced that further effort was useless. Luther had set his feet upon the sure foundation, and he could not be moved.

The Reformer was convinced that there was nothing to be gained by a

longer stay at Worms. Before retiring from the presence of the archbishop he said, "My lord, I beg you to request his majesty to send me the safe-conduct necessary for my return whence I came."

"I will attend to it," said the archbishop, and they parted.

Luther had refused to exchange the yoke of Christ for the yoke of popery. This was his only offense; but it was sufficient to imperil his life. The attention of the whole empire had been directed to this one man, and all their threats and entreaties had failed to shake his fidelity to God and his word. Luther had not without help maintained his steadfastness. A greater than Luther was with him, controlling his mind, sanctifying his judgment, and imparting to him wisdom in every hour of peril.

Had the Reformer yielded a single point, Satan and his hosts would have gained the victory. But Luther's unwavering firmness under the iron hand of the pope was the means of emancipating the church and beginning a new and better era. The influence of this one man, who had dared to think and act for himself in religious matters, was to affect the church and the world not only in his own time, but to all future generations. His firmness and fidelity would strengthen all who should pass through a similar experience, to the close of time. This was the work of God. Luther's defense before the diet of Worms was one of the grandest scenes recorded in history. The power and majesty of God stand forth above the counsel of men, above the mighty power of Satan.

Shortly after Luther's return to his hotel, two high officers of State, accompanied by a notary, presented themselves. The imperial chancellor addressed him, stating that the emperor, the electors and princes, having vainly exhorted him, his imperial majesty, as defender of the Catholic faith, found himself compelled to resort to other measures. He commanded Luther to return home in the space of twenty-one days, and on the way to refrain

from disturbing the public peace by preaching or writing.

Luther was aware that this message would speedily be followed by his condemnation. He answered mildly, "It has happened unto me according to the will of the Eternal. Blessed be his name!" He continued: "And first I humbly, and from the bottom of my heart, thank his majesty, the electors, princes, and States of the empire, that they have given me so gracious a hearing. I neither have, nor ever have had, a wish but for one thing; to wit, a reformation of the church according to the Holy Scriptures. I am ready to do or to suffer all things for obedience to the emperor's will. Life or death, honor or dishonor, I will bear. I make but one reservation, the preaching of the gospel; for, says St. Paul, the word of God is not to be bound.

September 27, 1883

Walk in the Light

The present is a time of dense darkness to the world; but the true light is shining, and God, in his great mercy, has permitted us to behold its brightness and to walk in its guiding rays. We are favored above any other people upon the earth. Our spiritual blessings are more and greater than have been granted to the church in any previous age.

What makes me tremble for the professed believers in present truth, is the fact that they do not appreciate the light, and follow its guidance. With all our opportunities for spiritual advancement, we are not, as a people, wise, humble, and holy. As the Lord caused the pillar of fire to shine upon ancient Israel, so has he shed upon us the light of his truth. He requires us, as rational, accountable beings, to walk in the light. If we refuse to do this, our light will become darkness, and the darkness will be in proportion to the light rejected.

We are living in the time when Christ is about to close his work of mediation in our behalf. All should now closely examine their hearts to see whether they are in the faith. Instead of indulging doubt and unbelief, they should humble themselves before God, cultivate faith in his word and his work, and labor earnestly for the salvation of souls. It is no time now for caviling, dissension, and disunion. Where these exist, we may know that self is not dead. Those who have received the truth into the heart will be so filled with joy and gratitude, and so absorbed in the desire that others may share its great blessings, that they will lose sight of petty doubts and evil surmisings. In their disinterested labor for the salvation of souls, they forget self and selfish interests. Instead of acting the part of Judas the betrayer, or of Peter when he denied his Lord, they earnestly seek to follow the example of

Christ, and carry forward the work which he came on earth to do.

When I think how strong we might be if we would take hold of the strength of the Mighty One, and then see how weak we are, because we do not claim the promises of God, my soul cries out in anguish, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach;" "wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?"

There are among us many who profess the truth, but who refuse to be crucified with Christ. The Author of our salvation labored and suffered for us. His whole life was one long scene of toil and privation. He could have done as many of his professed followers choose to do; he could have passed his days on earth in ease and plenty, and appropriated to himself all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. But he sought not his own comfort or gratification; he lived to do good, to save others from shame, suffering, and ruin. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Can those who are partakers of this great salvation, who are objects of this wondrous condescension, this infinite love, cherish one feeling of dissatisfaction or indulge one murmuring thought, because they are not free from trials, toils, and conflicts? Do we desire a better portion in this life than was given to our Lord? Can we not yet comprehend the great privileges which are ours through the grace of Christ? If Jesus had not died as our sacrifice, and risen again as our Mediator, we could never have known peace, never have felt joy; we must have experienced the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair. Then let only praise and gratitude to God be the language of our hearts. All our lives we have been partakers of his heavenly benefits, recipients of the blessings of Christ's atonement; therefore it is impossible for us to conceive the hopeless state of ignorance and misery into which we had fallen and from which the Saviour raised us. When we feel the

pains, the sorrows, the bereavements to which we are all subject, we should not, by one murmuring word or thought, dishonor our Redeemer. In the hour of trial and affliction let us consider that we cannot tell how much greater our sufferings would be, had we not a compassionate Saviour; we cannot determine how much less we suffer than our sins deserve.

Oh that we might, as a people, seek the Lord as never before! Oh that we might renounce our sins, break down our pride, and with contrition of soul cast ourselves unreservedly upon Christ, believing that he accepts us just now, not because we are worthy, but because he died for us. God grant that all who have named the name of ChriST 5/depart from iniquity! All that God could do for us has been done. Jesus is now looking upon the people for whom he suffered and died, and is saying, What more can I do for my vineyard than I have already done? Can we wish to be free from trials and reproach for the truth's sake? Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and not be willing to share his humiliation?

Our sins mingled the bitter cup which he drank in our stead, that he might put to our lips the cup of blessing. He endured the cross, despising the shame, that he might reconcile us to God, that whosoever would come unto him might take of the water of life freely. In view of the cross of Christ, can you, my brethren and sisters, wish or expect to enter his kingdom in any other way than through much tribulation? We have a work to do which we have neglected. We do not love to follow where Jesus leads the way. Our Heavenly Father requires of his church and people according to the grace and truth given them; and his requirements are just and right. All these must be fully met, or in the Judgment they will condemn the transgressor.

All who profess Christ are accountable for the talents committed to their trust. Christians must stand on that elevated ground which the truth has for ages been preparing for them. To meet the mind of the Spirit of God, we must exhibit to the world, in character and works, that union with Christ

which is in accordance with the light of sacred truth now shining upon us. It is not the lack of knowledge and understanding that at the last day will condemn Seventh-day Adventists, and banish them from the presence of the Lord; but it is the truth that has reached the understanding, the light that has illuminated the soul, which will witness against us, if we turn away and refuse to be led by it. If we were blind, we would have no sin; but the Lord has given us great light, sacred truth has been unfolded to our understanding; yet we have not been wise unto salvation, we have not advanced in knowledge and true holiness according to the light and truth which has been bestowed upon us.

God has been very merciful to you, my brethren and sisters in California. Great light has been shining upon you; but you have a great work to do for yourselves before you can share largely of his blessing. Many are seeking to smooth over and excuse sin, instead of striving, with all their hearts, to put it away. Such must be thoroughly transformed in character and in life. When they seek earnestly to meet the high standard of the Bible, then will the Lord be to them a present help in every time of need. But how few will bear the test when examined by the light which God has given them. A deeper heart-work must be experienced by many, or they will drift into the deceptions of Satan. Their works must be wrought in God.

Oh that my dear brethren and sisters would make sure work for eternity! There is no hope, no remedy, except in confessing and forsaking our sins, and with full purpose of heart turning unto the Lord.

The time has come for us to take advance steps. We should beware lest a selfish, covetous spirit shut out the blessing of God. The Lord calls upon us to give of our means to support his cause. He requires more of us than merely the payment of the tithe. The message is to go forth, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Those who have large farms should begin to cut down their possessions. There is earnest work to do for God, and we are far behind

his opening providence. Recall all the mercies and blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon you, and consider that he has made you stewards of his goods: Then let each one examine himself and see if he is honoring the Lord with his substance. We should come before him with both thank-offerings and sin-offerings. Our obligation to God is endless. His work must not languish for want of means. His claims must be met first, at whatever cost or sacrifice. It is time for those who have large possessions to cut down the principal, that God's work may be extended in foreign lands. Throughout our own country also there are fields that have not yet been entered, and where the truth should be proclaimed.

John Wesley once preached a powerful sermon on the use of money. He laid down three rules: "Make all you can; save all you can; give all you can." To acquire and not save is improvidence. To hoard up money, adding land to land, and house to house, is covetousness and idolatry. To make and to save in order to give in support of the cause of God, is obeying the command of Christ, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

Those who have not hitherto felt the claims that God has upon them, should now begin to act. God calls for all to act a part in the closing work for sinners. Let every needless ornament, every extravagance, every selfish indulgence, be given up, and let all these little outgoes, these tiny streams, flow into the Lord's treasury. Let us remember continually what Jesus has done for us. He for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Let us do our duty faithfully, and then trust ourselves and all we have to the hands of God. He wants not only ours but us. None can render effectual service unless they do the work he has left for them to do, and then leave the result wholly with him.

Oh that those to whom have been intrusted so great and solemn truths would manifest corresponding faith! They should trust their work in the Lord's hands, pleading upon their knees for wisdom and guidance, and then, instead of taking the burden all back, and seeking to plan and execute in their own strength, and groaning because they are overburdened, let them leave it with the Lord. Amid a life of constant activity they will thus find rest to their souls. That which they trust with him they are not to fret and worry about. Those who really trust in God will find the rest he has promised, will find his yoke easy and his burden light.

If the Lord had a company of workers who would rely wholly upon him, he would accomplish a great work through them. One could chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. The Lord is a mighty helper. If we trust in him, we shall have rest and peace. The language of the soul should be that of joy and gratitude. If we have dark chapters in our experience, let us not keep their memory fresh by repetition. Forgetting the things that are behind, let us press forward to the things that are before. Cultivate only those thoughts and feelings which produce gratitude and praise. If you have been wronged, forget it, and think only of the great mercy, the loving-kindness, the inexpressible love of Jesus. Learn to praise rather than to censure. If you meet with insult and abuse, do not become discouraged, for Jesus met the same. Go forward, doing your work with fidelity. Store the mind with the precious promises of God's word, and hold sweet communion with him by frequently repeating them. Cease fretting, cease murmuring, cease finding fault, and make melody to God in your hearts. Think of everything you have to be thankful for, and then learn to praise God. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God."

If all our mourning, and fretting, and complaining were presented before us as written in the book of records, what a sight would we behold! How astonished we would be to see and understand our real thoughts and feelings-naught but unhappy complainings.

I entreat you never to utter one word of complaint. Weave into the warp and woof of your experience the golden threads of gratitude. Contemplate the better land, where tears are never shed, where temptations and trials are never experienced, where losses and reproaches are never known, where all is peace, and joy, and happiness. Here your imagination may have full scope. These thoughts will make you more spiritually minded, will imbue you with heavenly vigor, will satisfy your thirsty soul with living water, and will impress upon your heart the seal of the divine image. You will be filled with hope and joy in believing, and the Comforter will abide with you forever.

October 4, 1883

Christian Privileges and Duties

It is the privilege of every soul to seek and find peace in Christ. Yet this peace is granted only upon conditions. We must surrender our own ways and wills and plans, and thus put off the grievous yoke which we have bound upon our own necks, and we must take upon us the yoke of Christ, which will bring rest to our souls. "Learn of me," says the Divine Teacher; "for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

We each need to learn in the school of Christ; and it is because we are not more humble and diligent students that we are so slow to manifest meekness and lowliness of heart. It is only when we cherish these precious graces that peace and rest can abide in the soul. Only the humble and contrite ones find shelter in the promises of God; only these obtain a saving knowledge of the Scriptures, and a rich experience in trusting God and obeying his precepts. In our own strength we are indeed feeble; but in the strength of our Redeemer we may be strong. In the midst of tumult we may have quietness and peace. We must believe in him, even though darkness envelop the soul; we must work from principle, rather than from feeling. By this continual, unwavering trust, Satan is baffled and disappointed. Says the psalmist, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

If we would maintain our fidelity to God, in this time of danger and deception, we must constantly rely upon the power of Christ. We must be often before God in prayer, holding every emotion and every passion in calm subjection to reason and conscience, banishing all unholy imaginings, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. By earnest

prayer and living faith we can resist the assaults of Satan, and keep our hearts unspotted from pollution.

The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel any one to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph over righteousness.

I appeal to you who profess to be followers of Christ to depart from all iniquity. You must do this, if you would represent the truth as it is in Jesus. God wants whole-hearted, thorough-going men. These only can stand the test of the Judgment. If those who have received the light were but true to their trust, what a flood of light would be poured upon the world! But how is it, not only with the members of the church, but with those who stand as ministers of the gospel? Do their habits and experience correctly represent the purity and simplicity of a holy, cross-bearing life?

The true toilers in the Lord's vineyard will be men of prayer, of faith, of self-denial,--men who hold in restraint the natural appetites and passions. These will, in their own lives, give to the world evidence of the power of the truth which they present to others; and their labors will not be without effect. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

Fellow-workers for Christ, time is short; we have no moments to idle away. Are you watching for souls as they that must give an account, or are you yourselves drowsy, ease-loving, and lukewarm? Have you a living faith? Are you every day increasing in the knowledge of Christ? Do you possess practical godliness, Christian meekness, and deep love for the souls for whom Christ died? Search the Scriptures. Do not depend upon the little

knowledge which you already have. Pray for clearer light. Dig for the precious gems of truth as for hid treasure. Thus will you be enabled to bring forth from the storehouse of God things new and old.

In this age of conflicting doctrines, when fables abound, and there is so much sensational preaching on the one hand, and so great formality on the other, it is a difficult matter to arouse the people. Our only hope of success is to reach them through God. We must give evidence of earnestness, zeal, and devotion commensurate to the importance and solemnity of our work. There should be no exaltation of self. We are not to call attention to the instrument, but to present Christ and the sacred truths that are to test the people of God. If these truths sanctify our own hearts, if they purify and ennoble our own characters, we shall be living epistles, known and read of all men.

The ambassadors of Christ must learn where their strength lies. They must themselves drink of the living water, before they can guide others to the fountain. We must learn by experience what it is to lean upon the arm of our Beloved. There is no evil more fatal to the prosperity of the church than the influence of professed teachers and ministers of the gospel who are deficient in Christian experience, in faith, self-denial, self-control, and in the tact and energy essential for skillful warfare.

My brethren, you should be constant learners in the school of Christ, obtaining from the heavenly Teacher precious lessons to impart to others. You have lost much in your labors because you have not constantly felt the necessity of vital connection with God. There is earnest solemn work to do in every branch of the cause of Christ. You need the Spirit and power of God, that your testimony, like a sharp, two-edged sword, may cut to the heart of those who hear.

The faithful witnesses for Christ will keep themselves unspotted from the world. Those who seek to be popular with the world, will not love the

testimony of the Spirit of God. They are not sanctified through the truth; and after a brief period of half-hearted service, they will make a decided move toward uniting with the enemies of God. They reject the light, and it is withdrawn from them. In time it will be seen that they are in utter darkness.

Many retain a form of godliness and a connection with the church, when they bring no strength, help, or blessing to the church. They seek to make the narrow way broad and pleasant for the multitude to walk in. Such are destitute of spiritual eyesight. They have put out their own eyes, and they stumble at every step. The word of God has not widened the narrow way; and if the half-hearted and pleasure-loving choose a path where they need not bear the cross or suffer tribulation, they are in a path where the Saviour did not walk.

In all parts of our country, during the summer and autumn, large companies assemble in the tented grove, to worship God and to listen to words of warning and instruction from his servants. Great privileges are afforded by these yearly convocations. The Lord Jesus himself comes up to the feast. We have a precious opportunity to humble our hearts before God, and to become settled and grounded in the truth. Are these opportunities wisely improved? They will prove to us either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. After these seasons are over, and those who met together have returned to their homes, will they be prepared to let their light shine forth to the world? Will their works correspond with the faith which they profess? If we continue to love the world, to have fellowship with the works of darkness, or to find pleasure in unrighteousness, then we have put the stumbling-block of our iniquity before our face, and have set up idols in our hearts. If we do not heed the word of the Lord, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean," we are in a worse condition than if we had not listened to the words of truth.

The Scriptures clearly set before us the high and holy position which we

should occupy as sons and daughters of God. If all who attend the camp-meetings would seek earnestly to attain this position, and would receive the spiritual benefit which it is their privilege to receive, they would be prepared to do good when they return home. If the love of Christ is kindled afresh in their own hearts, if they have drank anew from the heavenly fountain, their cheerful testimonies and their prayers, sent up in faith, will be as great a help to the church as ministerial labor. The Spirit of God will come into their meetings, and the hearts of believers will say, It is good to be here.

Every church, be it large or small, should be taught not to depend on ministerial labor. Therefore, fellow-Christians, there is the greater need that you kindle your tapers at the divine altar, that the light may shine forth to all around. However weak you may be, you can become a help and blessing to others, if you will keep your own souls in the love of God, and search the Scriptures for a clear understanding of the truth. It is not only your privilege but your duty to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. You may rejoice in a living Saviour, and may show to all connected with you that he is the center of your affections and your hopes.

Would that all might view this matter of daily, practical Christianity as it has been presented to me; would that they could see what we might be in spiritual power, and what we are because we neglect the light which God has given us! Many will have to combat intellectual slothfulness and spiritual stupor, before they can be a blessing to themselves or to their fellow-men. We are living under the most solemn message of warning ever given to our world. We are altogether too near the closing scenes of this world's history to be inattentive, to occupy a neutral position. It behooves us now to be wide awake, ready for every good work, ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

Brethren, you must come closer, closer to the bleeding side of Jesus. Instead of yielding to every passing influence, seek earnestly to know the

truth, and then endeavor to form a character consistent therewith. Seek to be like Christ, meek and lowly of heart, and, like him, be resolute also; in principle be firm as a rock; be pure, sincere, and holy. Be ever cheerful, humble, grateful. Keep yourselves separate from the spirit and influence of the world. Let not sin find a sanction in your position. Give no occasion for evil-doers even to imagine that they have your sympathies. Let not irreligion find in your lax principles a pretext to excuse itself.

God calls upon you to be zealous and repent of your half-heartedness. Strive to walk wisely, in a perfect way. Begin and end each day with earnest prayer and close self-examination. Compare your life and character with the law of God, mark where its precepts condemn you, and set to work at once to correct the wrong by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Wash your robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Let your words be well chosen. Put away all lightness, trifling, and irreverence.

Those who really desire to advance in the divine life will cherish every ray of light, and heed every warning given by the servants of God. The Holy Spirit admonishes those who preach the gospel, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." If the Lord has given this command, there is certainly a work of reproof, rebuking, warning, and correction to be done. Let all be careful, then, how they allow their hearts to rise up against the reproofs of God through his servants; for in so doing they rise up against God.

Like the Pharisees of old, the self-deceived, the self-sufficient, the self-righteous, refuse to be warned. The Lord points out their dangers, but they do not heed his voice. As they assimilate to the world, they become the friends of evil-doers. While God reproves the transgressor, they feel inclined to excuse and encourage him. Thus they say to the sinner, It shall be well with thee. Such persons call good evil, in that they oppose and denounce those

who faithfully deliver the messages of warning and reproof committed to them of God. They call evil good by extolling those who have no reproofs to bear and no warnings to give, who pass along in a careless, indifferent spirit, excusing sin, and by their own course encouraging worldliness and backsliding. All these are sanctioning a deception which has proved the ruin of many. The blood of souls is upon them. Their course is more offensive to God than is that of the open sinner. Anciently, the Lord always had among his people faithful prophets, whom, he sent to reprove sin. He has never removed these from his church. Those who rise up against warning and reproof, and seek by their jests, their smart speeches, or their deceptions, to make of no effect the plain words of reproof prompted by the Spirit of God, will find, in the great day of final reckoning, an account against them which they will not wish to meet.

To be a Christian is to be Christ-like, a man of faith, a man of principle. The Christians most serviceable in the church are those whose convictions are so firm, whose characters are so strong, that nothing can sway them from their faith or deter them from their duty. As a people, we are altogether too much like the world. We are not the separate, holy people that God requires us to be. When we come up to the high standard of God's law, then shall we be indeed the light of the world.

The professed church of Christ has wandered from her privilege, her duty, and her God. Like ancient Israel, she has forsaken the covenant, and joined herself in harmony with the world. Pride, luxury, and pleasure are invited into the sanctuary, and her holy places are defiled. Those who have pledged their allegiance to God, enjoy the company and spirit of his avowed enemies. Their choice determines their character. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth them.

But, thank God, in every age he has had men who were not time-servers, men who would stand firm for the right, and risk all consequences. In the

strength of God, Martin Luther fearlessly proclaimed the truths of the Bible. In vain earthly potentates sought to intimidate him. In vain they attempted to break his hold on God, and drive him to seek the favor of the pope or the protection of the emperor at the sacrifice of his faith. His one answer was, "God and the right will triumph." Neither men nor devils could silence him. Gold, ambition, honors, could not win him from his work of exposing error and declaring truth. In like manner Huss, Jerome, Ridley, and many others, counted not their own lives dear unto themselves that they might keep the testimony of Jesus. Amid torture and flames, amid dungeons and horrible deaths, these faithful standard-bearers held aloft the banner of the cross of Christ.

We also, who are called to stand in these last trying days of peril and conflict, must be willing, for the truth's sake, to sacrifice our ease, our time, our reputation, yea, even life itself. At whatever cost, we must be true to principle and to God.

October 11, 1883

Luther in the Wartburg

On the 26th of April, 1521, Luther departed from Worms. Threatening clouds overhung his path, yet as he passed out of the gate of the city, his heart was filled with joy and praise. "Satan himself," said he, "kept the pope's citadel; but Christ has made a wide breach in it, and the devil has been compelled to confess that Christ is mightier than he."

"The conflict at Worms," writes a friend of the Reformer, "resounded far and near; and as the report of it traversed Europe, from the northern countries to the mountains of Switzerland and the towns of England, France, and Italy, many seized with eagerness the mighty weapons of the word of God."

Luther left, the city at ten o'clock, with the friends who had accompanied him to Worms. Twenty gentlemen on horseback surrounded the carriage, and a great crowd attended him beyond the walls.

Upon the journey from Worms, he determined to write once more to the emperor, being unwilling to appear to him as a guilty rebel. "God is my witness, who knoweth the thoughts," said he, "that I am ready with all my heart to obey your majesty through good or evil report, in life or in death, with one exception--save the word of God, by which man liveth. In all the affairs of this life my fidelity shall be unshaken; for in these, loss or gain has nothing to do with salvation. But it is contrary to the will of God that man should be subject to man in that which pertains to eternal life. Subjection in spirituals is a real worship, and should be rendered only to the Creator."

He also addressed to the States of the empire a letter of nearly the same purport, recapitulating what had transpired at Worms. This letter made a

deep impression upon the minds of the German people. They saw that Luther had been treated with great injustice by the emperor and the higher clergy, and their feelings were strongly aroused against the arrogant assumptions of the papacy.

Had Charles V. understood the real value of such a man as Luther to his empire, a man who would not be bought or sold, who would not sacrifice principle for friends or foes,--he would have cherished and honored instead of denouncing and proscribing him.

Luther journeyed toward home, receiving, as he went, the most flattering attentions from all classes. Dignitaries of the church welcomed the monk upon whom the pope's curse rested, and secular officers honored the man who was under the ban of the empire. He decided to turn aside from the direct route, to visit Mora, his father's birthplace. His friend Amsdorff and a wagoner accompanied him, while the remainder of the party proceeded on their way to Wittenberg. After spending a day with his relatives, enjoying a peaceful rest in marked contrast to the turmoil and strife of Worms, he resumed his journey.

As the carriage was passing a narrow defile, the travelers encountered five horsemen, completely armed and masked. Two of the men seized Amsdorff and the wagoner, while the other three proceeded to secure Luther. In profound silence they forced him to alight, threw a knight's cloak over his shoulders, and placed him upon an extra horse. Then the two in charge of Amsdorff and the wagoner released them, and the five all sprang into their saddles, and disappeared with their prisoner in the thick gloom of the forest.

Through winding and intricate paths they made their way, now advancing and now retracing their steps in such a manner as effectually to elude pursuit. When night fell, they struck into a new road, and swiftly and silently pressed forward, through dark, almost untrodden forests, to the

mountains of Thuringia. Here, on a lofty summit, reached only by a steep and difficult ascent, stood the castle of Wartburg. Within the walls of this isolated stronghold, Luther was conducted by his captors, and the heavy gates closed after him, effectually shutting him from the sight and knowledge of the world without.

The Reformer had not fallen into the hands of enemies. A vigilant eye had followed his movements, and as the storm was about to burst upon his defenseless head, a true and noble heart had resolved upon his rescue. It was plain that Rome would be satisfied with nothing short of his death; only by concealment could he be preserved from the jaws of the lion.

Upon Luther's departure from Worms, the papal legate had procured an edict against him, to which was affixed the emperor's signature and the seal of the empire. In this imperial decree Luther was denounced as "Satan himself, under the semblance of a man in a monk's hood." It was commanded that as soon as his safe-conduct should expire, measures be taken to stop his work. All persons were forbidden to harbor him, to give him food or drink, or by word or act, in public or private, to aid or abet him. He was to be seized wherever he might be, and delivered to the authorities. His adherents also were to be imprisoned, and their property confiscated. His writings were ordered to be destroyed, and finally, all who should dare to act contrary to this decree were placed under the ban of the empire.

The emperor had spoken, and the diet had given their sanction to the decree. The whole body of Romanists were jubilant. Now they considered the fate of the Reformation sealed. The superstitious multitude were filled with horror at the thought of Luther as the incarnate Satan whom the emperor had described as clothed in a monk's habit.

In this hour of peril, God prepared a way of escape for his servant. The Holy Spirit moved upon the heart of the Elector of Saxony, and gave him

wisdom to devise a plan for Luther's preservation. Frederick had caused it to be intimated to the Reformer while still at Worms, that his liberty might be sacrificed for a time to secure his own safety and that of the Reformation; yet no hint had been given as to the manner in which this might be accomplished. With the co-operation of true friends, the elector's purpose was carried out, and with so much tact and skill that Luther was effectually hidden from friends and foes. In fact, both his seizure and his concealment were so involved in mystery that even Frederick himself for a long time knew not whither he had been conducted. This ignorance was not without design; so long as the elector knew nothing of Luther's whereabouts, he could reveal nothing. He had assured himself that the Reformer was safe, and with this knowledge he was content.

Spring, summer, and autumn passed, and winter came, and Luther still remained a prisoner. Aleander and his partisans rejoiced that the light of the gospel seemed about to be extinguished. But instead of this, Luther was but filling his lamp from the unfailing storehouse of truth, to shine forth in due time with brighter radiance.

It was not merely to secure his own safety that Luther was, in the providence of God, withdrawn from the stage of public life. Infinite Wisdom overruled all circumstances and events for the accomplishment of his deep designs. It is not the will of God that his work should bear the impress of one man. There were other workers who in Luther's absence must be called to the front, to give character to the Reformation, that it might develop proportionately.

Furthermore, in every reformatory movement, there is danger that it will receive the stamp of the human rather than the divine. As men rejoice in the freedom which the truth brings them, they are inclined to exalt those whom God has employed to break the chains of error and superstition. These leaders are honored, extolled, and revered, and if they are not truly

humble and devoted, unselfish and incorruptible, they gradually lose sight of their continual dependence upon God, and begin to trust in themselves. Soon they seek to control the minds and restrict the consciences of others, seeming to regard themselves as the only channel through which God will communicate light to his church. The work of reform is often retarded because of this spirit indulged by its supporters.

In the friendly security of the Wartburg, Luther for a time gave himself up to repose, and rejoiced in his release from the heat and turmoil of battle. From the castle walls he looked down upon the dark forests that shut him in on every side, then turning his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "Strange captivity! a prisoner by consent, yet against my will!" "Pray for me," he writes to Spalatin. "I want nothing save your prayers. Do not disturb me by what is said or thought of me in the world. At last I am quiet."

The solitude and obscurity of this mountain retreat had another and still more precious blessing for the Reformer. Here he was saved from becoming too greatly elated by success. He was removed from every human prop, shut out from the sympathy and praise which are so often unwisely given, and which so often lead to the most deplorable results. It is Satan's studied object to direct men's thoughts and affections from God, who should receive all praise and glory, and fix them upon human agencies; to exalt the mere instrument which God employs, and ignore the Hand that directs all the events of providence.

Here is a danger against which all Christians should constantly guard. However much they may admire the noble, self-sacrificing deeds of God's faithful servants, they should remember that God alone is to be exalted. All the wisdom, ability, and grace which men possess, has been given them of God. To him should be all the praise.

Luther could not long find satisfaction in quiet and repose. Accustomed

to a life of activity and stern conflict, he could ill endure to remain inactive. In these solitary days, the condition of the church rose up before him, and he felt that there was no man who could stand upon the walls and build up Zion. Again his thoughts returned to himself, and he feared being charged with cowardice in withdrawing from the work. Then he reproached himself for his indolence and self-indulgence. Yet at the same time he was daily accomplishing more than it seemed possible for one man to do. He writes, "I am going through the Bible in Hebrew and Greek. I mean to write a discourse in German touching auricular confession, also to continue the translation of the Psalms, and to compose a collection of sermons as soon as I have received what I want from Wittenberg. My pen is never idle."

While his enemies flattered themselves that he was silenced, they were astonished and confused by tangible proof that he was still active. A host of tracts issuing from his pen, circulated throughout Germany. For nearly a whole year, sheltered from the wrath of all opposers, he exhorted and rebuked the prevailing sins of the time.

He also performed a most important service for his countrymen by translating the original scriptures of the New Testament into the German tongue. Thus the word of God was opened to the understanding of the common people, so that all might read for themselves the words of life and truth. Thus he labored most effectually to turn all eyes from the pope of Rome to Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness.

October 18, 1883

The Reformation During Luther's Imprisonment

While Luther was safely hidden in the fortress of Wartburg, how did his strange absence affect the world? All Germany was thrown into consternation. Inquiries concerning him were heard everywhere. Even his enemies were more agitated by his absence than they could have been by his presence. The wildest rumors were circulated. Many believed that he had been murdered. There was great lamentation, not only by his avowed friends, but by thousands who had not openly taken their stand with the Reformation. Said the people, "Never more shall we behold him. Never again shall we hear that bold man whose voice stirred the depths of our hearts." Many bound themselves by a solemn oath to avenge his death.

The Romanists saw with terror to what a pitch had risen the feeling against them. Though at first exultant at the supposed death of Luther, they now desired to hide from the wrath of the people. Those who were enraged against him when he was at large, were filled with fear now that he was in captivity. "The only way of extricating ourselves," said a Roman Catholic, "is to light our torches, and go searching through the earth for Luther, till we can restore him to a nation that will have him."

The edict of the emperor seemed to fall powerless. The papal legates were filled with indignation as they saw that it commanded far less attention than did the fate of Luther. "The ink of the signature," said they, "has scarcely had time to dry, when, behold, on all sides the imperial decree is torn to pieces."

The Reformation was constantly gaining in strength. Increasing numbers joined the cause of the heroic man who had, at such fearful odds, defended

the word of God. The people said, "Has he not offered to retract if refuted? and no one has had the hardihood to undertake to refute him. Does that not show that he has spoken the truth?"

The seed which he had sown was springing up everywhere. Luther's absence accomplished a work which his presence would have failed to do. Other laborers felt a new responsibility, now that their great leader was removed. With new faith and earnestness they pressed forward to do all in their power, that the work so nobly begun might not be hindered.

But while the Reformation was progressing steadily and surely, Satan was not idle. Baffled in all his previous efforts to destroy the work, he adopted another plan of operation. He now attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement,--to deceive and destroy the people by palming off upon them a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false christs in the first century of the Christian Church, so there arose false prophets in the sixteenth century.

A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven. Refusing to be guided by the word of God, they gave themselves up to be controlled by feelings and impressions. Instead of heeding the apostle's injunction to walk by the same rule, and mind the same things, seeking to be in harmony with those whom God was leading, they determined to move out independently. They claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished. Luther had presented to the people the word of God as the rule by which their character and faith should be tested. These men substituted for that unerring guide the changeable and uncertain standard of their own feelings and impressions.

"What is the use," asked they, "of such close application to the Scriptures? Nothing is heard of but the Bible. Can the Bible preach to us? Can it suffice for our instruction? If God had intended to instruct us by a book, would he not have sent us a Bible direct from Heaven? It is by the Spirit only that we can be enlightened. God himself speaks to us, and shows us what to do and what to say." Thus did these men seek to overthrow the fundamental principle on which the Reformation was based,--the word of God as an all-sufficient standard of faith and practice. By this act of setting aside the great detector of error and falsehood, the way was opened for Satan to control minds as best pleased himself.

In the town of Zwickan [Zwickau] arose one claiming to have been visited by the angel Gabriel, and instructed concerning matters which he was forbidden to reveal. A former student of Wittenberg joined this fanatic, and at once abandoned his studies, declaring that he had received from God himself the ability to explain the Scriptures. Several other persons who were naturally inclined to fanaticism, united with these men; and as their adherents increased, the leaders effected an organization, being desirous, they said, to follow the example of Christ, and claiming that in them prophets and apostles were restored to the church.

The proceedings of these enthusiasts created no little excitement. The preaching of Luther had aroused the people everywhere to feel the necessity of reform, and now some really honest persons were misled by the pretensions of the new prophets. Those especially who had a love for the marvelous, united with the fanatical party. But the heresy was promptly met by workers in the cause of the Reformation. The pastor of the church of Zwickan [Zwickau] was a man who exemplified in his own life the truths preached by Luther. He tested all things by the word of God, and therefore was not deceived by these pretenders. He resolutely resisted the delusions which they were seeking to introduce, and his deacons supported him in the work.

The fanatics, opposed by the officers of the church, set themselves against all the established forms of order and organization. Their passionate appeals aroused and excited the people, who, in their zeal against the Romanists, proceeded to violence. A priest bearing the host was pelted with stones, and the civil authorities, being called upon to interfere, committed the assailants to prison.

Intent upon justifying their course, and obtaining redress, the leaders of the movement proceeded to Wittenberg, and presented their case before the professors of the University. Said they, "We are sent by God to teach the people. We have received special revelations from God himself, and therefore know what is coming to pass. We are apostles and prophets, and appeal to Dr. Luther as to the truth of what we say."

The professors were astonished and perplexed. This was such an element as they had never before encountered, and they knew not what course to pursue. Said Melancthon, "There are indeed spirits of no ordinary kind in these men; but what spirits? None but Luther can decide. On the one hand, let us beware of quenching the Spirit of God, and on the other, of being seduced by the spirit of Satan."

Doctrines that were in direct opposition to the Reformation were put forth by these men, and the fruit of the new teaching soon became apparent. The minds of the people were diverted from the words of God, or decidedly prejudiced by against it. Both the University and the lower schools were thrown into confusion. The students, spurning all restraint, abandoned their studies, and the States of Germany recalled all that belonged to their jurisdiction. Thus the men who thought themselves competent to revive and control the work of the Reformation, succeeded only in bringing it to the very brink of ruin.

Luther at the Wartburg, hearing of what had transpired, said with deep concern, "I always expected that Satan would send us this plague." The Romanists now regained their confidence, and exclaimed exultantly, "One more effort, and all will be ours." A prompt and determined effort to check the fanaticism was the only hope of the Reformation.

And now there rose throughout all Wittenberg a cry for Luther. Never were his sound judgment and inflexible firmness more greatly needed. Neither the mild and peace-loving elector nor the timid and youthful Melancthon were prepared to cope with such an enemy. Professors and citizens alike felt that Luther alone could guide them safely at this important crisis. Even the fanatics appealed to his decision.

Luther received numberless letters describing the different phases of this new evil, and its baleful results, and earnestly entreating his presence. He perceived the true character of those pretended prophets, and saw the danger that threatened the church. All that he had endured from the opposition of both the pope and the emperor had not caused him such perplexity of mind or anguish of soul as did this deceptive work now linking itself with the Reformation. From the cause itself had arisen its worst enemies. Pretended friends were tearing down what he had labored at tremendous odds to build up. The very truths which had brought peace to his troubled heart had been made the cause of dissension in the church.

In the work of reform, Luther had been urged forward by the Spirit of God, and had been carried beyond himself. He had not purposed to take such positions as he did, or to make so radical changes. He had been but the instrument in the hands of infinite power. Yet he often trembled for the result of his work. He had once said, "If I knew that my doctrine had injured one human being, however poor and unknown,--which it could not, for it is the very gospel,--I would rather face death ten times over than not retract it."

And now a whole city, and that city Wittenberg itself, is fast sinking into confusion. The doctrine taught by Luther had not caused this evil; but throughout Germany his enemies were eagerly charging it upon him. In bitterness of soul he sometimes asked "Is this to be the result of the great work of the Reformation?" Again, as he wrestled with God in prayer, peace flowed into his mind. "The work is not mine, but thine own," he said; "thou wilt not suffer it to be corrupted by superstition or fanaticism." But the thought of remaining longer from the conflict in such a crisis, became insupportable. He determined to go forth and meet the disturbing element that threatened so great damage to the cause of truth and righteousness.

October 25, 1883

Luther Returns to Wittenberg

On the third of March, 1522, ten months after his capture and imprisonment, Luther bade adieu to the Wartburg, and through the gloomy forests pursued his journey toward Wittenberg.

He was under the ban of the empire. Enemies were at liberty to take his life; friends were forbidden to aid or even shelter him. The Imperial Government, urged on by the determined zeal of Duke George of Saxony, were adopting the most stringent measures against his adherents. So great were the dangers threatening the Reformer's safety, that notwithstanding the urgent demand for his return to Wittenberg, the elector Frederick wrote entreating him to remain in his secure retreat. But Luther saw that the work of the gospel was imperiled, and, regardless of his own safety, he determined to return to the conflict.

Upon arriving at the town of Borne, he wrote to the elector, explaining his course in leaving the Wartburg. "I have sufficiently shown my deference to your highness," he said, "in withdrawing from the public gaze for a whole year. Satan knows that it was not from cowardice that I did so. I would have entered Worms, though there had been as many devils in the town as there were tiles upon its roofs. Now Duke George, whom your highness mentioned as if to scare me, is much less to be dreaded than a single devil. If what is passing at Wittenberg were occurring at Leipsic [the usual residence of Duke George], I would instantly mount my horse, and repair thither, even though--your highness will, I trust, pardon the expression--it should rain Duke Georges for nine days together, and every one should be nine times as fierce as he! What can he be thinking of in attacking me? Does he suppose that Christ my Lord is a man of straw? May God avert from him the awful

judgment that hangs over him!

"Be it known to your highness that I am repairing to Wittenberg under a protection more powerful than that of an elector. I have no thought of soliciting the aid of your highness; and am so far from desiring your protection, that it is rather my purpose to protect your highness. If I knew that your highness could, or would, take up my defense, I would not come to Wittenberg. No secular sword can advance this cause; God must do all, without the aid or co-operation of man. He who has most faith, is the most availing defense; but, as it seems to me, your highness is as yet very weak in faith.

"But since your highness desires to know what to do, I will humbly answer: Your electoral highness has already done too much, and should do nothing whatever. God neither wants nor will he endure, that you or I should take thought or part in the matter. Let your highness follow this advice.

"In regard to myself, your highness must remember your duty as elector, and allow the instructions of his imperial majesty to be carried into effect in your towns and districts, offering no impediment to any one who would seize or kill me; for none may contend against the powers that be, save only He who has ordained them.

"Let your highness accordingly leave the gates open, and respect safe-conducts, if my enemies in person, or by their envoys, should come to search for me in your highness' States. Everything may take its course without trouble or prejudice to your highness.

"I write this in haste, that you may not feel aggrieved by my coming. My business is with another kind of person from Duke George, one who knows me, and whom I know well."

It was not to war against the decrees of earthly rulers, but to thwart the plans and resist the power of the prince of darkness, that Luther returned to Wittenberg. In the name of the Lord he went forth once more to battle for the truth. With great caution and humility, yet with decision and firmness, he entered upon his work, maintaining that the word of God must be the test of all doctrines and all actions. "By the word," said he, "we must refute and expel what has gained a place and influence by violence. I would not resort to force against the superstitious, nor even the unbelievers. Whosoever believeth, let him draw nigh, and he that believeth not, let him stand afar off. Let there be no compulsion. I have been laboring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is the very essence of faith."

The Reformer had no desire to meet the deluded men whose fanaticism had been productive of so great evil. He knew them to be men of hasty and violent temper, who while claiming to be especially illuminated from Heaven would not endure the slightest contradiction, or even the kindest admonition. Arrogating to themselves supreme authority, they required every one, without a question, to acknowledge their claims. Two of these prophets, Stubner and Cellarius, demanded an interview with Luther, which he deemed it best to grant. He determined to expose the pretensions of these impostors, and, if possible, rescue the souls that had been deceived by them.

Stubner opened the conversation by showing how he proposed to restore the church and reform the world. Luther listened with great patience, and finally replied, "Of all you have been saying, there is nothing that I see to be based upon Scripture. It is a mere tissue of fiction." At these words Cellarius in a violent passion struck his fist upon the table, and exclaimed against Luther's speech as an insult offered to a man of God.

"Paul declared that the signs of an apostle were wrought among the Corinthians in signs and mighty deeds," said Luther. "Do you likewise prove your apostleship by miracles?" "We will do so," answered the prophets. "The

God whom I serve will know how to bridle your gods." rejoined Luther. Stubner now fixed his eyes upon the Reformer, and said, in a solemn tone, "Martin Luther, hear me while I declare what is passing at this moment in your soul. You are beginning to see that my doctrine is true."

Luther was silent for a moment, and then said, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan."

The prophets, losing all self-control, shouted in a rage, "The Spirit! the Spirit!" Luther answered, with cool contempt, "I slap your spirit on the mouth."

Hereupon the outcries of the prophets were redoubled; Cellarius, more violent than the others, stormed and raged until he foamed at the mouth. As the result of the interview, the false prophets left Wittenberg that very day.

The fanaticism was checked for a time; but a few years later, it broke out with greater violence and more terrible results. Said Luther, concerning the leaders in this movement: "To them the Holy Scriptures were but a dead letter, and they all began to cry, 'The Spirit! the Spirit!' But most assuredly I will not follow where their spirit leads them. May God in his mercy preserve me from a church in which there are none but saints. I wish to be in fellowship with the humble, the weak, the sick, who know and feel their sins, and sigh and cry continually to God from the bottom of their hearts to obtain comfort and deliverance."

Thomas Munzer, who was the most active of these fanatics, was a man of considerable ability, which, rightly directed, would have enabled him to do good; but he had not learned the very first lessons of Christianity; he had not a knowledge of his own heart, and greatly lacked true humility. Yet he imagined himself ordained of God to reform the world, forgetting, like many other enthusiasts, that the reform should begin with himself. Erroneous

writings which he had read in his youth had given a wrong direction to his character and his life. Furthermore, he was ambitious of position and influence, and unwilling to be second, even to Luther. He charged the Reformers with establishing, by their adherence to the Bible alone, a species of popery, and with forming churches that were not pure and holy.

"Luther," said he, "has liberated men's consciences from the papal yoke; but he has left them in carnal liberty, and has not led them to depend on the Spirit, and look directly to God for light." He considered himself as called of God to remedy this great evil, and held that manifestations of the Spirit were the means by which this was to be accomplished, and that he who had the Spirit possessed the true faith, though he might never have seen the written word. "The heathen and the Turks" said he, "are better prepared to receive the Spirit than many of those Christians who call us enthusiasts."

It is easier to tear down than to build up. It is far easier to trig the wheels of reform than to draw the chariot up the steep ascent. Men are still to be found who will accept just enough truth to pass as reformers, but who are too self-sufficient to be taught by those whom God is teaching. Such are always leading directly away from the point to which God is seeking to bring his people.

Munzer taught that all who would receive the Spirit must mortify the flesh, wear tattered clothing, neglect the body, be of a sad countenance, and, forsaking all their former associates, retire to desert places, and there entreat the favor of God. "Then," said he, "God will come and speak with us as formerly he spoke with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If he were not to do so, he would not deserve our attention." Thus was this deluded man, like Lucifer himself, making terms for God, and refusing to acknowledge his authority unless he should comply with these terms.

Men naturally love the marvelous and whatever flatters their pride, and

Munzer's ideas were received by a considerable part of the little flock over which he presided. He next denounced all order and ceremony in public worship, and declared that to obey princes was to attempt to serve both God and Belial. Then marching at the head of his followers to a chapel which was the resort of pilgrims from all quarters, he demolished it. After this act of violence, being compelled to leave that region, he wandered from place to place in Germany, and even went as far as Switzerland, everywhere exciting a spirit of rebellion, and unfolding his plan for a general revolution.

The minds of men, already beginning to throw off the yoke of the papacy, were also becoming impatient under the restraint of civil authority. Munzer's revolutionary teachings, claiming divine sanction, led them to break away from all restraint and to give loose rein to their prejudices and passions. The most terrible scenes of sedition and strife followed, and the fields of Germany were drenched with blood.

The anguish which Luther had so long before experienced in his cell at Erfurth, now pressed with redoubled power upon his soul as he saw the results of fanaticism charged upon the Reformation. The princes constantly repeated, and many believed, that Luther's doctrine had been the cause of the rebellion. Although this charge was without the slightest foundation, it could but cause the Reformer great distress. That the work of Heaven should be thus degraded by being classed with the basest fanaticism, seemed more than he could endure. On the other hand, Munzer and all the leaders in the revolt hated Luther because he had not only opposed their doctrines and denied their claims to divine inspiration, but had pronounced them rebels against the civil authority. In retaliation they denounced him as a base pretender. He seemed to have brought upon himself the enmity of both princes and people.

The Romanists exulted, expecting to witness the speedy downfall of the Reformation, and they blamed Luther even for the errors which he had been most earnestly endeavoring to correct. The fanatical party, by falsely

claiming to have been treated with great injustice, succeeded in gaining the sympathies of a large class of the people, and as is usually the case with those who take the wrong side, they came to be regarded as martyrs. Thus the ones who were exerting every energy to tear down the work of the Reformation were pitied and lauded as the victims of cruelty and oppression. All this was the work of Satan, prompted by the same spirit of rebellion which was first manifested in Heaven.

It was Satan's desire for the supremacy that caused discord among the angels. The mighty Lucifer, "son of the morning," claimed the right to honor and authority above the Son of God; and this not being accorded him, he determined to rebel against the government of Heaven. He therefore appealed to the angelic host, complaining of God's injustice, and declaring himself deeply wronged. His false representations won to his side one-third of all the heavenly angels; and so strong was their delusion that they would not be corrected; they clung to Lucifer, and were expelled from Heaven with him.

Since his fall Satan has continued the same work of rebellion and falsehood. He is constantly laboring to deceive the minds of men, and lead them to call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. How successful has been his work! How often are censure and reproach cast upon God's faithful servants because they will stand fearlessly in defense of the truth! Men who are but agents of Satan are praised and flattered, and even looked upon as martyrs, while those who should be respected and sustained for their fidelity to God, are left to stand alone, under suspicion and distrust. Satan's warfare did not end when he was expelled from Heaven; it has been carried on from century to century, even to the present year of our Lord 1883.

The fanatical teachers gave themselves up to be governed by impressions, calling every thought of the mind the voice of God; consequently they went to great extremes. "Jesus," said they, "commanded

his followers to be as little children;" therefore they would dance through the streets, clap their hands, and even tumble one another in the sand. Some burned their Bibles, at the same time exclaiming, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Ministers indulged in the most violent and unbecoming behavior in the desk, sometimes leaping from the pulpit into the congregation. Thus they gave practical illustration of their teaching, that all forms and order proceeded from Satan, and that it was their duty to break every yoke, and to act just as they felt.

Luther boldly protested against these extravagances, and declared to the world that the Reformation was wholly distinct from that disorderly element. These abuses, however continued to be charged upon him by those who wished to stigmatize his work.

Fearlessly did Luther defend the truth from the attacks which came from every quarter. The word of God proved itself a weapon mighty indeed in every conflict. With that word he warred against the usurped authority of the pope, and the rationalistic philosophy of the schoolmen, while he stood firm as a rock against the fanaticism that sought to ally itself with the Reformation.

Each of these opposing elements was in its own way setting aside the sure word of prophecy, and exalting human wisdom as the source of religious truth and knowledge. Rationalism idolizes reason, and makes this the criterion for religion. Roman Catholicism claims for her sovereign pontiff an inspiration descended in unbroken line from the apostles, and unchangeable through all time, thus giving ample opportunity for every species of extravagance and corruption to be concealed under the sanctify of the apostolic commission. The inspiration claimed by Munzer and his associates proceeded from no higher source than the vagaries of the imagination, and its influence was subversive of all authority, human or divine. True Christianity receives the word of God as the great treasure-

house of inspired truth, and the standard and test of all inspiration.

November 1, 1883

Triumph of the Reformation

Upon his return from Wartburg, Luther gave his attention to the work of revising his translation of the New Testament, and the gospel was soon after given to the people of Germany in their native tongue. This translation was received with great joy by all who loved the truth; but it was scornfully rejected by those who chose human traditions and the commandments of men.

The priests, who themselves knew little of the Scriptures, were alarmed at the thought that the common people would now be able to discuss with them the precepts of God's word, and that their own ignorance would thus be exposed. Rome summoned all her authority and power to prevent the circulation of the Scriptures; but decrees, anathemas, and tortures were alike in vain. The more she condemned and prohibited the circulation of the Bible, the greater was the anxiety of the people to know what it really taught. All who could read were eager to study the word of God for themselves. They carried it about with them, and read and reread, and could not be satisfied until they had committed large portions to memory. Seeing the eagerness with which the New Testament was received, Luther immediately began the translation of the Old, and published it in parts as fast as completed.

About this time there appeared a new foe of the Reformation. Tidings reached Wittenberg that Henry VIII., king of England, had written a book supporting the Romish doctrines, and violently attacking Luther. Henry was one of the most powerful monarchs of Christendom, and he vainly imagined that he could, without difficulty, annihilate the Reformation. He drew no arguments from the Scriptures in support of his position, but cited instead only the authority of the church and the traditions of the Fathers. He also

resorted to contempt and ridicule of his "feeble adversary," as he termed Luther, styling him also a wolf, a poisonous serpent, a limb of the devil.

The appearance of this book was hailed with great delight by the partisans of Rome. Its superficial reasoning and harsh denunciations suited well a people who willfully rejected the truths of God's word. It was lauded by princes and prelates, and even by the pope himself, and Henry VIII. was revered as a prodigy of wisdom, even a second Solomon.

Luther read the work with astonishment and contempt. Its falsehood and insulting personalities, as well as its tone of affected contempt, excited his indignation, and the thought that the pope and his partisans had exulted in so weak and superficial a production, inspired him with a determination to silence their boasting.

Again he took up his pen against the enemies of the truth. He showed that Henry had sustained his doctrines only by the decrees and teachings of men. "As to me," said he, "I do not cease my cry of, 'The gospel, the gospel! Christ, Christ!' and my enemies continue to reply, 'Custom, custom! Ordinances, ordinances! Fathers, Fathers!' St. Paul says, 'Let not your faith stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' And the apostle, by this thunder-clap from Heaven, at once overturns and disperses, as the mind scatters the dust, all the foolish thoughts of such a one as this Henry."

"To all the decisions of Fathers, of men, of angels, of devils, I oppose," says he, "not the antiquity of custom, not the habits of the many, but the word of the eternal God, the gospel, which they themselves are obliged to admit. It is to this book that I keep; upon it I rest; in it I make my boast; in it I triumph and exult... The King of Heaven is on my side; therefore I fear nothing." And with arguments drawn from the word of God did Luther demolish and scatter to the winds all the sophisms of his opposers. It was with the new doctrines and their advocates as with the Israelites in Egypt,-

"the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew."

Luther's writing were eagerly read alike in the city and in the hamlet. At night the teachers of the village schools would read aloud to little groups gathered at the fireside. With every effort some souls would be convicted of the truth, and, receiving the word with tears of gladness, would in their turn tell the good news to others.

The words of inspiration were verified, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." The study of the Scriptures was working a mighty change in the minds and hearts of the people, not only reforming the morals, but arousing the intellectual powers to a strength and vigor heretofore unknown. The papal rule had placed upon the people an iron yoke which held them in ignorance and degradation. All their instruction and discipline had been of a character to encourage a superstitious observance of forms; the prescribed routine of worship was scrupulously maintained, but in all their service the heart and intellect had little part. Yet many of these worshipers possessed dormant powers that needed only to be awakened and called into action. The preaching of Luther, setting forth the plain truths of God's word, and then the word itself, placed in the hands of the common people, had not only purified and ennobled the spiritual nature, but had imparted a new life to the intellectual powers.

Persons of all ranks were to be seen with the Bible in their hands, defending the doctrines of the Reformation. The papists who had left the study of the Scriptures to the priests and monks, now called upon them to come forward and refute the new teachings. But ignorant alike of the Scriptures and of the power of God, priests and friars were totally defeated by those whom they had denounced as unlearned and heretical. Unhappily," says a Catholic writer, "Luther had persuaded his followers that their faith ought only to be founded on the oracles of Holy Writ." Crowds would gather to hear the truth advocated by common men, and even discussed by them

with learned and eloquent theologians. The shameful ignorance of these great men was made apparent as their arguments were met by the simple teachings of God's word. Persons of little education, women and laborers, were able to give from the Scriptures the reason of their faith.

The success that attended the Reformation excited the most bitter opposition. As the Romish clergy saw their congregations diminishing, they invoked the aid of the magistrates, and by every means in their power endeavored to bring back their hearers. These efforts were but partially successful. The people were hungering for the bread of life; they had found in the teachings of the Reformation that which supplied the wants of their souls, and they turned away from those who had so long fed them with the worthless husks of superstitious rites and human traditions. Sometimes the people, irritated at the thought that they had so long been deceived by fables, compelled the priests to leave their positions.

When persecution was kindled against the Reformers, they gave heed to the words of Christ, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." The light penetrated everywhere. The fugitives would find somewhere a hospitable door open to them, and there abiding they would preach Christ, sometimes in the church, or, if denied that privilege, in private houses, or in the open air. Wherever they could obtain a hearing was a consecrated temple. The truth, proclaimed with such energy and assurance, spread like fire in the stubble. No effort could stay its progress. In the city of Ingolstadt, where was a university, and where, also, lived one of the most learned opponents of the Reformation, a young weaver read Luther's works to a crowded congregation. In the same city, the university council having decided that a disciple of Melancthon should be compelled to retract, a woman volunteered to defend him, and challenged the doctors to a public disputation. Women and children artisans and soldiers, had a better knowledge of the Scriptures than learned doctors or surpliced priests.

In vain were both ecclesiastical and civil authorities invoked to crush the heresy. In vain they resorted to imprisonment, torture, fire, and sword. Thousands of believers sealed their faith with their blood, and yet the work went on. Throughout Germany, particularly in the Saxon States, in France and Holland, in Switzerland, in England, and in other countries, the Lord raised up men to present to the benighted minds of the people the light of God's word. Persecution served only to extend the work; and the fanaticism which Satan endeavored to unite with it, resulted in making more clear the contrast between the work of Satan and the work of God.

The cause of truth was destined to triumph. God's faithful builders were not toiling alone. Could their eyes have been opened, they would have seen as marked evidence of divine presence and aid as was granted to a prophet of old. When Elisha's servant pointed his master to the hostile army surrounding them and cutting off all chance of escape, the prophet prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." And, lo, the mountain was filled with chariots and horses of fire, the army of Heaven stationed to protect the servant of the Lord. Thus did the angels of God guard the workers in the cause of the Reformation. God had commanded his servants to build, and the combined forces of earth and hell were powerless to drive them from the walls. Saith the Lord, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night."

November 15, 1883

The All-Important Lesson

During the entire day after Christ had cleansed the desecrated courts of the temple, he was healing the sick and relieving the afflicted. Nicodemus had seen with what pitying compassion he had received and ministered unto the poor and the oppressed. With the demeanor of a loving father toward his suffering children, he had wrought cures and removed sorrow. No suppliant was sent unrelieved from his presence. Mothers were made glad by the restoration of their babes to health, and voices of thanksgiving had taken the place of weeping and moans of pain. All day, Jesus had instructed the restless, curious people, reasoning with the scribes, and silencing the caviling of the haughty rulers by the wisdom of his words. Nicodemus, after seeing and hearing these wonderful things, and after searching the prophecies that pointed to Jesus as the looked-for Messiah, dared not disbelieve that he was sent of God.

When night came on, Jesus, pale with the weariness of his long-continued labors, sought for retirement and repose in the Mount of Olives. Here Nicodemus found him and desired a conference. This man was rich and honored of the Jews. He was famous throughout Jerusalem and for his wealth, his learning and benevolence, and especially for his liberal offerings to the temple to carry out its sacred services. He was also one of the prominent members of the national council. Yet when he came into the presence of Jesus, a strange agitation and timidity assailed him, which he essayed to conceal beneath an air of composure and dignity.

He endeavored to appear as if it were an act of condescension on the part of a learned ruler, to seek, uninvited, an audience with a young stranger at that unseasonable hour of night. He began with a conciliating address.

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." But instead of acknowledging this complimentary salutation, Jesus bent his calm and searching eye upon the speaker, as if reading his very soul; then, with a sweet and solemn voice, he spoke and revealed the true condition of Nicodemus. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Pharisee was surprised out of his self-possession by these words, the meaning of which he partially comprehended; for he had heard John the Baptist preach repentance and baptism, and also the coming of One who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. Nicodemus had long felt that there was a want of spirituality among the Jews; that bigotry, pride, and worldly ambition guided their actions in a great measure. He had hoped for a better state of things when the Messiah should come. But he was looking for a Saviour who would set up a temporal throne in Jerusalem, and who would gather the Jewish nation under his standard, bringing the Roman power into subjection by force of arms.

This learned dignitary was a strict Pharisee. He had prided himself upon his own good works and exalted piety. He considered his daily life perfect in the sight of God, and was startled to hear Jesus speak of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state. His mind misgave him; yet he felt irritated by the close application of the words to his own case, and he answered as if he had understood them in the most literal sense, "How can a man be born when he is old?"

Jesus, with solemn emphasis, repeated, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The words of Jesus could no longer be misunderstood. His listener well knew that he referred to water baptism and the grace of God. The power of the Holy Spirit transforms the entire man. This change

constitutes the new birth.

Many of the Jews had acknowledged John as a prophet sent of God, and had received baptism at his hands unto repentance; meanwhile he had plainly taught them that his work and mission were to prepare the way for Christ, who was the greater light, and would complete the work which he had begun. Nicodemus had meditated upon these things, and he now felt convinced that he was in the presence of that One foretold by John.

Said Jesus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Jesus here seeks to impress upon Nicodemus the positive necessity of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the human heart to purify it preparatory to the development of a righteous and symmetrical character. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." This fountain of the heart being purified, the stream thereof becomes pure.

This new birth looks mysterious to Nicodemus. He asks, "How can these things be?" Jesus, bidding him marvel not, uses the wind as an illustration of his meaning. It is heard among the branches of the trees, and rustling the leaves and flowers, yet it is invisible to the eye, and from whence it comes and whither it goeth, no man knoweth. So is the experience of every one who is born of the Spirit. The mind is an invisible agent of God to produce tangible results. Its influence is powerful, and governs the actions of men. If purified from all evil, it is the motive power of good. The regenerating Spirit of God, taking possession of the mind, transforms the life; wicked thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced, love, peace, and humility take the place of anger, envy, and strife. That power which no human eye can see, has created a new being in the image of God....

The conversion of the soul through faith in Christ was but dimly comprehended by Nicodemus, who had been accustomed to consider cold formality and rigid services as true religion. The great Teacher explained that his mission upon earth was not to set up a temporal kingdom, emulating the pomp and display of the world, but to establish the reign of peace and love, to bring men to the Father through the mediatorial agency of his Son.

Nicodemus was bewildered. Said Jesus, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" If Nicodemus could not receive his teachings illustrating the work of grace upon the human heart, as represented by the figure of the wind, how could he comprehend the character of his glorious heavenly kingdom should he explain it to him? Not discerning the nature of Christ's work on earth, he could not understand his work in Heaven. Jesus referred Nicodemus to the prophecies of David and Ezekiel:

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new a spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence." "Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I

will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

The learned Nicodemus had read these pointed prophecies with a clouded mind, but now he began to comprehend their true meaning, and to understand that even a man as just and honorable as himself must experience a new birth through Jesus Christ, as the only condition upon which he could be saved, and secure an entrance into the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke positively that unless a man is born again he cannot discern the kingdom which Christ came upon earth to set up. Rigid precision in obeying the law would entitle no man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

There must be a new birth, a new mind through the operation of the Spirit of God, which purifies the life and ennobles the character. This connection with God fits man for the glorious kingdom of Heaven. No human invention can ever find a remedy for the sinning soul. Only by repentance and humiliation, a submission to the divine requirements, can the work of grace be performed. Iniquity is so offensive in the sight of God, whom the sinner has so long insulted and wronged, that a repentance commensurate with the character of the sins committed often produces an agony of spirit hard to bear.

Nothing less than a practical acceptance and application of divine truth opens the kingdom of God to man. Only a pure and lowly heart, obedient and loving, firm in the faith and service of the Most High, can enter there. Jesus also declares that as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." The serpent in the wilderness was lifted up on a pole before the people, that all who had been stung unto death by the fiery serpent, might look upon this brazen serpent, a symbol of Christ, and be instantly healed. But they must look in faith, or it would be of no avail. Just so must men look upon the Son of man as their Saviour unto eternal life.

Man had separated himself from God by sin. Christ brought his divinity to earth, veiled by humanity, in order to rescue man from his lost condition. Human nature is vile, and man's character must be changed before it can harmonize with the pure and holy in God's immortal kingdom. This transformation is the new birth.

If man by faith takes hold of the divine love of God, he becomes a new creature through Christ Jesus. The world is overcome, human nature is subdued, and Satan is vanquished. In this important sermon to Nicodemus, Jesus unfolded before this noble Pharisee the whole plan of salvation, and his mission to the world. In none of his subsequent discourses did the Saviour explain so thoroughly, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the human heart, if it would inherit the kingdom of Heaven. He traced man's salvation directly to the love of the Father, which led him to give his Son unto death that man might be saved.

November 15, 1883

Good Counsel

We received an encouraging letter from sister white which is worthy of more than a passing notice. The following words will be appreciated by our people in california at this time:

"We are not doing all we might do to encourage workers in the great harvest-field. We must encourage simplicity; we must not degenerate into formal service. We must lay responsibility upon humble, God-fearing men. I know God will accept their efforts if they will dedicate themselves to him. If they will place themselves in the channel, the light from the throne of God will shine through them. Jesus will work through their disinterested efforts. The Bible readings will be a means of getting the truth before a large number. Men and women may do a good work here. Our sisters are not excusable in letting the talents God has given them rust from inaction."

We believe that in many cases the sisters could find openings for bible-readings where men could not. Why should they not improve them?

November 22, 1883

A Solemn Appeal

The Lincoln, Nebraska, State Journal kept a reporter in the field every day during the camp-meeting of seventh-day adventists at crete. His reports were very favorable, even complimentary, and the synopses of discourses quite liberal. From the Journal report of a discourse by Mrs. E. G. white, we take the following:

We are standing as a brand in the burning. What a position we are in! The whole world is in darkness. Deception is prevalent everywhere; and here is the remnant church taking its stand on an important truth. I wrote these great truths out in my fourth volume, I felt that we are not ready and I said to my son, I must go. He argued that I ought not, when my health was so poor, but I felt that I must go and talk once more at our meetings. If I could only tell you how my heart is stirred when I feel that the time is at hand, and so many are unprepared. We have no time to devote to frivolity, to backsliding from God. We must be preparing to walk through time and eternity. The work is going on in the sanctuary, yet how sensual, how sleepy, how indifferent we are. How much our young men and our young women could do! What rich experience they could have! It seems sometimes as if there were a paralysis upon our people; that they do not realize how near they are to the end of the earth. We need more standard-bearers. We need more missionaries to go forth into the world.

We feel at this hour we ought to understand our position in history and prophecy. We want to know if you understand this as well as you do your wheat-fields and your cattle and your hogs; whether you are purifying yourselves line upon line and precept upon precept. So many look upon confession of Christ as a step down. But O, what could be a greater privilege

than to be a child of God, children of the heavenly King. This is not taking a step down, not making a sacrifice. I have been engaged in this work forty years. I have fainted down upon the floor for want of food, with an infant in my arms. I have known poverty. I have laid dear ones in the grave, but I have never made a sacrifice. I have been letting treasures go here, but I have put them in the bank in Heaven.

But Christ has made a sacrifice for us. Christ, the majesty of Heaven. We make no sacrifice. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. I have proved it for forty years.

Mothers and fathers there is a great work devolving upon you--to instruct your children aright. When you do not do this, you have imposed a terrible burden upon them. They grow up with their characters deformed and crooked, and they must be all made over again. In allowing children to be disobedient you are teaching them to be rebellious against the commands of God. The first missionary duty you have is your families. You will see the power of God when you begin the work in your families. It will do more than all the preaching. A family that has moral backbone will sway and not be swayed. Work just as earnestly with your family as with those outside. Are you afraid to talk with your children because your fretful and impatient disposition has alienated you from them? Then mend. Bind them to you by the golden words of love. All this fretting and fault-finding is the work of Satan. What a world this would be if we were all true Christians.

November 29, 1883

Nehemiah Desires to Restore Jerusalem

Nehemiah, the Hebrew exile, occupied a position of influence and honor in the Persian Court. As cup-bearer of the king, he was familiarly admitted to the royal presence, and by virtue of this intimacy, and his own high abilities and tried fidelity, he became the monarch's counselor. Yet in that heathen land, surrounded by royal pomp and splendor, he did not forget the God of his fathers or the people who had been intrusted with the holy oracles. With deepest interest, his heart turned toward Jerusalem, and his hopes and joys were bound up with her prosperity.

Days of peculiar trial and affliction had come to the chosen city. Messengers from Judah described to Nehemiah its condition. The second temple had been reared, and portions of the city rebuilt; but its prosperity was impeded, the temple services disturbed, and the people kept in constant alarm, by the fact that its walls were still in ruins, and its gates burned with fire. The capital of Judah was fast becoming a desolate place, and the few inhabitants remaining were daily embittered by the taunts of their idolatrous assailants, "Where is your God?" The soul of the Hebrew patriot was overwhelmed by these evil tidings. So great was his sorrow, that he could not eat or drink; he "wept and mourned certain days, and fasted." But when the first outburst of his grief was over, he turned in his affliction to the sure Helper. "I prayed," says he, "before the God of Heaven." He knew that all this ruin had come because of the transgressions of Israel; and in deep humiliation he came before God for pardon of sin and a renewal of the divine favor. He addressed his petitions to the God of Heaven, "the great and terrible God;" for such the Lord had shown himself to be in the fearful judgments brought upon Israel. But with a gleam of hope, Nehemiah continues, "that keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and

observe his commandments." For repentant and believing Israel there was still mercy.

Faithfully the man of God makes confession of his sins and the sins of his people: "Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee; both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses."

And now, taking fast hold, by faith, of the divine promise, Nehemiah lays down at the footstool of heavenly mercy his petition that God would maintain the cause of his now penitent people, restore their strength, and build up their waste places. God had been faithful to his threatenings when his people separated from him; he had scattered them abroad among the nations, according to his word. And Nehemiah finds in this very fact an assurance that he will be equally faithful to fulfill his promises. His people had now returned in penitence and faith to keep his commandments; and God himself had said that if they would do this, even though they were cast out into the uttermost part of the earth, he would gather them thence, and would cause the light of his countenance again to shine upon them. This promise had been given more than a thousand years before; but it stood unchanged through all the centuries. God's word cannot fail.

Nehemiah's faith and courage strengthen as he grasps the promise. His mouth is filled with holy arguments. He points to the dishonor that would be cast upon God, were his people, now that they have returned to him, to be left in their state of weakness and oppression.

Nehemiah had often poured out his soul thus before God in behalf of his

people. Day and night had he offered this prayer. And as he prayed, a holy purpose had been forming in his mind, that if he could obtain the consent of the king, and the necessary aid in procuring implements and material, he would himself undertake the arduous task of rebuilding the ruined walls of Jerusalem, and seeking to restore the national strength. And now in closing his prayer he entreats the Lord to grant him favor in the sight of the king, that this cherished plan may be carried out.

Four months he was compelled to wait for a favorable opportunity to present his request to the king. During this period, while his heart was oppressed with grief, he constantly endeavored to carry a cheerful and happy countenance. In his seasons of retirement, many were the prayers, the penitential confessions, and the tears of anguish, witnessed by God and angels; but all this was concealed from human sight. The regulations of Eastern courts forbade any manifestation of sorrow within them. All must appear gay and happy in those halls of luxury and splendor. The distress without was not to cast its shadow in the presence of royalty.

But at last the sorrow that burdened Nehemiah's heart could no longer be concealed. Sleepless nights devoted to earnest prayer, care-filled days, dark with the shadow of hope deferred, leave their trace upon his countenance. The keen eye of the monarch, jealous to guard his own safety, is accustomed to read countenances and to penetrate disguises. Seeing that some secret trouble is preying upon his servant, he suddenly inquires, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart."

This question fills the listener with apprehension. Will not the king be angry to hear that while outwardly engaged in his service, the courtier's thoughts have been far away with his afflicted people? Will not the offender's life be forfeited? And his cherished plan for restoring the strength of Jerusalem--is it not about to be overthrown? "Then," he says, "I was very

sore afraid." With trembling lips and tearful eyes he reveals the cause of his sorrow,--the city, which is the place of his father's sepulcher, lying waste, and its gates consumed with fire. The touching recital awakens the sympathy of the monarch without arousing his idolatrous prejudices; another question gives the opportunity which Nehemiah has long sought: "For what dost thou make request?" But the man of God does not reply until he has first asked the support of One higher than Artaxerxes. "I prayed," he says, "to the God of Heaven."

A precious lesson is this for all Christians. Whenever we are brought into positions of difficulty or danger, even when surrounded by those who love and fear not God, the heart may send up its cry for help, and there is One who has promised that he will come to our aid. This is the kind of prayer that Christ meant when he said, "Pray without ceasing." We are not to make ejaculatory prayer a substitute for public or family worship, or for secret devotion; but it is a blessed resource, at our command under circumstances when other forms of prayer may be impossible. Toilers in the busy marts of trade, crowded and almost overwhelmed with financial perplexities, travelers by sea and land, when threatened by some great danger, can thus commit themselves to divine guidance and protection. And in every circumstance and condition of life, the soul weighed down with grief or care, or assailed by temptation, may thus find comfort, support, and succor in the unfailing love and power of a covenant-keeping God.

Nehemiah and Artaxerxes stand face to face,--the one a servant, of a down-trodden race, the other the monarch of the world's great empire. But infinitely greater than the disparity of rank is the moral distance which separates them. Nehemiah has complied with the invitation of the King of kings, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." He has enlisted in his behalf a power in whose hand is the heart of kings, even as the rivers of water, and who "turneth it whithersoever he will." The silent petition sent up to Heaven was

the same that he had offered for many weeks, that God would prosper his request. And now taking courage at the thought that he has a Friend, omniscient and all-powerful, to work in his behalf, the man of God calmly makes known to the king his desire to be released for a time from his office at the court, and be authorized to build up the waste places of Jerusalem, and to make it once more a strong and defended city. Momentous results to the Jewish city and nation hung upon this request. And, says, Nehemiah, "the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me."

While Nehemiah implored the help of God, he did not fold his own hands, feeling that he had no more care or responsibility in the matter. With admirable prudence and forethought he proceeded to make all the arrangements necessary to ensure the success of the enterprise. Every movement was marked with great caution. He did not reveal his purpose even to his own countrymen; for while they would rejoice in his success, he feared that they might, by some indiscretion, greatly hinder his work. Some would be likely to manifest a spirit of exultation which would rouse the jealousy of their enemies, and perhaps cause the defeat of the undertaking.

As his request to the king had been so favorably received, he was encouraged to ask for such assistance as was necessary to carry out his plans. To give dignity and authority to his mission, as well as to provide for protection on the journey, he secured a military escort. He obtained royal letters to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates, the territory through which he must pass on his way to Judea; and he obtained, also, a letter to the keeper of the king's forest in the mountains of Lebanon, directing him to furnish such timber as was needed for the wall of Jerusalem and such buildings as Nehemiah proposed to erect. Nehemiah is careful to have the authority and privileges accorded him clearly defined, that there may be no room for complaint that he has exceeded his commission.

The example of this holy man should be a lesson to all the people of

God, that they are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligence and fidelity. How many difficulties we encounter, and how we hinder the working of Providence on our behalf, because prudence, forethought, and painstaking are regarded as having little to do with religion. This is a grave mistake. It is a religious duty to cultivate and to exercise every power which will render us more efficient workers in the cause of God. Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the success of sacred enterprise today as in the time of Nehemiah. If all who are engaged in the work of God would realize how much depends upon their fidelity and wise forethought, we would see far greater prosperity attend their efforts. Through diffidence and backwardness we often fail to secure that which is attainable as a right, from the powers that be. God will work for us, when we are ready to do what we can and should do on our part.

Men of prayer should be men of action. Those who are ready and willing, will find ways and means to work. Nehemiah does not depend upon uncertainties. The means which he has not he solicits from those who are able to bestow. All the world, with its riches and treasures, belongs to God, although it is now in the possession of wicked men. If his servants take a wise and prudent course, so that the good hand of God may be with them, they can obtain the means they need to advance his cause.

December 6, 1883

Nehemiah Secures the Co-operation of the People

The royal letters to the governors of the provinces along his route, secured to Nehemiah an honorable reception and prompt assistance. And no enemy dared molest the official who was guarded by the power of the Persian king and treated with so marked consideration by the provincial rulers. Nehemiah's journey was therefore safe and prosperous.

His arrival at Jerusalem, however, with the attendance of a military guard, showing that he had come on some important mission, excited the jealousy and hatred of the enemies of Israel. The heathen tribes settled near Jerusalem had previously indulged their enmity against the Jews by heaping upon them every insult and injury which they dared inflict. Foremost in this evil work were certain chiefs of these tribes, Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian; and from this time those leaders watched with jealous eye the movements of Nehemiah, and endeavored by every means in their power to thwart his plans and hinder his work.

Nehemiah continued to exercise the same caution and prudence which had hitherto marked his course. Knowing that bitter and determined enemies stood ready to oppose every effort for the restoration of Jerusalem, he concealed the nature of his business until by previous observation he had been enabled to form his plans. Thus he was prepared to secure the co-operation of the people and set them at work before his enemies had opportunity to arouse their fears or their prejudice.

Yet, although he had been so highly favored of God, Nehemiah did not move out in an independent, self-sufficient manner, as if able to carry everything by his own ability. He selected a few persons whom he knew to

be worthy of confidence, and to them he made known the circumstances which had led to his visit, the object to be accomplished, and the plans which he purposed to employ, and secured their assistance in his important undertaking.

On the third night after his arrival, the burden weighing so heavily upon his mind as to preclude sleep, he rose at midnight, and with a few trusted companions went out to view for himself the desolation of Jerusalem. Mounted on his mule, he moved about by moonlight, surveying the ruined walls and broken gates of the city of his fathers. Painful were the reflections that filled the mind of the Jewish patriot. Memories of Israel's past glory stood out in sharp contrast with the marks of her present degradation. Because she had not taken heed to the word of God, because she had not received reproof, and corrected her ways, she had been left to be thus reduced in power and honor among the nations. The people for whom God had wrought wondrously, had trifled with their privileges, set at naught his counsels, and joined themselves to idolaters, until he had withdrawn from them his special presence and protection.

With sorrow-stricken heart, that visitant from afar gazes upon the ruined defenses of his loved Jerusalem. And is it not thus that angels of Heaven survey the condition of the church of Christ? Like the dwellers at Jerusalem, we become accustomed to existing evils, and often are content to do nothing to remedy them. But how do they appear to the eye of one divinely illuminated? Would he not, like Nehemiah, look upon ruined walls, and gates burned with fire?

Are not every where visible the shameful tokens of backsliding from God and conformity with a sin-loving and truth-hating world? In these days of darkness and peril, who is able to stand in defense of Zion and show her any good? Her spiritual state and prospects are not in accordance with the light and privileges bestowed of God.

The same reproofs are applicable to her today as to the people of Israel when the Lord said by his prophets, "Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins."

In secrecy and silence, Nehemiah completed his circuit of the walls. He declares, "The rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work." In this painful survey he did not wish to attract the attention of either friends or foes, lest an excitement be created, and reports be put in circulation which might defeat, or at least hinder, his work.

Nehemiah devoted the remainder of the night to prayer; in the morning there must be earnest effort to arouse and unite his dispirited and divided countrymen. Although he bore a royal commission requiring the inhabitants to co-operate with him in rebuilding the walls of the city, he chose not to depend upon the mere exercise of authority. He sought rather to gain the confidence and sympathy of the people, well knowing that a union of hearts as well as hands was essential to success in the great work which he had undertaken. When he called the people together on the morrow, he presented such arguments as were calculated to arouse their dormant energies and to unite their scattered numbers.

They knew not, neither did he tell them, of his mournful midnight circuit while they were sleeping. Nevertheless that very circumstance contributed greatly to his success. He was enabled to speak of the condition of the city with an accuracy and minuteness that astonished his hearers, while the actual contemplation of the weakness and degradation of Israel, deeply impressing his heart, gave earnestness and power to his words. He presented before the people their condition as objects of reproach among the heathen. The nation

once so highly favored of God as to excite the terror of all surrounding countries, had now become a by-word and a hissing. Her religion was dishonored, her God blasphemed.

He then told them how, in a distant land, he had heard of their affliction, how he had entreated the favor of God in their behalf, and how, while praying, the plan had been formed in his mind, of soliciting permission from the king to come to their assistance. He had asked God that the king might not only allow him to go to Jerusalem, but invest him with authority and render the help needed for the work. His prayer had been answered in such a manner as clearly to show that the whole thing was of the Lord. And having thus laid the matter fully before them, showing that he was sustained by the combined authority of the Persian king and the God of Israel, Nehemiah put to the people directly the question whether they would take advantage of this favorable occasion, and arise with him and build the wall.

This appeal went straight to their hearts; the manifestation of the favor of Heaven toward them put their fears to shame. With new courage they cried out with one voice, "Let us rise up and build."

The holy energy and high hope of Nehemiah were communicated to the people. As they caught the spirit, they rose for a time to the moral level of their leader. Each, in his own sphere, was a sort of Nehemiah; and each strengthened and upheld his brother in the work.

There is need of Nehemiahs in the church today,--not men who can pray and preach only, but men whose prayers and sermons are braced with firm and eager purpose. The course pursued by this Hebrew patriot in the accomplishment of his plans is one that should still be adopted by ministers and leading men. When they have laid their plans, they should present them to the church in such a manner as to win their interest and co-operation. Let the people understand the plans and share in the work, and they will have a

personal interest in its prosperity.

The success attending Nehemiah's efforts, shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action, will accomplish. Living faith will prompt to energetic action. The spirit manifested by the leader will be, to a great extent, reflected by the people. If the leaders professing to believe the solemn, important truths that are to test the world at this time, manifest no ardent zeal to prepare a people to stand in the day of God, we must expect the church to be careless, indolent, and pleasure-loving.

Among the first to catch Nehemiah's spirit of zeal and earnestness were the priests of Israel. From the position of influence which they occupied, these men could do much to hinder or advance the work. Their ready co-operation at the very outset, contributed not a little to its success. Thus should it be in every holy enterprise. Those who occupy positions of influence and responsibility in the church, should be foremost in the work of God. If they move reluctantly, others will not move at all. But "their zeal will provoke very many." When their light burns brightly, a thousand torches will be kindled at the flame.

A majority of the nobles and rulers of Israel also came nobly up to their duty; but there were a few, the Tekoite nobles, who "put not their necks to the work of their Lord." While the faithful builders have honorable mention in the book of God, the memory of those slothful servants is branded with shame, and handed down as a warning to all future generations. In every religious movement there are some who, while they cannot deny that it is the work of God, will keep themselves aloof, refusing to make any effort to advance it. But in enterprises to promote their selfish interests, these men are often the most active and energetic workers. It were well to remember that record kept on high, the book of God, in which all our motives and our works are written,--that book in which there are no omissions, no mistakes, and out of which we are to be judged. There every neglected opportunity to

do service for God will be faithfully reported, and every deed of faith and love, however humble, will be held in everlasting remembrance.

Against the inspiring influence of Nehemiah's presence, the example of the Tekoite nobles had little weight. The people in general were animated with one heart and one soul of patriotism and cheerful activity. Men of ability and influence organized the various classes of citizens into companies, each leader making himself responsible for the reaction of a certain portion of the wall. It was a sight well pleasing to God and angels to see the busy companies working harmoniously upon the broken-down walls of Jerusalem, and it was a joyous sound to hear the noise of instruments of labor from the earliest dawn "till the stars appeared."

Nehemiah's zeal and energy did not abate, now that the work was actually begun. He did not fold his hands, feeling that he might let fall the burden. With tireless vigilance he constantly superintended the work, directing the workmen, noting every hindrance, and providing for every emergency. His influence was constantly felt along the whole extent of those three miles of wall. With timely words he encouraged the fearful, approved the diligent, or aroused the laggard. And again he watched with eagle eye the movements of their enemies, who at times collected at a distance and engaged in earnest conversation as if plotting mischief, and then drawing near the workmen attempted to divert their attention and hinder the work. While the eye of every worker is often directed to Nehemiah, ready to heed the slightest signal, his eye and heart are uplifted to God, the great overseer of the whole work, the one who put it into the heart of his servant to build. And as faith and courage strengthen in his own heart, Nehemiah exclaims, and his words, repeated and re-echoed, thrill the hearts of the workers all along the line, "The God of Heaven, he will prosper us."

December 13, 1883

Efforts to Hinder Nehemiah's Work

Those who were restoring the defenses of Jerusalem did not go forward in their work unmolested. Satan was busy in stirring up opposition and creating discouragement. The principal agents in this movement were Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian. These idolaters had exulted in the feeble and defenseless condition of the Jews, and had mocked at their religion, and ridiculed their devastated city. And when the work of rebuilding the wall was entered upon, they with envenomed zeal set themselves to hinder the undertaking. To accomplish this, they attempted to cause division among the workmen by suggesting doubts and arousing unbelief as to their success. They also ridiculed the efforts of the builders, declared the enterprise an impossibility, and predicted a disgraceful failure.

"What do these feeble Jews?" exclaimed Sanballat mockingly; "will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" Tobiah, endeavoring to be still more contemptuous and sarcastic, added, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall."

The builders on the wall were soon beset by more active opposition. They were compelled to guard continually against the plots of their sleepless adversaries. The emissaries of the enemy endeavored to destroy their courage by the circulation of false reports; conspiracies were formed, on various, pretexts, to draw Nehemiah into their toils; and false-hearted Jews were found ready to aid the treacherous undertaking. Again, the report was spread that Nehemiah was plotting rebellion against the Persian monarch,

intending to exalt himself as king over Israel, and that all who aided him were traitors.

Emissaries of the enemy, professing friendliness, mingled with the builders, suggesting changes in the plan, seeking in various ways to divert the attention of the workers, to cause confusion and perplexity, and to arouse distrust and suspicion. And the plans formed for the advancement of the work were reported, by these spies, to the enemy, and thus they were enabled to labor with greater effect to thwart the purpose of the builders.

But Nehemiah continued to look to God for guidance and support, and the work went forward until the gaps were filled, and the entire wall built up to half its intended height. As the enemies of Israel saw that all their efforts had been unavailing, they were filled with rage. Hitherto they had not dared to employ violent measures; for Nehemiah and his companions were acting by the king's commission, and any active opposition might bring upon themselves the monarch's displeasure. But now, in their blind passion, they themselves became guilty of the crime of rebellion of which they had so eagerly accused Nehemiah. Having assembled for united counsel, they "conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem."

The experience of Nehemiah is repeated in the history of God's people in this time. Those who labor in the cause of truth will find that they cannot do this without exciting the anger of its enemies. Though they have been called of God to the work in which they are engaged, and their course is approved of him, they cannot escape reproach and derision. They will be denounced as visionary, unreliable, scheming, hypocritical,--anything, in short, that will suit the purpose of their enemies. The most sacred things will be represented in a ridiculous light to amuse the ungodly. A very small amount of sarcasm and low wit, united with envy, jealousy, impiety, and hatred, is sufficient to excite the mirth of the profane scoffer. And these presumptuous jesters sharpen one another's ingenuity, and embolden each other in their

blasphemous work. Contempt and derision are indeed painful to human nature; but they must be endured by all who are true to God. It is the policy of Satan thus to turn souls from doing the work which the Lord has laid upon them.

Proud scorers are not fit to be trusted; yet as Satan found in the heavenly courts a company to sympathize with him, so these find among professed followers of Christ those whom they can influence, who believe them honest, who sympathize with them, plead in their behalf, and become permeated with their spirit. Those who are at variance in almost everything else, will unite in persecuting the few who dare to pursue the straightforward path of duty. And the same enmity which leads to contempt and derision, will, at a favorable opportunity, inspire more violent and cruel measures, especially when workers for God are active and successful.

Some of the leading men among the Jews, becoming disaffected, sought to discourage Nehemiah by exaggerating the difficulties attending the work, and representing the people as already exhausted by their excessive labor. Said they, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall."

Again, they attempted to intimidate the people by the report that large armies were preparing for a secret attack upon the city: "And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease." It was the help and encouragement received from traitors in the camp that emboldened the enemies of Israel to make those threats. And traitors reported the threats for the sole purpose of terrifying and disheartening the builders on the wall.

"And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us, they will be upon you." These alarms were given by those who were taking

no part in the work. They were gathering up the statements and reports of their enemies, and bringing these in to the workers to weaken courage and create disaffection. Then every word of complaint, distrust, suspicion, or unbelief dropped by the workmen, with all the additional conjectures and conclusions of the news-carriers, was eagerly reported outside the walls, and circulated among those who despised the Jews, and sought to hinder their prosperity.

The same difficulties are experienced by those who are now seeking to make up the breach in the law of God. The servants of the Lord must expect every kind of discouragement. They will be tried, not only by the anger, contempt, and cruelty of enemies, but by the indolence, inconsistency, lukewarmness, and treachery of friends and helpers. As we seek to advance the cause of truth, and prepare a people to stand in the day of God, we are led directly away from the customs and practices of the world. But there are among us pleasure-seekers, who are not laboring to meet the high standard of the divine requirements, who love the spirit and influence of the world more than they love the truth or the prosperity of God's cause. These unconsecrated elements are used by Satan to accomplish his purposes. While still connected with the people of God, they unite themselves with his enemies, and thus the Lord's work is laid open to the attacks of its bitterest foes, and the arguments furnished by professed friends of the truth are employed to destroy the confidence, courage, and faith of workers who are too easily discouraged.

Even some who seem to desire the work of God to prosper, will yet weaken the hands of his servants by hearing, reporting, and half believing the slanders, boasts, and menaces of their adversaries. Those who appear to be honest souls are sometimes deceived through the influence of ambitious and turbulent men. Satan works with marvelous success through his agents; and all who yield to their influence are subject to a bewitching power that destroys the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent. Hence

they allow themselves to be prejudiced, misled, and deceived. For this reason, many whose lives are a reproach to the cause of truth, will yet succeed in arousing distrust and suspicion of those through whom God is working.

How busy, in a crisis, is the rebellious spirit, the evil tongue! How eagerly will they gather up floating rumors, and send them to the bitterest enemies of God, to be sown broadcast, like thistle seed, to produce their harvest of evil! And when the result is seen, in desolation, backsliding, and apostasy, then those who have done the very work which Satan prompted them to do, are ready to charge the result upon the faithful workers whom they have hindered, burdened, and distressed. But every man's work stands registered in the books in Heaven, and no disguise can there conceal the motives that prompt to action. Those who obey God will be honored of him.

Amid great discouragements, Nehemiah made God his trust; and here is our defense. A remembrance of what the Lord has done for us, will prove a support in every danger. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" And "if God be for us, who can be against us?" However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to naught all their counsels.

The most bitter opposition, the boldest threats of the enemy, seemed only to inspire Nehemiah with firmer determination, and to arouse him to greater watchfulness. "Nevertheless," he declares, "we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night." "Therefore, set I in the lower places, behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters,

your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to naught, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons." "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded."

Beside Nehemiah stood a trumpeter, and on different parts of the wall were stationed priests bearing the sacred trumpets. The people were scattered in their labors; but on the approach of danger at any point, a signal was given for them to repair thither without delay. Then the priests sounded an alarm upon the trumpets as a token that God would fight for them. "So we labored in the work," says Nehemiah, "and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared." Those who lived in towns and villages outside Jerusalem were required to lodge within the walls, both to guard the work and that they might be ready for duty in the morning. This would prevent unnecessary delay, and, furthermore, would cut off the opportunity which the enemies would otherwise enjoy, of attacking the workmen as they went to and from their homes, or embittering with prejudice or discouraging by threats.

Nehemiah and his companions did not shrink from hardships, or excuse themselves from trying service. Neither by night nor by day, not even during the brief time given to slumber, did they put off their clothing, or even lay aside their armor. "So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing."

Nehemiah was engaged in an important work, one which concerned the

prosperity of the cause of God: Every effort previously put forth to accomplish that work had failed because of a lack of true faith and union of effort among the Jews. The Samaritans, disguising their enmity and cloaking their slanders under a pretense of fidelity to the king of Persia, had succeeded in causing a discontinuance of the work. The zealous and true-hearted among the Jews had again and again been disappointed in their purposes. But in the strength of God, Nehemiah determines that the adversaries shall not again hinder the work. The despisers of the God of Heaven shall be disappointed. Their Satanic policy cannot succeed if the people of God will bar the doors against the enemy, and work harmoniously to carry out the divine will. The foe cannot enter unless the gates are thrown open by traitors within. If we are but loyal and true, every attack of the enemy will lead us to a firmer reliance upon God, and to more determined effort to carry forward his work, against all opposing influences.