

Ellen G. White 1880 Sign of The Times

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

(Continued from Vol. 5, No. 47.)

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.

E. G. White.

(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

(Continued.)

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.

Mrs. E. G. White

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, "Ye have bereaved me 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 peradventure 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 awed 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 father's 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.

Mrs. E. G. White

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.

Mrs. E. G. White

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 worshipping, 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 of Egypt

(Concluded.)

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 a 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 God-ward, 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 waded 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."

E. G. White.

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, became 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 man-servant, 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.

Mrs. E. G. White

Lemoore,

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.

E. G. White.

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 worshipping 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 veil. A similar veil closed the entrance of the first apartment. These veils, 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 veil 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 drunk 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.

E. G. White.

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 unhealthy, 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 sware 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.

(Concluded next number.)

September 2, 1880

The Twelve Spies

(Concluded.)

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

(Concluded.)

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 wide-spread; 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 unwallled 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 tableland 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 frenzied 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 unflinching 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 Ashtaroth, 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.

