

Ellen G. White 1888 Sign Of The Times

January 6, 1888

The Wisdom of the People of God

“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. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-Peor; for all the men that followed Baal-Peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day.”

The claim has been made that the commandments of God are a yoke of bondage, that it is impossible for man to keep them, and that ancient Israel found them unendurable, and failed to fulfill their righteous obligations; but such a claim is proven to be false by the words we have presented. The commandments were not grievous while the people were firm in their allegiance to God; but when they separated from him and gave their powers to the service of the prince of evil, they became aware of their inability to execute the holy enactments of Heaven. The law that had once been their delight, became an unendurable weight, because they had deprived themselves of the love and power of God, and had taken a willful course to resist the authority of the Most High.

The ancient Israelites had not too much will,—it needs will to be a servant of God,—but when they fixed it on the side of self-indulgence, and in opposition to the direct commands of God, it only wrought for their destruction. They placed their will on the side of the first great rebel, and followed his example in complaining of the precepts of Heaven. All murmuring against the law of God is instigated by the lawless one who first created dissatisfaction in the courts of Jehovah, and incited rebellion among the ranks of the angels.

Satan is ever on the alert for the first word of complaint against God and his service. He takes advantage of a spirit of murmuring, and fills the mind with his dark doubts and suggestions. He is constantly seeking to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction in the heart, concerning the requirements of God, presenting them as unjust in their restraints, and unreasonable in their demands. It is the work of Satan to belittle the law that condemns him, and all who love sin show the characteristics of their commander. Many of the people of God had fallen under his temptations and left their allegiance to God, but here was a living testimony, presented by the faithful servant of the Most High, setting forth the blessedness of obedience. It was transgression that had brought disaster, and laid the nation under the curse of God. Those who had left their loyal service and turned to idolatry, were smitten with disease and death. In contrast to the fate of the transgressor, Moses points out the prosperity of those who had kept the commandments of the Lord; no harm had befallen them; they were alive every one of them that day.

All who have determined to serve God will seek to know and to do his will, at whatever cost to themselves. The true servants of God will be made manifest by their willing obedience to all the commandments of their Master. They will not be murmuring and finding fault with the law, but will declare by word and action, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his

commandments are not grievous." In obeying the law, they are doing that which is well-pleasing in the sight of Heaven, and all the promises of the word of God are pledged to the support of the faithful and obedient. They may hope in his mercy, build on his immutable counsels, obtain the desires of their hearts, because their wills are placed on the side of God's will. It is their meat to do the will of God and to finish his work. The gates of the eternal city shall open for the nation that has kept the truth. The servants of God shall eat of the tree of life, and enjoy the unsearchable riches of eternity.

What astonishing benevolence on the part of God to make conditions for the re-instatement of rebel man to his divine favor! Oh that the mercy of God might not be lightly esteemed! Oh that we might appreciate the forbearance of the great God of the universe, comply with his requirements, and receive the great reward that he has promised to those who love him! Should we not from humble and grateful hearts present our services to him who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? We may become the sons of God, the heirs of an eternal inheritance, partakers of the divine nature, kings and priests unto God. The most exalted privileges are offered to the obedient. Shall we turn away in rebellion and unbelief, and propose to go back to Egypt? Never! Our march should be onward, toward the heavenly Canaan. Every step should be from faith to a greater faith, from obedience to a more perfect obedience, from light to a brighter light; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

We are the Israel that God is leading out of the errors of the world in these last days to live by every word that proceedeth out of his mouth. The truth for this time will not fail to sanctify the soul that receives the love of it and obeys it from the heart. It will enable us to overcome every besetting sin, and to surmount every difficulty in our onward march. We can run and not be weary, walk and not faint.

"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."

The wisdom and understanding of ancient Israel before all the nations, was their obedience to God's law. This doing of God's commandments worked an elevation of character and life that even the heathen world recognized and commended. Those who have rendered obedience to God in all ages, have been transformed in character, and in these last days, when iniquity abounds on every hand, our wisdom and understanding before all people will consist in our obedience to the standard of righteousness. The servants of God will not be foolish, ignorant, uncourteous, and coarse; but as they conform their lives to the holy laws of Heaven, they become like Jesus Christ, who was a living example of perfect obedience to the statutes of Jehovah. They will become refined, ennobled, elevated, and will manifest that courtesy that forgets the interests of self, that others may be blessed and benefited.

The follower of Jesus will place his will on the side of his Master's will. He will have a consciousness of the nearness of God's presence. Doubts will vanish before the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, as the shadows fly before the morning. The true Christian identifies his interest with the interest of Christ, wears the yoke of his Master, lifts his burden, bears his reproach; but no murmur escapes his

lips. No, he rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer for His sake who suffered for him. You may expect complaint, but you will hear only the language of thanksgiving from Christ's burden-bearers. They do not bear the load alone; for He whom their soul loveth, walks with them, and the heaviest weight is borne by his loving and mighty heart. Those who come to Christ, weary and heavy-laden, find rest unto their souls. Those who learn of him and take his yoke upon them, find that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever," promises, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Yes, this God is our God forever and ever. Then why should we chafe and fret under the commandments of our God? He who leadeth us and teacheth us to profit, declares, "I have kept my Father's commandments;" and those who follow Christ will do as he has done. Their steps will fall in his foot-prints all along the path of obedience that he has trodden before them as their example. The law of our God "is holy, and just, and good," and it is to our highest interest that we come into perfect harmony with its precepts. It is ordained unto life. The world knows that it is wisdom to serve the God of Heaven. However reluctant men may be to acknowledge it, they look upon the obedient children of God as favored of Heaven.

Moses asks: "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? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons."

Here is the solemn charge that was given to ancient Israel, and it comes echoing down the ages to us, with accumulated force; for we are under greater obligation and increased responsibility, because we have the record of their experiences to teach us to avoid their errors and profit by their mistakes. Their departures from God, their backslidings, their murmuring, their sins "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The judgment of God in the destruction of the guilty is marked before us, that we may take heed to the warnings, and escape from the paths of transgression. The rich rewards and blessings bestowed upon the obedient are recorded as encouragements to those who will follow the way of the Lord and delight in his testimonies.

In the commendation of God to the faithful among ancient Israel, is unmistakable evidence that he highly appreciates those who are peculiar in character, because they render perfect obedience to his holy laws. The spiritual excellency of these people is manifested in their words and works. They are branches of the living vine, and partakers of the divine nature.

Like seeks like. Like appreciates like. Christ recognizes his own Spirit and image in his followers. As they become more like him, they seek a closer association with him. His character shines with new attractions. They see matchless charms in their Redeemer, and he becomes "the chiefest among ten thousand," and the one "altogether lovely." His ways are precious to them, and it is their delight to do his will.

The words of Jesus test the profession we make. He declares: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.... If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

The conditions and promises are the same in the Old Testament as they are in the New. The favor of God is promised only to those who obey him. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love,” says the Master. If we would claim the rich promises, if we would have the pardon of our sins, and eternal life at last, we must yield a royal service to the God of Heaven. In our faithful performance of his requirements consists our prosperity as a church and as individuals. Not in great talents, not in great possessions, not in grand appearances, but in humble service to our Maker is our strength, wisdom, and understanding.

We must not take a feeble, vacillating course; but with unchangeable purpose, place our wills on the side of God's will, become rich in faith, rich in the knowledge of his word, and rich in the power of his Spirit. If we do those things that are pleasing in the sight of our God, we may hold the keys of the invisible world. We may unlock Heaven's storehouses, and draw upon their inestimable treasures.

Then let none of us entertain the thought that it is of little moment whether we heed the commandments of God, or pass them by with indifference. When the great books of Judgment are opened, and the motives of every heart are laid bare, there will be no excuse for those who trifle with God's plain words. “The wages of sin is death.” This is the awful and inevitable sentence pronounced upon the transgressor. But the righteous shall enter into life. Says the Son of God, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

January 13, 1888

True Religion

What is true religion? It is to love God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves. This is the whole duty of man. To reach this high standard of character should be the absorbing purpose of every soul. How shall I love God with all my heart? What means are provided for fixing my affections on high and heavenly things? Love to God must be cultivated daily, by calling to mind the great love that God has manifested toward us in giving us his well-beloved Son.

We should try to comprehend the wonders of this amazing sacrifice. We should dwell on the marvelous love of our Redeemer till our stony hearts are melted in contrition and gratitude. The love that stirred his bosom enabled him, the spotless Lamb of God, to become an offering for the guilty transgressor of his Father's law. It sustained him in his purpose to save the fallen race, amid their heartless ingratitude and scorn. It strengthened him for temptation, reproach, torture, poverty, shame, and death. Oh, the unfathomable depths of redeeming love! who can sound this mighty deep?

When we make redemption the subject of our meditation, and try to comprehend the vastness of the plan of salvation, and to realize the unutterable love of Him who has died for us, our hearts will be subdued and softened, and we shall yield them wholly to our Saviour. We shall fall at his feet in adoration, exclaiming, “My Lord and my God!” A more than human love is wakened in the soul,

through the knowledge of the wonderful love of Christ to one who has rebelled against his rule and grieved him by transgression. The sinner who has felt the power of Christ's cleansing blood, has a deep and abiding sense that he owes his all to that Saviour who has purchased him with his own precious life. All who have this consciousness and appreciation of the love of Christ, will esteem it the highest privilege of their lives to devote every power of their being to his service. The transforming grace of Christ moulds the desires of the heart, and there is a ready willingness to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake.

Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity to share with him in humiliation, shame, and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering, for his sake, sweet; and they know that if they suffer with him they shall also reign with him in his glory. This experience of suffering for Christ's sake is absolutely essential to the spiritual life of the Christian. There can be no true, vital godliness without seasons of trial and grief. We are chosen in the furnace of affliction, and the trial of our faith is more precious than gold.

Many claim to love God while they fail to cherish love toward their brethren; but genuine love to God will testify to its real existence by love to our fellow-men. Those who love God will reveal the tender, compassionate spirit of Jesus to all that are around them. They will love their brethren, because they are the members of the body of Christ. They will love the sinner, because he is the purchase of the blood of Christ; and this love, abiding in the heart, will display itself by earnest labor to benefit and bless all with whom they associate. They will yearn for the salvation of men, and will lead others to the fountain that has refreshed their own souls.

The love of Christ will not make us less fit for actual life, but will enable us to adapt ourselves to the wants of others, and will develop highly practical fruit in our daily experience. It is not a weak sentimentalism. It is not of that cheap order that is earthly and sensual, leading to debasement of the soul and defilement of the character. It is not of earthly, but of heavenly origin. This love is elevating in its nature, enduring and ennobling, shedding rays of beneficence upon all within the circle of its influence. God, through his Son, has sent down this heavenly love to unite us with himself. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Let us ponder this divine love, that we may become changed, and may reflect this precious attribute of the character of our Redeemer. We shall be in less peril of placing our affections on unworthy objects.

The disciple John became a possessor of this divine love. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. He came under the power of the love of Christ, and the knowledge of this love awakened a depth of affection that, by its infusion through his heart, wrought a transformation of character. The warm affection of John was not the cause of Christ's love for him. The Saviour had loved him before this affection had an existence; but the unmerited kindness of his Lord had kindled love in the breast of the disciple.

John's natural character was marked with imperfections. He was impetuous, and resentful under injuries. When the Samaritans refused to entertain his Lord because they thought he favored the Jews more than he did them, John wanted the insult to receive immediate retribution. His spirit was stirred with revenge, and he said to his Master, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Jesus looked upon John, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Revengeful thoughts and words are contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus. It is not always easy to bring our feelings under control. The human heart needs to be guarded continually, that we may not cherish a spirit unlike that of our divine Lord. It will be impossible for us to bear insult and harshness with loving forbearance and patience unless we drink of the spirit of Him "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." It is natural for us to think when we are falsely accused that we must retaliate and show our contempt of the traducers, but this is foreign to the meekness of our Redeemer. We must not allow one revengeful thought to arise. Sorrow and indignation may fill our hearts for a season, because souls are deceived and misled by these falsehoods; but it will not help matters to cherish unholy anger, and it will not be cherished where the forgiving love of Christ has imbued the soul.

The prevalent opinion that John was naturally of a meek and yielding character is proved, by a study of his life, to be erroneous. He had high ambitions to be first in the kingdom of Christ. He had decidedly rebuked one who was casting out devils in the name of Jesus, because he was not in their company. He had strong traits of character, not weak and vacillating, but self-assertive and ambitious for honor. Jesus taught the needed lessons of humility and patience. He manifested in contrast to John's violent spirit, calm consideration and forbearance. John was a learner in the school of Christ. As the character of the divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and the patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and the meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love; but he was not simply an admirer; he showed his appreciation by imitating the divine characteristics of his Lord. His revengeful, ambitious temper he yielded to the moulding power of the Spirit of Christ. He set his soul to copy the lovely Pattern and become like Him who is meek and lowly of heart.

This is the sure result of association with Jesus. As we meditate upon his character our hearts are drawn out in love, desire awakens to become like him whom we love, and, by beholding, we become changed. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Everything that defileth is banished from the soul's temple. Lust, base passions, impure thoughts, pride, inordinate affections, revenge, retaliation, covetousness, envy, all these are prohibited; and what we once loved, now we hate; for we become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Christ's Spirit, Christ's love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raise the thoughts and desires toward God and Heaven.

The truth we claim to believe should make us better men and women in our home life, in our church relations, in our business, and in our intercourse with our friends and neighbors. Unless this result is manifested, we should examine ourselves to see what is hindering the sanctifying influence of the truth from accomplishing its work of purification in our lives. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Our characters must be moulded after the divine model, that we may have an elevating influence on all with whom we associate. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Had Peter practiced the lessons that Christ presented during his ministry, he would never have apostatized and denied his Lord; but we thank God that, although in his weakness he did forsake his Master, he thoroughly repented and was forgiven. The lessons which he had failed to take to heart were learned and made practical in his life, and at last he who had deserted his Lord counted it too great an honor that he was permitted to suffer shame and death for his sake.

How different it was with Judas. He had been in the society of the great Teacher. The same privileges were granted to him as were bestowed on Peter and John; but how did he respond to the light? Like many of this day, he professed to be a follower of Christ, but failed to identify his interests with the cause of his Lord. He listened to the lessons of Christ, but he made no change in his character. He did not seek to rid himself of his selfish penuriousness by sacrificing for the advancement of the cause he claimed to espouse. He cultivated a spirit of greed, till the desirableness of Christ and Heaven was eclipsed. This plague-spot in his soul spread, like a destroying leprosy, till the whole man was corrupted. Noble liberty was left to wither. Every unselfish purpose was darkened, until the hope of obtaining a few paltry dollars led him to betray his Saviour.

How many are repeating these mistakes, because they do not profit by the example of those who have followed this course in the past! They are not doers of the words of Christ. They do not conform their lives to his divine instruction. Those who have the greatest deformities of character, may have the greatest grace. The highest seat will be awarded to those who, through appropriating the promises of God to themselves, attain the greatest likeness to Christ.

A longing, hungering desire takes possession of the soul that is conforming to the divine standard. Oh, to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God! Oh, that heavenly light may illumine the pathway! Oh, for deeper draughts of the well of salvation! This is the constant cry of the heart to God, and the promise is that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

It is the love of Jesus in the soul that enables the Christian to count all things as loss, to endure toil, to rejoice in sacrifice, and to suffer reproach for the truth. Love for Jesus is the motive power of the life-work, and the sustaining strength for every duty.

While the love of God makes its possessor meek and lowly of spirit, and eradicates all hatred and revenge, and all that is unholy, it will not leave the Christian without power to oppose wrong and rebuke sin. If dangerous errors threaten the faith, through the efforts of deceived church-members or false shepherds, they will be met and opposed with decision. The soldiers of Christ must be like sentinels on guard, watching on the walls of Zion. They must defend the faith once delivered to the saints, and press back the powers of moral darkness with determined energy and will.

The disciple John, while he has written many chapters on the subject of love, speaks very decidedly to his brethren on the duty of rebuking error. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God," is his decision; and he instructs them not to receive such a one into their houses or bid him Godspeak.

We must arm ourselves with the Spirit of Christ, stand in defense of the truth, and yet do this whole work of honoring God and resisting evil without having a spirit of retaliation arise in our hearts. Every warning in the word of God is to be heeded, every instruction followed, that we may keep our souls in the love of God. We must oppose error for Christ's sake and for the sake of the purchase of his blood, that God may be honored, his ways vindicated, and souls saved from the fast-hastening ruin that is to overwhelm the world. Christ is our example in all things. We must consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds. We must go forward, exemplifying in our lives the principles of true religion, that we may be living epistles, "known and read of all men;" that we may love God with all our heart, and our neighbors as ourselves.

January 20, 1888

Know the Reason of Your Hope

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

This exhortation is addressed to the children of God. The Scriptures are they which testify of our hope, and it is necessary for us to search them diligently, that we may be ready to give an intelligent and well-grounded reason for our faith. This is the duty enjoined upon us by Him who gave his life to redeem man.

After the crucifixion of Christ two disciples were journeying toward Emmaus. Their hearts were burdened with grief and doubt. Their way lay over a bleak, barren plain, broken by rugged ridges dangerous steep. The ground was cracked and parched, and loose stones strewed the path.

As they ascended the ridge a stranger joined them; but they were so engrossed in reviewing the mournful events of the passover week that they did not notice his presence. The stranger gently accosted them; but their eyes were holden, and they did not recognize their divine Master. And he asked, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them. What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.... Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Had not the disciples heard this very exposition of these scriptures from their Master's lips while he was with them? But how little had they comprehended them! How forcible is their meaning now! How startling their fulfillment! The truths they had but dimly discerned now stand revealed in a blaze of light. The very things he had told them have been accomplished. Faith begins to revive. Their hearts beat with a strong and renewed hope as they listen eagerly to the plain, simple words of their unknown fellow-traveler. They are surprised to find their burdened hearts becoming light; and as they think of Jesus, of all he was to them, of all he suffered, their tears flow freely. Their confidence had not been misplaced. He was all and even more than they had believed.

If these men had no reason of their hope within them, their hearts would not have responded to the world's Redeemer as he strove to fasten their trembling faith upon the testimony of the prophets concerning himself. As it was, the evidences of the truth needed only to be revived in their minds. The very clouds that darkened their faith grew luminous with assurance as they saw the harmony of prophecy and its fulfillment. As the mists began to lift, the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion stood like

great waymarks promising the fulfillment of the word of God, witnessing to his providences, and telling the story of the unutterable love and truth of their Saviour. Again their feet stood firm on the sure foundation.

There will be chapters of a similar character in the experience of every follower of Christ. Faith will be tested, and for a time its brightness will be dimmed; but those who sincerely love God will not be left to be overwhelmed. Jesus comes to their side. He speaks to them. He encourages them. It may be through some humble agent; but he surely ministers unto them.

The divine Son of God, the resurrected Saviour, who walked with the sorrowing disciples up and down the steep that intercepted the journey to Emmaus, is our compassionate Saviour. He knows whose hearts are burdened with sorrows and disappointed hopes. He is at our right hand to interest himself in all our sorrows and to soothe our griefs. He presses close to the believing mourner who yearns for his presence; but he never forces his company upon any.

These two disciples saw in Jesus not only a stranger but one who had been acquainted with their beloved Master, and as such he was endeared to them. The sun sinks behind the hills and they near their destination. They cannot endure the thought of separation. As the stranger seems about to leave them they urge the request, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

The three weary travelers had walked together. The Son of God was one with them. He had labored up the toilsome steep; he had moved with equal caution down the precipitous path, and there was nothing in his dress or his manner to lead the disciples to suspect that he was any other than one of the many pilgrims returning from the great feast.

He enters the lowly home, and is seated before the humble board. While the meal is preparing, words that stir and warm the heart flow from his lips. He puts forth his hands to bless the bread. The eyes of the disciples are riveted on them. They see the print of the nails. They recognize his voice. The words, the tone, the manner, are all familiar. It is the Master himself. He whom they had placed in Joseph's new tomb lives before them. They had walked with their risen Saviour from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Oh! why had they not known him? Their unbelief had hidden Jesus from their view. They rise in great haste and fall at his feet to express their joy; but he is gone.

The disciples had thought themselves weary; but now their vigor is renewed. Discouragement is gone. They stop not for food, nor feel they the need of it, but hasten to retrace their steps over the rough path so lately trodden with Jesus. They have a message of joy to carry to their mourning brethren. They have seen and talked with Jesus. He has risen from the dead. Their hearts are all light, and joy, and peace.

They urge their way through the darkened streets, and climb to the upper chamber. All is silent within; but finally, to their continued knocking, they hear the slipping of the bolts. The door is cautiously opened, and carefully barred after them. Scarcely had they finished relating the marvelous story of the walk to Emmaus to the incredulous disciples, when they behold with amazement another in their midst. It is Jesus. The bars and bolts have not been withdrawn. They have heard no footstep, and they are terrified. Their amazement deepens as they hear his voice, saying, "Peace be unto you," and continuing to reassure the terrified disciples: "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I

myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

The duty of the disciple of Christ is revealed in these words. To preach to all nations repentance and remission of sins; to present Jesus as the sin-pardoning Redeemer. The hearts of sinners must be melted into contrition, before God will hear their prayer. When the soul is emptied of its defilement, Jesus will take possession, and pardon and peace that floweth like a river will be enjoyed.

The followers of Christ will have trials and conflicts while on earth, but we have a sure refuge in every storm. Jesus has told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The forces of Satan are marshaled against us. He is a diligent foe, but in following the warning of Christ we shall find safety. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." There are foes to be resisted and overcome, but Jesus is by our side, ready to strengthen for every effort and brace for duty.

We have a great work to do to be witnesses to the fulfillment of God's word; and to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us," will require a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. We need in these times of peace to become familiar with the prophecies that foretell the events to take place in our time, that, like the disciples, our minds will need only to be refreshed to become encouraged, and that the very trial which seems to confuse us may become a tower of strength, and an evidence that God is fulfilling the sure word of prophecy.

January 27, 1888

"I Will Come Again"

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The time of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion, was drawing near; and as the disciples gathered around him, the Lord unfolded to them the mournful events that were about to take place, and their hearts were filled with sorrow. To comfort them he spoke these tender words: "Let not your heart be troubled.... I will come again, and receive you unto myself." He directed their minds away from the scenes of sorrow, to the mansions of Heaven and the time of reunion in the kingdom of God. "I go to prepare a place for you." Though he must go from them and ascend to his Father, his work for those he loved would not be at an end. He was to prepare homes for those who, for his sake, were to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

After his resurrection "he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven." And as he went up, two shining angels asked the disciples, "Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven." Do you imagine as they went back to Jerusalem that they said to one another, "Well, the Lord has left us. What is now the use of trying to gain followers to Jesus? Let us return to our nets. Let us take up our old employment. What can we do against the opposition of the world?" There is no record of any such conversation. Not a line is written or a hint given that they had a thought of leaving the service of their ascended Lord, for the service of self and the world. The Saviour's hand had been outstretched in blessing his disciples he had left behind as he ascended. They had seen his glory. He had gone to prepare mansions for them. Their salvation had been provided for, and if they were faithful in complying with the conditions, they would assuredly follow him to the world of unending joy. Their hearts were filled with songs of rejoicing and praise.

We all have the same cause for thanksgiving. The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that Heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect his image to behold and share with him his glory.

Though the disciples had gazed far into the Heaven until their Lord had vanished from their sight, they did not behold the angels that gathered around their beloved commander. Jesus led a multitude of captives who had risen from the grave at his resurrection. As the glorious company approach the gates of the eternal city the angels sing. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in." And the angels guarding the gates respond, "Who is this king of glory?" The attendant angels reply, "The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." As the glorious train passes in, the angels are about to bow in adoration before the Lord of glory; but he waves them back. Before he will permit their homage he must know that his sacrifice for the fallen race has been accepted of the Father. He must know whether the price paid for the redemption of the lost has been sufficient to ransom them from the power of sin and the grave. This is the absorbing thought in the breast of the Saviour. Amid the splendor of the courts of glory, amid ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands waiting to cast their crowns at his feet, he does not forget those that he has left on earth to bear opposition, reproach, and scorn. After the Father has assured him that the ransom paid is accepted, still he has a request to offer for those who believe in him and follow in his footsteps: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." He requested that his disciples might enter into his joy and share his glory; and at last the faithful servant of the Lord will hear the glad words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

When he had finished preferring his requests, the Father gave the command, "Let all the angels of God worship him," Then the song of joy and love swells through the heavenly courts, "Worthy, worthy, worthy, is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror." And this same Jesus, whom unnumbered hosts of angels delight to adore, is coming again to fulfill his promise and receive those who love him unto himself. Have we not great reason to rejoice? "When Christ, who is

our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The consummation of our hope is at hand; the faithful will soon enter into the joy of their Lord.

A little time is given that the inhabitants of the world may hear the warning, and that those who will may prepare for the coming of the great king. We must not be like the foolish virgins. They did not provide oil for their lamps, and at the very time when the cry was raised, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," their lights burned dim and went out. Are there not many who are pursuing the same unwise course? They profess to be followers of Jesus, but they are making no preparation for his glorious appearing and kingdom. They go on, taken up with the affairs of this world, and have no realization of the great events about to come to pass.

Christ warned us in view of this very time that we should not be engrossed in the cares of the world, to the neglect of eternal interests; but how many of us allow the things of this life to interpose between our souls and the great gift of Heaven. How few are living for the glory of God and the good of humanity. How few are telling their children of the love of Christ, of the mansions of Heaven, of the necessity of faith and obedience. How few are warning their friends and neighbors of the fast-hastening Judgment. My heart is pained with the thought of the ingratitude of man to his Maker, and the indifference of souls to their dearly-purchased salvation. We are warned that if we do not watch and pray, the day of final reckoning will overtake us as a thief in the night, and our portion will be appointed with the hypocrites and unbelievers. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." There is every provision made that we may have the light, and there will be no excuse in the day of God if we are overtaken in our sins. Sorrow and woe await those who do not heed the instructions of the word of life; but what joy is in store for those who have made preparation for the coming of their Lord! They will be changed from mortality to immortality. They will see the King in his beauty, and reflect his image. They will be caught up to be forever with the Lord.

Let us go forward together to reach the great reward and join the song of the redeemed. If we ever sing the praises of God in Heaven, we must first sing them here. Out of grateful hearts the notes of thanksgiving should spring continually, and our lips should tell of the goodness of the Lord, and magnify his holy name. All complaint and murmuring should cease among the children of the Most High. We ought to be the happiest people on the earth, because we have a mighty Saviour in the sanctuary above, who has died that we might live. It might be inferred from our sad countenances and words of complaint that Jesus was still in Joseph's tomb, with a great stone rolled before the door; but I declare to you that Jesus is risen, that he loves you, that he represents you in the courts of his glory, making intercession for you. We should rejoice and praise God with songs of unfeigned thankfulness. Let us determine that if it costs everything we will have Heaven and become partakers of the divine nature.

We may have a right to enter into the city, to eat of the tree of life, and to share in the unending joy of the redeemed. We may listen to the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, as he welcomes his children to their eternal home. Those who have chosen his service will hear him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And oh, what a kingdom! There will be no night in the city of gold. God and the Lamb will be its light. There are homes for the pilgrims of earth. There are robes for the righteous—crowns of glory, palms of victory. All that perplexed us in the providences of God, will

then be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find an explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered these experiences that seemed the most trying and hard to bear. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of Heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

Think of this, children of suffering and sorrow, and rejoice in hope. Strive with all your God-given powers to enter into the kingdom of Heaven; for "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Jesus has promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" This is the question we should put to our souls. It becomes us, as rational beings, to consider whether we are prepared to meet our Lord, or placing our affections upon the things of earth. When we think how many are given to selfishness and pleasure-seeking, our hearts are troubled. The careless and indifferent, whose chief care is for their personal and earthly interests, will be left in outer darkness, but those who are waiting for their Lord, with their lamps trimmed and burning, will go in with the heavenly Bridegroom to the wedding.

February 3, 1888

"Serve the Lord with Gladness"

[Sermon preached at Christiania, Norway, November 11, 1885.]

"Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

There are times when under adversity and sorrow, the servants of God become discouraged and despondent. They brood over their circumstances, and, contrasting their condition with the prosperity of those who have no thought or care for eternal things, they feel aggrieved. They manifest a spirit of reproach, and murmur and repine at their lot. They seem to consider that God is under special obligation to bless them and prosper their undertakings, and therefore, as they are placed in situations of trial, they grow rebellious, and look with envy on the wicked who flourish in their iniquity. They seem to regard the condition of the transgressor as preferable to their own. These bitter thoughts are suggested to the mind by the deceiver of mankind. It is his delight to stir up rebellion in the breasts of the children of God. He knows it causes them weakness, and is a source of dishonor to their God. He desires us to think that it is a vain thing to serve God, and that those

who are unmindful of the claims of Heaven are more favored than those who strive to obey the commandments of God.

The psalmist David had this experience. When he looked upon the flourishing condition of the wicked he was envious of their success, and said, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued." But when he went into the sanctuary, and communed with the Lord, he no longer desired the portion of the wicked; for then he understood their end. He saw that their way led to destruction at last, and their pleasure was but for a season. Envy had no more a place in his heart. His rebellious spirit bowed in humble submission to his God, and he declared, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." He saw that the guidance of the Lord was of infinitely more value than all the temporal prosperity of the world; for the way of the Lord kept the feet in the paths of righteousness that lead to eternal glory.

The true servant of God will take the suggestions and temptations of Satan to the throne of grace, where peace and submission will flow into the soul. When he enters into the sanctuary he will know the end of those who have not the fear of the Lord before their eyes. The Lord has heard our murmuring. He says, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?" This question will present itself, with more or less force, to the minds of the people of God; but before you answer it think of the exalted honor that the God of Heaven has conferred upon you. Think how he has given his only begotten Son, that a way of salvation might be opened for you. Think how he has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, called you to be the children of the Most High, called you to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Is this no compensation? no encouragement?

In these last days there is a call from Heaven inviting you to keep the statutes and ordinances of the Lord. The world has set at naught the law of Jehovah; but God will not be left without a witness to his righteousness, or without a people in the earth to proclaim his truth. The door of the heavenly sanctuary has been opened, and no man can shut it, and the light of the Holy of Holies is shining into the world. The people of God have had their attention called to the ark of the testimony, and the law within it has been revealed with its unalterable precepts. In holy vision, John saw the remnant church on the earth, in an age of lawlessness, and he points them out in unmistakable language: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." They are in harmony with that law that rests in the ark in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. The whole duty of man is summed up in its sacred precepts. In the heart of the law is the commandment enjoining upon man the observance of the Sabbath of Jehovah, which the world and the church have trodden under their feet. For centuries men have walked in blindness concerning the true Sabbath, and the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now is the day of reformation, and he calls upon men everywhere to repent. When the light of God's disregarded commandment shone upon the path of those who sincerely loved God, they delayed not to keep his statutes. They realized that they must come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean, that they might claim the promise, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." They became the repairers of the breach that has been made in the law of God, because they turned away their feet from the Sabbath, from doing their pleasure on God's holy day, and called the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and did honor him, not speaking their own words or finding their own pleasure.

Now the question is, Will we ally ourselves with those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? Will we cease to trample upon the Sabbath of the Lord our God? We want to be sure that we are the children of light; that we are following in the footsteps of our Redeemer and Example. The cross lies in our pathway, but shall we not take it up and bear it for his sake who bore the cross for us? All who are seeking to serve God will have trials; but shall we say, What does it profit to come out from the world and be separate? Shall we call the proud happy? Shall we say that those who work wickedness are set up? that those who tempt God are even delivered, and we are left unaided in the midst of sorrows?

This is the evil that will prevail in the hearts of many. They will grow despondent in their service, because they are not prospered as the wicked are. Some are acting on the suggestions of the enemy today, and are distrusting their best friend. But we want you to understand that if you rely on God in your trial, with living faith, not one of his gracious promises will fail. The Lord is acquainted with all our sorrows and self-denials. Those who have embraced the truth in all ages have had to suffer for its sake, and shall we be exempt? Let the mind dwell upon the sufferings of our precious Saviour. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." He made himself of "no reputation," took upon him the "form of a servant," and humbled himself "even to the death of the cross." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

There must be a coming up, lest Satan divert the mind from the contemplation of the spiritual and eternal, to the earthly and temporal. God is willing to give you grace and strength for every time of need, if you seek for it with a sincere heart.

We read that "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." When the people that are engaged in the service of God come together, they are to speak words that will encourage and comfort and upbuild their brethren in the faith. They are not to find fault with their lot, and question the dealing and work of God. They are not to murmur against each other, and magnify their trials and sacrifices, thus leaving the impression that it is unprofitable to serve God. Let them remember the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the multitude of his tender mercies, and, out of hearts melted with gratitude and love, let them praise his name and inquire, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" Angels record the words of your lips in the books of remembrance. God hearkens and hears the utterances of his servants; and those who appreciate his mercy and love his name "shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Do not say it is a vain thing to serve God. Have respect unto the recompense of the reward. Even in this life you are to cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you. His promise is, that if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all necessary things shall be added unto you. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, and the hairs of your head are all numbered.

The glory of the eternal world has been opened before me, and I want to tell you that Heaven is worth your winning. An infinite price has been paid that you might share in its indescribable glories, and enjoy its exalted privileges. The God of Heaven did not spare even his only Son, that rebel man might be restored to the favor of Heaven; and shall we hesitate to yield to him grateful and whole-hearted service? Oh, that no word of murmuring might ever escape the lips of those who have tasted of the heavenly gift! This is no time to ask, What does it profit to keep the ordinances of our God? The celestial city is just before us. If you could get one glimpse into the glories of that place, you would not count any loss too great if you might only walk its streets of transparent gold, and sing the song of triumph with the white-robed company of Heaven. You would not wish for the prosperity of earth, or be envious of the wicked.

There are traces, even amid the havoc that sin has wrought, of what God has done to make the earth beautiful. I enjoy these prospects of loveliness in nature. My mind is carried up through nature to nature's God, and I adore him who has created such scenes of beauty; but I know that if I love God and keep his commandments there is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" awaiting me in the kingdom of Heaven. Beautiful as are the landscapes of earth, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." God designs that we should contemplate heavenly things, and that we should dwell upon the attributes of his character, till we see matchless charms in our God, and become changed into the same image. When we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, we shall have no disposition to murmur at our lot; the praise of God will be welling up in our hearts continually. The solemn responsibilities that God has laid upon us for the salvation of souls will absorb our whole heart and mind, and we shall have no time to talk of our trials and sacrifices. Oh! we must wash our robes of character from every stain, in the blood of the Lamb, and prepare for the great day of God. We must not wait till the Lord comes in the clouds of heaven before we make our calling and election sure.

Enoch walked with God three hundred years before his translation to Heaven. He had the daily testimony that his ways pleased God. Why should not every Christian follow Christ as did this faithful servant? Do you love Jesus a great way off? Do the tidings of his coming seem a message of joy to your heart? Do you find his service a profitable service? How can you win others to the truth, if your own heart is not in the work, and you do not see matchless charms in your Redeemer? The prayer of Christ was, that he might be glorified in those he had left upon earth to carry on his work, and we do not glorify our Redeemer when we complain of the difficulties of the way, and murmur at the providences of God.

Jesus is soon coming in power and great glory, and we are not to sit down in idle expectation of this event. We are to show our faith by our works. He has committed to every man his work. A great truth has been given to us, and the world must be warned of the fast-approaching judgments. Every talent must be given out to the exchangers, that it may be used for the good of man and the glory of God. And those who are faithful to the small trusts of earth, will be made rulers of many things in the eternal world. Now we have the precious privileges of probation. We have the opportunity of laboring in the greatest cause that ever engaged the attention of the servants of God. Let us not spend these valuable moments in discontent at our lot. Let us praise God, and speak often one to another and to all that we meet, of his marvelous truth. The Lord will count such among his jewels, and will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

February 10, 1888

Be Diligent

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

The day of the Lord is at hand, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all the cities of the earth shall be destroyed. Christ, escorted by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, shall come in the clouds of heaven. The righteous dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and rise from their graves to immortal life, and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so be forever with the Lord. In view of these great and solemn events we are exhorted to be diligent that we may be “found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

There are attractions on every hand to draw the mind away from the contemplation of the coming of our Lord and Saviour; but it is absolutely necessary to bear in remembrance that “the great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly.” The God of Heaven has multiplied warnings, entreaties, and instructions, that we may be prepared to stand in the time of the overwhelming destruction. We are not left in darkness. Those who meditate and act upon the instructions that God has given will cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. They will keep in mind the command to “be diligent,” to be holy in all their conversation and life. An infinite price has been paid for our redemption that we might have an opportunity to turn to God and perfect characters that will meet the approbation of Heaven. And we should inquire as did the lawyer, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Christ answered, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” The lawyer replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” And Jesus said unto him, “Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.”

Christ presented the great moral standard of righteousness to the lawyer. Every man's life must meet this test in the Judgment. Now you are invited to look into the law of God. Take the ten commandments, that grow out of the principles of love to God and love to man, and see if you are in harmony with their requirements. If you are not breaking any one of them, you may ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you; for you are in the favor of God. The only way that you can determine whether you are righteous or not is by examining your heart with the light of the law and the Spirit of God. As the looking-glass reveals the defects in your appearance, so the moral mirror of the law will make plain the imperfections of your character, and the true condition of your heart. Those who are looking into the perfect law of liberty, and seeking a fitness for Heaven, will realize their need of divine help and will often be found before God in prayer.

Only those who are sanctified through the truth will be accepted as heirs of eternal life. The sanctification that God intends his children should have, is not of that character which leads men to boast of their holiness and reject the law of God, which is “holy, and just, and good.” Bible

sanctification is implicit obedience to the requirements of God. Christ did not die to save anyone in the pollution of sin. He came to "save his people from their sins," that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" in his followers. The death of the Son of God on the cross demonstrates the immutable character of the precepts of Jehovah. Then how grieved should we be for every transgression and disobedience. The precious Saviour was bruised for our iniquity. There is enmity against the commandments of God in the hearts of those who claim sanctification and refuse to acknowledge the binding obligation of the law. Hatred arises in their hearts as soon as the law is mentioned. They profess to believe that the law is abolished. But if the law is abolished, what is the standard by which we shall be judged before the judgment-seat of Christ? This work of belittling the law is the work of the great deceiver. If Satan can persuade men that the God of the universe has no law by which he governs them, then he can set up a standard of his own, and turn men into the path of transgression and destruction.

Sanctification is not the work of an hour, it is the result of the constant effort of a lifetime. We must fight the good fight of faith, struggle against the powers of darkness, resist evil, subdue the natural tendencies to sin, and by the grace of God perfect holiness, and work out our own salvation. The nearer we come to Jesus and behold the purity and greatness of his character, the less we shall feel like exalting self. The contrast between our character and his will lead to humiliation of soul and deep heart-searching. We shall not desire to boast of our holiness; but the more we love Jesus, the more will self be forgotten and humbled. When our souls are filled with self-esteem and pride we cannot realize the need of divine power; but when we are aware of our own insufficiency our hearts cry out, "Other refuge have I none," and we hang our helpless souls upon Him who is mighty to save.

Our precious Saviour gave his life that fallen man might be saved. It was impossible for those who had once weakened themselves by transgression to fulfill the requirements of God; the consequence and penalty of sin was upon the race; but the Lamb of God paid the penalty of the past transgressions, and will impart to those who believe on him power to become the sons of God, power to obey the commandments of the law. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we may be conquerors in the battle with "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing;" we are dependent upon him for divine grace and help from day to day. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." But let no one think that because Christ has died for us we are released from all personal responsibility, that we need not be particular to obey his will, to glorify God or to honor the rule of his government. "Sin is the transgression of the law," and sin is very offensive in his sight. We must put it away if we would enter the city wherein is nothing that defileth.

A true appreciation of the plan of salvation will fill us with wonder and love. Our hearts will be so melted with the love that Jesus has manifested toward us, that we cannot be taken up with the affairs of this world. When Christ is abiding in the heart and we have a true conception of the sacrifice that he has made, we shall talk about it. We shall understand something of the perfection of the law that he came to magnify and make honorable. The privilege of obedience will seem precious and gracious to our souls. We shall take no delight in the teaching of those who seek to make of no effect the law of God. We want that intelligent faith that has the word of God as its foundation, that leads in the path of righteousness, and makes every step a step Heavenward. Everything that God could do has been done that we might obtain salvation from sin and

destruction. Now it depends upon us whether or not we will accept of the conditions of his mercy and co-operate with his divine aid, and gain eternal life.

“What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” The books of Heaven register everything just as it is. The angels make no mistakes. You cannot afford to speak evil of your brethren; this is not holy conversation. Whenever you are tempted to criticise and condemn others, close your lips, and lift up your heart in prayer to God that you may have power to resist and overcome. We have a great work to do to remove every defect of character and be a constant light to those around us, reflecting the character of Jesus, the light of the world. Those who are heads of families should do as did faithful Abraham. They should erect an altar to the Lord in their homes, and command their households after them, bringing up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. I have been very careful in the education of my children that there should be no element of unbelief woven into their early teaching. They have never heard one word of questioning or doubt in regard to the word of God, the plan of salvation, or the truth for this time. I have kept the Saviour before them. I have repeated the story of his life, pictured the scenes of his suffering, humiliation, crucifixion, and death. I have sought to impress them with the importance of faith and obedience. I have presented before them the mansions of Heaven, and the future immortal life. We should seek to make these themes attractive to our little ones.

You are to be holy in your conversation. Your homes should not be darkened by faultfinding and criticism. You must manifest love and kindness to those who are dependent upon you. You should not hold up the peculiarities of your neighbors and indulge in jealousies, evil surmisings, and evil-speaking. All your bitter speeches are registered in the books of Heaven, and you will have to meet them again, if you do not repent and put away the evil of your doings.

Christ identifies his interests with the interests of his brethren on the earth. He said to those on the left hand, “I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.” And they answered, “Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?” And Christ declares, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” The persons that our Lord condemned were not aware that they had dealt unjustly with their brethren. Satan had so blinded their perceptions that they did not conceive what they owed to their brethren. They might have understood their duty; the word of God was full of instruction on this very point; but instead of searching the Scriptures and doing according to the words of God, they were simply neglectful hearers. When you are tempted to find fault with your brethren, take your Bible and read what that says; for right in the church you are dealing with Christ in the person of his saints. You do not want to be among those who are blinded to the grievousness of their sin, and who when they are rebuked ask, “When saw we thee, thus?” They do not comprehend how they have mistreated their Lord. On the other hand, those who have fulfilled their obligations to their fellow-men are received into the favor of Heaven. Every word of love, every act of kindness—even the cup of cold water that has been given in the name of Christ—is recognized and rewarded.

Now let us seek Christ for ourselves, and find him precious to our souls. Let us minister to our brethren both in and out of the church. It is our privilege to be constantly strengthening those around us, and shedding an influence that will bless and elevate. Do not sow the seeds of envy,

strife, and doubt. Let your conversation be holy before God. Seek in every way that you may grow up into a fit temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. You must be living stones, reflecting and emitting the light of Heaven. The truth of God has quarried you out of the world to be squared and hewed and fitted for the heavenly building. The robe of your character must be washed till it is spotless, in the fountain opened for all uncleanness. Your moral worth will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and if you are found wanting, you will be at an eternal loss. All the coarseness, all the roughness, must be removed from your character before Jesus comes; for when he comes, the preparation for every soul is ended. If you have not laid aside your envy, your jealousies, your hatred one against another, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. You would only carry the same disposition with you; but there will be nothing of this character in the world to come. Nothing will exist there but love and joy and harmony. Some will have brighter crowns than others, but there will be no jealous thoughts in any heart among the redeemed. Each one will be perfectly satisfied, for all will be rewarded according to their work; for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Everyone will know that those who have been instrumental in winning souls to Jesus have engaged in the greatest work that ever employed the powers of man. Oh! shall we not bend every energy to this great and noble work, not seeking to destroy and tear down, but by every word and act, with all the tact and influence at our command, seek to save and build up others in the most holy faith?

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." We are approaching the time when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and we must make haste to depart from all iniquity, that our calling and election may be made sure. We are looking for new heavens and a new earth wherein the righteous shall dwell throughout eternity. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

February 17, 1888

"Your Reasonable Service"

[Sermon at Great Grimsby, England, September 24, 1886.]

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

In the time of ancient Israel the priests critically examined every offering that was brought as a sacrifice. If any defect was discovered in the animal presented for the service of the sanctuary, it was refused, for the Lord had commanded that the offering should be "without blemish." We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God; and should we not seek to make the offering as perfect as possible? God has given us every instruction necessary for our physical, mental, and moral well-being, and it is the duty of every one of us to bring our habits of life into conformity with the divine standard, in every particular. Will the Lord be pleased with anything less than the best we can

offer? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." If you do love him with all your heart, you will desire to give him the best service of your life, and you will be constantly seeking to bring every power of your being into harmony with the laws that will promote your ability to do his will. You will not feel satisfied to present to your merciful heavenly Father an offering enfeebled by indulgence of appetite and passion. You will plead for divine help and healing. And the grace of Christ will enable you to overcome your perverted appetites, and begin a work of reformation in your life. You are not to follow the customs of the world. "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Every faculty of our being was given us that we might render acceptable service to our Maker. When, through sin, we perverted the gifts of God, and sold our powers to the prince of darkness, Christ paid a ransom for us, even his own precious blood. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." And shall we waste the energies that he has ransomed at such infinite cost, by disregarding the laws of life and morality?

Look at the world today. Misery and pain exist on every side; and the heart grows sick, beholding the untold suffering of humanity. The dead and the dying are continually before our eyes; but we cannot charge this to our heavenly Father. Man has brought this upon himself through sinful disregard of the laws of God. The most reckless habits are formed and practiced by the world, in regard to eating, drinking, and dressing. Suffering, disease, and premature death follow in the train of lawless, inconsiderate customs. In these matters of vital importance, men and women follow their impulses, without consulting reason, or considering the experiences of others. What a perverted appetite may crave, that they must have. Whatever the fashion may be, that they must follow, no matter how disastrous the result; but God would have us live in accordance with law, so that, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may glorify God and benefit our fellow-men.

If we are the servants of Christ, we must fight against the evils of this degenerate age. While lawlessness of all kinds is sweeping over our world like a flood, we must take a decided stand on the requirements of the Bible, or we shall be swept away into moral and physical ruin. We must have moral strength to place ourselves, with firm determination, in opposition to the iniquity that abounds, or we shall be overcome. It is our privilege to understand the laws of this wonderful structure, the human habitation, that God has given us. Mind and body should be preserved in the best possible state of health that we may take up our work in the world. I know that much can be done toward building up a good condition of health. I have had five shocks of paralysis, and God, in his mercy, has raised me up, to take my place in the work he has given me to do, and to try to benefit others by my experience. Light was given me, and I saw the reason for my feeble health. I was astonished that I had so long remained in ignorance in regard to the laws of life. My habits were out of harmony with the conditions that are necessary to health. My food had not been of a proper kind to give vitality and strength to the system. It was highly seasoned, and stimulating rather than nutritious. The physicians said that I might die at any time, and I resolved that if I died, I would die in attempting to correct my injurious habits of life. I resolved to place myself on a platform of strictest temperance. I did not use tea or coffee or any kind of intoxicating wine or liquor, so I did not have these habits to overcome; but I had used flesh and spices, eating hearty meals three times a day. I had to educate myself to enjoy the simple, healthful grains and fruits that God has provided for the wants of man. But I found that all the sacrifice I had to make was doubly repaid in renewed health of body and mind. I had used pepper and mustard in my diet; but these should not be put into the

human stomach. The delicate membrane becomes inflamed, the healthy tone of the stomach is lowered, and the appetite is perverted, the taste loses its discernment, and the delicious flavors of grains, vegetables, and fruits become insipid and unpalatable.

I see that in this country wine and beer, as well as tea and coffee, are placed upon your tables. Could you realize the injurious effects of these things, you would banish them from your board. Luxurious living and the use of wine and beer corrupt the blood, inflame the passions, produce disease, and hasten you to your graves. The faculties are benumbed. The moral perception is blunted, and the mind becomes incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong; the animal passions are strengthened, and gain supremacy over the intellectual and spiritual nature.

This fact is illustrated in the case of Nadab and Abihu. The Lord had kindled a sacred fire, from which the priests were to take coals, for the burning of incense before the Lord. They were not to use strange fire in the services of the sanctuary; but, under the effects of strong drink, the sons of Aaron lost all sense of sacred things. They kindled their incense from common fire, and disregarded the commandment of God. The Lord did not excuse their sin because they had unfitted themselves for their sacred duties by indulgence in drink. They were cut off from the congregation of Israel. God's dealing with these transgressors should be a warning to the children of men today. You are to offer to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. As these intoxicants are used, the same effects will follow as in the case of these priests of Israel. The conscience will lose its sensibility to sin, and a process of hardening to iniquity will most certainly take place, till the common and the sacred will lose all difference of significance.

I have been invited here and there to come and take tea with certain families. I was glad to have an opportunity to talk with these friends; but I could not countenance their hurtful practice of tea-drinking, I could not partake of this beverage with them, or give my influence to encourage this unnecessary and injurious habit. After freely partaking, the effects of tea-drinking may be discovered. The face becomes flushed, the eyes brighten, a new vigor is manifested, and the mind seems unnaturally active. Tea is a stimulant, and its exhilarating effects are neither lasting nor beneficial. The same is true of coffee. I have heard people declare that they could not live without their coffee. They were languid and dispirited, and were unfit to take up the tasks of the day, but after they had had their coffee they felt revived and encouraged; but this feeling of strength was only due to the stimulant they had taken. They were, in reality, just as unfit for their tasks as before and had only spurred up their flagging energies. When the influence of coffee had passed away, they were left as much in need of another cup as before they had taken the first cup.

We want a work of reformation in our land. There are thousands who can testify to the benefits of discarding these luxuries, and drinking from nature's pure fountain. Why should we go to China and Japan for the products of a backward civilization? Why not banish the narcotic bean and the poisonous herb, and come into harmony with the sanitary laws of the Bible? If we are pursuing a course of action that brings weakness upon us, how can we present to God a holy offering, a living sacrifice? We are required to love God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves; but we are failing of this high requirement, if we are unfitting ourselves by hurtful habits for rendering acceptable service to our Maker and to our fellow-men. How can we think deeply and seriously on the plan of salvation, if our minds are clouded, our nerves unstrung, and our bodies full of pain and disease? If we are knowingly transgressing the laws of health, God cannot sustain and comfort us

with his grace. This would only encourage us in wrong-doing. We must put our feet in the path of righteousness, and make all the efforts we can to walk uprightly, and then we may appropriate the rich promises, and we shall realize that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

We must be fitting up for the society of Heaven. We want to have a right to the tree of life. We want to enter that city where nothing that defileth shall ever come. Our characters must reach the standard of holiness. Every thought and habit must be brought into harmony with the will of God. Jesus came to our world to be our Saviour and example, and it is in his name alone, that we may gain the victory over perverted nature. He overcame in man's behalf, and through his grace we may become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." He "suffered, being tempted" for forty days, in the lonely wilderness, he endured fasting and temptation that man might have help to overcome the cravings of appetite, and live, not by bread alone, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He stood in his integrity, a conqueror, and through him the sons of Adam may also be overcomers. Those who put their energies against the sinful indulgence of appetite, will have his divine aid and sympathy, and "he that endureth unto the end shall be saved."

February 24, 1888

"The Light of Life"

The world's Redeemer said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Those who will walk in the footsteps of the meek and lowly Jesus will be sensible that the light of life is illuminating their pathway. Said the prophet, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." While the world is lying under the gross shadow of error, ignorance, superstition, and death, the follower of Jesus walks in an atmosphere radiant with spiritual light. As he draws away from the traditions and customs of the world, and lifts the cross, and enters the way of truth, he finds that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Every step of faith and obedience brings him into closer connection with the light of the world, in whom "is no darkness at all."

The believer in Jesus has a right to expect a rich and abundant experience. It is his privilege, if he has complied with the conditions, to plead and claim the promises of God, and if he does this he will receive according to his faith. Paul writes of his desire that the brethren at Ephesus might come to understand the height of the Christian's privilege. He says, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

The apostle Paul had been greatly blessed. He had been caught up to the third Heaven, and had heard things not lawful for man to utter. He had been shown what abundance of blessing the Lord is willing to bestow upon those who love his service and keep his commandments. He knew what exalted privileges belong to the obedient children of God, and he earnestly desired that they might have the glorious promises fulfilled in their experience. Amid the darkness of error, the delusions of Satan, the opposition of enemies, the trial and the conflict with principalities and powers, they were to be children of light. He opens before them in the most comprehensive language, the marvelous knowledge and power that they might possess as sons and daughters of the Most High. It was theirs to "be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man," to be "rooted and grounded in love," to "comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" but the prayer of the apostle reaches the climax of privilege, when he prays that "ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

Let us dwell upon this wonderful prayer, recorded that we may understand what heights of attainment we may reach, through faith in the promises of our heavenly Father, when we fulfill his requirements. Through the merits of Christ we have access to the throne of infinite power. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The Father gave the Spirit without measure to his Son, and we also may partake of its fullness. Jesus says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The prayer of the apostle only reaches the exaltation of the promise.

How marvelous that humanity, an earthen vessel, can receive the treasure of the light and power of God; can be filled with the fullness of his grace! Jesus was anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power," and he "went about doing good." This is the result of receiving the anointing of Heaven. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit you will work the works of Christ, you will seek the salvation of those around you, and "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Before his ascension, Jesus had promised the disciples that the Comforter should come. He said, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." And on the day of Pentecost, "they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential for the success of the ministry in the early gospel age; but it is no less necessary in this age when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." And the Lord has promised the same quickening spiritual power to his servants in these days. "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Let us purify our souls by obeying the truth, lifting up "holy hands, without wrath and doubting," that we may obtain this heavenly gift, and realize, by a blessed experience, what is the meaning of the words of the apostle: "filled with all the fullness of God." There will be no question then but that you will "do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless,

the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." You will "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," knowing that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." You must come closer to Jesus. There is a great work to be done in the world, and your influence is as far-reaching as eternity. You must be rooted and grounded in the truth. If Christ, the hope of glory, is in you, the light of Heaven will shine from you into the moral darkness of the world, and souls will be guided to the light of life. You will be a chosen vessel, through which God will make manifest the riches of his saving power. Christ will be in you "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." You will be daily refreshed by the streams of his salvation, and you will be a source of refreshment to those around you, for from you will "flow rivers of living water." The beauty of holiness will be seen in your life, for the comeliness of Christ will be put upon you. You will be a light-bearer in the world. Nothing short of this will be consistent with your holy faith and exalted calling. Your example and influence must be wholly on the Lord's side. Our Master has said that "he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

A formal religion, a feeble faith, does not correspond to the truth we profess. It demands living energy and fervency of spirit. It must be heart-felt with us, if we would urge it to the hearts of others. It must be cherished with intense love, if we would have others feel the sacredness and preciousness of its claims. All who would engage in the work of saving souls, must feel their dependence on God. The gifted and eloquent, if their talents are wholly devoted to God, may be used in the greatest work that ever engaged the powers of man; but those of less ability, if they are clothed with humility, may become men of faith, and mighty in the Scriptures. He who is meek in spirit, who is purest and most child-like, will be made strong for the battle. He will "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." He who feels his weakness and wrestles with God, as did Jacob, and like this servant of old cries, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," will go forth with the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere of Heaven will surround him. He will go about doing good. His influence will be a positive force acting upon others. He will be a living epistle, known and read of all men. He will know that the Captain of his salvation expects him to do his very best, and he will do it with cheerfulness.

There is no excuse for anyone growing weak, inefficient, and faithless. The promise is to us: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Are there not some of us too much like the man who came to the minister, complaining that he had not been blessed, that he felt no joy; God did not answer his prayers although he had prayed again and again for a blessing. "Well," said the minister, "let us kneel right down here and tell the Lord just how the matter stands." After both had prayed, the minister asked him if he felt better. The man answered, "I feel no better than I did before I prayed. I did not expect to be blessed, and I am not blessed." He had made a mockery of prayer. He did not believe the Lord would answer him, and he received just what his faith had claimed. Is it any wonder that such prayers are not answered? "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Do you consider this, when you offer up your faithless petitions? Do you stop to consider how you are dishonoring God, and impoverishing your own soul? If you could but realize the wrong you are doing, you would cease to make mockery by meaningless devotions.

Come to God in faith and humility. Plead with him till the break of day, if necessary, till your soul is brought into such close relationship with Jesus, that you can lay your burden at his feet, and say, "I

know whom I have believed." The Lord is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Our cold, faithless hearts may be quickened into sensibility and life, till we can pray in faith, preach in faith, and say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Let us seek for the fullness of the salvation of Christ. Follow in the footsteps of the Son of God, for his promise is, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

March 2, 1888

An Immortal Name

[Sermon at Copenhagen, Denmark, October 11, 1886.]

The devoted children of God are not appreciated or valued by the world. The world did not value their divine Master. The beloved disciple writes, "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The Son of God made himself of no reputation. He was despised and rejected of men; and the servant is not greater than his lord. But while the world casts out the names of the sons of God, if they are humbly doing their appointed work they are winning an immortal name. They are not writing on sand, as are children of this world; but their names are traced in the Lamb's Book of Life for eternal remembrance.

The anxiety of the children of God is not that they may be highly esteemed by those around them, to have titles of honor and the praise of men; but that they may stand approved before Heaven, and be well pleasing to the Father and the Son. Their desire is to crowd all the good works possible, into their lives, to be a savor of Christ, to represent his character to the world, and thus honor and glorify the God of Heaven.

They are not unhappy because they are called upon to deny self and to work the works of Christ. They realize that the less of selfishness there is in the life, the more the joy of Heaven flows in. The Saviour prayed that his joy might be fulfilled in his disciples. The love of Jesus, expressed in every act of our lives, while it subdues self, will not fail to bring peace and songs of praise into our hearts. The meekness, forbearance, gentleness, and goodness of the true Christian sheds a radiance over all with whom he associates.

Those who come into sacred relation with the God of Heaven are not left to the natural weakness and infirmity of their natures. They are invited by the Saviour: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." The righteousness of Christ is imputed unto them, and he gives them power to become sons of God. The world loses all attraction for them; for they seek a better country, an eternal reward, a life that is to continue through never-ending ages. This is the theme of their thought and conversation. The word of God becomes exceedingly precious. They discern spiritual things. They rejoice in "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." They long to see the King in his beauty, the angels that have never fallen, and the land of unfading bloom.

In the pathway of all who seek the crown, is the cross. If we would become partakers with Christ of his glory, we must be willing to share with him in his sufferings. If we would reflect his glorious image, we must be submissive to the divine moulding, we must follow in the footsteps of the Man of Calvary. God has claims upon every one of us. He created us, he redeemed us with an infinite sacrifice. He has promised the overcomer the great rewards of eternity. Why do we cling to anything

that is offensive to him? Why not separate from every sin, and perfect holiness before him? The only reward for sin is unutterable woe and death; but the righteous shall be at his right hand in fullness of joy, in his presence where are pleasures forevermore.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” What a promise is this, that we may share in the glory of our Redeemer! The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon the servants of God, and they are to reflect his rays. As the stars tell us that there is a great light in Heaven, with whose glory they are made bright, so Christians are to make it manifest that there is a God on the throne of the universe whose character is worthy of praise and imitation. As Christ is pure in his sphere, so man may be pure in his sphere. Those who have, by beholding, become changed into the moral image of Christ, will put on immortality and incorruption at his appearing, and will be caught up to be forever with the Lord.

All Heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God are walking up and down the streets of these cities, and marking the deeds of men. They record in the books of God's remembrance the words of faith, the acts of love, the humility of spirit; and in the day when every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is, the work of the humble follower of Christ will stand the test, and will receive the commendation of Heaven. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

We are too faithless. We do not take the promises of God, and drink in their rich meaning. We let doubt shut out the consolation of the assurances of God. Suppose that a man in this kingdom were condemned to death, but before the sentence was executed, a noble, who was able to free him, had compassion upon him, and he said, “I will die in his stead,” and the fetters were removed, the prisoner went free, while the noble died. What gratitude would awaken in the doomed man's heart! He would never forget his deliverer. The deed of the noble would be heralded to all parts of the world. This is what Jesus, the prince of Heaven, has done for us. When we were under the condemnation of death he came to rescue us, to set us free from the bondage of Satan, and to deliver us from everlasting death. With his own precious blood he paid the penalty of our transgression. Does not gratitude awaken in your hearts for this wonderful love? Is it not your determination to yield all you have and are to the service of such a Saviour? Will you not become a laborer together with God, seeking the salvation of those for whom Christ died?

You will lose nothing by connecting with the King of the universe. He “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” He will welcome you to the home of the blest. There you will see that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” What greater evidence could we ask of the love of God than he has given? Let us dwell upon his rich promises, till our hearts are melted into tenderness and devotion.

Jesus invites you, in words that touch the heart with their compassionate love and pity. He says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Have you experienced this blessed rest, or do you slight this invitation to make a confidant of Jesus? Do you pour out your trials and grievances into human ears?

Do you go for help to those who cannot give you rest, and neglect the loving call of the mighty Saviour? Have faith in God. Believe in the precious promises. Go to Jesus in child-like simplicity, and say: "Lord, I have borne these burdens as long as I can, and now I lay them upon the Burden-bearer." Do not gather them up again, but leave them all with Jesus. Go away free, for Jesus has set you free. He said, "I will give you rest." Take him at his word. Instead of your own galling yoke of care, wear the yoke of Christ. He says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Learn of him; for he is "meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Fix your eyes upon Jesus. He is the light of the world, and he declares, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

You can show to the world that there is power in the religion of Christ. Jesus will help those who seek him with all their hearts, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. When you follow the light, walking in the path of truth, you will reflect the rays of glory, and be like a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. When the books of remembrance are opened, your words, your deeds of love, will be acceptable before God; your robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb, will be spotless; the righteousness of Christ will be put upon you, and you will be given a new, an immortal name.

March 9, 1888

The Need of Humility

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

We are not charged with the task of exalting ourselves. We need not labor for the highest place in the estimation of others, or seek supremacy for our opinions in the counsels of our brethren. The task that God points out to us is that of self-humiliation. We are to "do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly" before God. We are not to encourage self-esteem and personal pride, nor to cherish the thought that we are not appreciated, and that our ability is under-estimated. It is our work to take up our duties, however lowly, and perform them with fidelity and courage, doing all things "heartily, as to the Lord."

We are the property of God; and shall we not be willing to stand in the lot that he assigns us, trusting his judgment, and gratefully accepting the privilege of becoming co-laborers with him in any part of his vineyard? If we are capable of a larger service, a more important work, the Lord knows all about it, and it is his work to lift us up. How thankful we should be that we are not burdened with the responsibility of estimating our own ability, and choosing our own place and position. It is our duty to exercise the talents that God has given us, and to study to show ourselves approved unto God, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Every duty should be done with faithfulness and care, and the smile of God will rest upon him who is "faithful in that which is least." Let the humble service be devoted to God, and in due time you will be made "ruler over many things." Give yourselves unreservedly to God, and trust in his love and wisdom to dispose of all your interests and affairs.

Says the apostle, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Oh that everyone who professes the

name of Christ among us would heed the admonition and humble himself, take up every duty, and co-operate with Christ in the work of salvation. If this were done, we would not be complaining at the lack of spirituality, for the showers of God's blessing would fall upon his church. All murmuring at the hardships of the way would be changed into songs of thanksgiving and praise to God; for he would lift you up according to his promise.

Cultivate the precious grace of humility. This will make you valuable in the sight of Heaven, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Those who esteem themselves more highly than they should, make themselves a center of thought. They neglect their duty to their fellow-beings, for they do not cultivate that tender, caretaking spirit which should characterize the servant of Christ. All their care is spent upon the interests of self; but God would have us show thoughtful courtesy to others. We are not to set up our individual opinions as infallible. We are to respect the opinions of others. God would have us counsel together. We should be tractable, teachable, kind to each other, not striving which shall be esteemed as the greatest and have the highest honors.

Paul writes, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It should be the constant effort of every disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, to keep "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." It is the desire for the exaltation of self that brings discord and dissension among brethren. If all were "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another," the peace of Christ would abide in our midst, and rule in our hearts.

Jesus, the precious Saviour, was the majesty of Heaven; but he came to our world and walked among the children of men, not as a king demanding homage, but as one whose work was to serve others. He estimated man by the price he paid for his redemption. He said, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." His constant anxiety and care was not how he could obtain the services of men, but how he could aid and bless humanity. His heart had been touched with compassion for a fallen world, and he left the heavenly courts, clothed his divinity with humanity, made himself of no reputation, "took upon him the form of a servant," and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," that we might be cleansed from sin, and share in his eternal glory. The cross of Christ puts to shame our selfish desires and ambitions, our strife for position and the honor of men. Jesus was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" and shall his followers expect to be exalted and favored? Christ is our example, and he says to every one of us, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Have we learned this precious lesson in the school of Christ? If we have not, let it be our first work to seek the lowly spirit of Jesus; for we are unfit to become teachers of the truth until we have learned this first great principle of true religion: "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."

God forbid that any of us should be deceived. We must study the life of Christ, for by beholding we are to become changed. We must be like Christ or we shall never see him as he is. We must constantly abide in the Vine if we bring forth the fruits of righteousness. With living faith we must present our petitions to the compassionate Saviour, for "without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We may lay hold on the arm of infinite strength, and draw from the source of infinite

power. We must individually have more of the grace of Christ. We want to be settled, rooted and grounded in the faith. We are called upon to be bold, faithful soldiers of Jesus. We need not be weak and inefficient in the work of God. Every need has been provided for in the great gift of Heaven. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

There is need of elevating our thoughts to dwell upon the promises of God. There is need of encouraging our faith and hope by exercise. Lay your soul before your heavenly Father in all its weakness and want, and repeat the assurances of his word, and claim their fulfillment, not because you are worthy, but because Christ has died for you. Plead the merits of his blood and take the Lord at his word. We must learn the simple art of perfect trust; and we shall be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Let nothing interpose between your soul and Christ. Let no darling sin be cherished. Present to God your whole body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.

When you are tempted to give expression to doubt, restrain your words. Educate your lips to speak the praise of your Creator and Redeemer. Praise belongeth unto God, for he is full of loving-kindness and tender mercy. Let not coldness and ingratitude bind your souls and keep you away from Christ, who is your only hope.

We must not allow self so much time and attention. We do not study the life of our Example as we should. His life was one of continual self-denial, sacrifice, and cross-bearing, and shall we, the subjects of his grace, the objects of his great love, be found depressed and discouraged, because we have trials to meet, and sacrifices to make? Shall we go mourning and complaining because the road that leads to Heaven and eternal life, is strait and narrow? Jesus trod every step of the way before us, and shall we not gladly take up the cross, and say, "I will follow thee, my Saviour, wheresoe'er thou leadest me"?

If we were all walking in the footsteps of the Man of Calvary, our proud hearts would be subdued by the grace of Christ. There would be no contention existing among the brethren, but in lowliness of mind each would esteem others better than himself. Your love for one another would be expressed in words and acts of tenderness, and this cold hard-heartedness would be melted away by the love of Jesus. You would obey the injunction of the apostle, when he says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

We are to be growing Christians, growing up in "the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." We are to be living stones in the temple of God; and now we must endure the hewing, the chiseling, the squaring of the Master-builder, until all roughness is removed, and our characters are polished and perfected for the heavenly building. There are many who claim to believe the truth, who are content with their defects of character. They do not make efforts to reform, or seek earnestly for a fitness to stand before God; but everyone who enters Heaven will enter as a conqueror, and will wave the palm branch of victory. There is no need of deficiency. Christ is a perfect Saviour, and those who seek him with their whole heart, will find that where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. There is no reason why we should not be overcomers. God has "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption

that is in the world through lust." We are not to live like the world. We must show that the grace of Christ has a sanctifying influence upon our lives. Our natural appetites and passions must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. We must reveal Christ in our daily words and actions. He bore reproach, insult, shame, mockery. He was rejected, maligned, crucified, that we might reflect his image, and be made perfect in his righteousness. When we fail to meditate upon the example of Christ, we do not comprehend its meaning, and we become sensitive, and unwilling to endure hardness. We shrink from becoming partakers of his sufferings. We lose sight of the cross of Calvary, while self attracts our attention, and claims our care and affection.

Let us change our course of action. God's standard must be our standard, or we shall fail of everlasting life. We are still in the precious hours of probation, "and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." He worked out the wonderful plan of redemption, and united fallen and finite man with the holy and infinite God. The world that Satan had claimed and ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God, by one vast achievement, encircled in his love, and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of Heaven, sang anthems of praise to God and to the Lamb, when this triumph was assured. The worlds rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened for rebellious man, and that earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin; and shall we, who are the objects of his unmerited favor, be unappreciative of the love of God? How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

We are invited to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We have an advocate with the Father, who pleads in our behalf with prevailing power. Christ's intercession is that of a pierced and broken body. It is the intercession of a spotless and victorious life, the pleading of all the wounds of Calvary. It is the intercession of our great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Let us then put away all self-exaltation. As long as the cross of Calvary stands as a monument of the cost of our salvation, as a reminder of the amazing love and humiliation of the King of glory, let us walk in its shadow, and seek to reflect the character of our Redeemer. Go to him as a perfect Saviour, for he has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." There is no reason why we should seek to exalt ourselves, for we are full of weakness. As you realize this, trust in him whose grace is sufficient for you, for "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Therefore "humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up;" for "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Let self and self-interest be lost in the great themes of redemption. "Show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." The Lord says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

March 16, 1888

Acceptable Confession

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing, in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not take long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances to commend our souls to the God of Heaven, or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. This is a precious promise given to fallen man to encourage him to trust in the God of love, and to seek for eternal life in his kingdom.

We read that Daniel, the prophet of God, was a man “greatly beloved” of Heaven. He held a high position in the courts of Babylon, and served and honored God alike in prosperity or trial; and yet he humbled himself and confessed his sin, and the sin of his people. With deep sorrow of heart he acknowledged: “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.”

Daniel did not seek to excuse himself or his people before God; but in humility and contrition of soul he confessed the full extent and demerit of their transgressions, and vindicated God's dealings as just toward a nation that had set at naught his requirements and would not profit by his entreaties.

There is great need today of just such sincere heart-felt repentance and confession. Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance not to be repented of, and have not confessed our sin with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit, abhorring our iniquity, we have never sought truly for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we may not have remission of sins that are past, is that we are not willing to humble our proud hearts, and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. There is explicit instruction given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heart-felt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is mingled with tears and sorrow, that is the outpouring of the inmost soul, finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Says the psalmist, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

There are too many confessions like Pharaoh when he was suffering the judgments of God. He acknowledged his sin, to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. Balaam's confession was of a similar character. Terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, he acknowledged his guilt, lest he should lose his life. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil, and no worth or virtue in his confession. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, returned to the priests, exclaiming, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” But his confession was not of such a character as would commend him to the mercy of God. It was forced from his

guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him, drew forth this acknowledgement of his great sin. There was no deep, heart-breaking grief in his soul that he had delivered the Son of God to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, that he had betrayed the holy One of Israel into the hands of wicked and unscrupulous men. His confession was only prompted by a selfish and darkened heart.

After Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was, how to excuse their sin before God, and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God, and partly upon his companion: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Why did you make the serpent? Why did you suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit, and will not be acceptable before Heaven. True repentance will lead men to bear their guilt themselves, and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as their eyes unto heaven, they will smite upon their breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and those who do acknowledge their guilt, will be justified; for Jesus will plead his blood in behalf of the repentant soul.

It is no degradation for man to bow down before his Maker and confess his sins and plead for forgiveness through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is noble to acknowledge your wrong before Him whom you have wounded by transgression and rebellion. It lifts you up before men and angels, for "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But he who kneels before fallen man, and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart, is dishonoring himself by debasing his manhood, and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest corrupted with wine and licentiousness, his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. His thought of God is degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity; for the priest stands as a representative of God. It is this degrading confession of man to fallen man, that accounts for much of the increasing evil which is defiling the world, and fitting it for the final destruction.

There are confessions that the Lord has bidden us to make to one another, but they are of an entirely different order. If you have wronged your brother by word or deed, you are to "first be reconciled to thy brother," before your worship will be acceptable to Heaven. Says the apostle: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This scripture has been interpreted to sustain the practice of going to the priest for absolution, but it has no such application. Confess your sins to God who only can forgive them, and your faults one to another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty to freely forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother whom you wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is not brought before the priest at all, but before the only true mediator, our great High Priest, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity.

When David sinned against Uriah and his wife, he pleaded before God for forgiveness. He declares: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. Therefore David seeks for pardon, not from a priest, but from the Creator of man. He prays: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as only to be brought before God; they may be wrongs that should be confessed before individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a general kind that should be made known in the congregation of the people. But all confession should be definite, and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you have been reproved by the Spirit of God.

When Israel was oppressed by the Ammonites, the chosen people made a plea before God that illustrates the definite character of true confession: "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? ... Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said, ... We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day." Then they began to act in harmony with their confessions and prayers. "They put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord." And the Lord's great heart of love was grieved, "was grieved for the misery of Israel."

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. Says Paul, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a goodly [godly] sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

In the days of Samuel, the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin, for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of his power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in his ability to defend and vindicate his cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe, and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: "We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." The very sin of which they were convicted, had to be confessed. Their ingratitude pressed their souls and severed them from God.

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrong-doer does not discern the defects of his character, nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt, he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that, if it had not been for certain circumstances, he would not have done this or that, for which he is reproved. But the examples in God's word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin, nor attempts at self-justification.

Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in the darkest shades, aggravating rather than lessening his guilt. He said: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." He did not hesitate to declare that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God, and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

March 23, 1888

"Abide in Me"

The apostle Paul wrote: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" and Jesus, instructing his disciples, said: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

It is impossible for any of us to have a practical knowledge of this union with Christ, without the constant exercise of faith. Faith binds our souls to him, and makes us partakers of the divine nature. Our spiritual growth, our peace, our steadfastness, our constant obedience to the words of Christ, all depend upon the degree of faith we have in God. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him;" for we are powerless to do anything from acceptable motives, except through the grace of Christ, and this grace can be supplied only through the channel of faith, that opens the way of direct communication between our souls and God. In accordance with our faith, we are enabled to overcome principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Selfishness will not be permitted to flourish in the heart that is exercising living faith. Sin will not be indulged where faith beholds God and angels watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. Eternal life, the gift of God through Jesus Christ, is a precious reality, and sin becomes exceeding sinful and abhorrent. Faith beholds "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and realizes something of the cost of Calvary.

Jesus came into the world to save sinners, not in their sins but from their sins, and to sanctify them through the truth; and in order that he may become a perfect Saviour to us, we must enter into union with him by a personal act of faith. Christ has chosen us, we have chosen him, and by this choice we become united to him, and are to live from henceforth, not unto ourselves, but unto him who has died for us. But this union can only be preserved by constant watchfulness, lest we fall into temptation, and make a different choice; for we are free always to take another master if we so desire. Union with Christ means an unflinching preference for him in every act and thought of our lives. In every part of the work there must be harmony between the Saviour and the one to be saved. Faith will see love in every requirement of God, and will submit to the will of Heaven, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God." We must have this perfect trust, if we become united with Christ, and share at last with him in his glory.

Christ will be constantly laboring for your salvation. Angels will be commissioned to guard you from the devices of the adversary, and to minister to all your needs. And the object of all this abundant solicitude must, on his part, depart from all iniquity, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. He must watch and pray. He must fight the good fight of faith, resist the devil that he may flee from him, and endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross of Christ. He has to wage a constant conflict with unseen foes, and only through Christ can he come off victorious. He must cultivate courage to surmount the difficulties obstructing his pathway, and build up a character of integrity and virtue, representing to the world the character of his Redeemer.

“Abide in me,” are words of great significance. Abiding in Christ means a living, earnest, refreshing faith that works by love and purifies the soul. It means a constant receiving of the Spirit of Christ, a life of unreserved surrender to his service. Where this union exists good works will appear. The life of the vine will manifest itself in fragrant fruit on the branches. The continual supply of the grace of Christ will bless you and make you a blessing, till you can say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

The sacred union with Christ will unite the brethren in the most endearing bonds of Christian fellowship. Their hearts will be touched with divine compassion one for another. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” Coldness, variance, strife, is entirely out of place among the disciples of Christ. They have accepted the one faith. They have joined to serve the one Lord, to endure in the same warfare, to strive for the same object, and to triumph in the same cause. They have been bought with the same precious blood, and have gone forth to preach the same message of salvation; and how out of harmony with these facts is disunion and contention among brethren. “This is my commandment,” said Jesus, “that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

Those who are constantly drawing strength from Christ will possess his Spirit. They will not be careless in word or deportment. An abiding sense of how much their salvation has cost in the sacrifice of the beloved Son of God, will rest upon their souls. Like a fresh and vivid transaction, the scenes of Calvary will present themselves to their minds, and their hearts will be subdued and made tender by this wonderful manifestation of the love of Christ to them. They will look upon others as the purchase of his precious blood, and those who are united with him will seem noble, and elevated, and sacred, because of this connection. The death of Christ on Calvary should lead us to estimate souls as he did. His love has magnified the value of every man, woman, and child. And if “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life,” should we be indifferent to others, and despise those whom God has valued at such an infinite price? Without the endowment of the holy Spirit of God, we are not fitted to engage in the great and solemn work for this time. When we have the love for souls that Christ had, we shall go forth with weeping, we shall become laborers together with God, we shall gather with Christ, and bear precious fruit unto everlasting life. When we consider that all Heaven is interested in the work of salvation, should we not seek by meditation and prayer to appreciate more intelligently the sacred character of our trusts? How can we, poor, fallible, fallen creatures, undertake this work without the special help and enlightenment of the Spirit of God?

Let God be your counselor. Let the heart in humility and meekness ascend to God in fervent, effectual prayer for spiritual discernment, for breadth of mind, and singleness of purpose to glorify God and save man. Let prayer constantly go forth from unfeigned lips for the presence of Christ, for the illumination of his Spirit, that the atmosphere of Heaven may surround you, and that self and selfish purposes may not have their way in your life. The Lord will draw nigh to those who sincerely desire to draw nigh to him.

We are living in a solemn day, and we are exhorted to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” Let every soul remember that he is in the presence of the Judge of all the earth, and that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Our words, our plans, our meditations, the motives of our hearts, are read as an open book. The case of every individual worker is registered in Heaven. Let us consider this. Do we want our light and frivolous remarks heard in the presence of angels and before God? Do we want the words of pride, that exhibit self, left on the books to condemn us in the Judgment? Do we want our plans for self-exaltation written in the unerring records? Let us ever remember that the Lord, who gave his life for us, is watching with intense interest our course of life, and that angels are witnessing our ways. Seek that singleness of purpose that will lead us to glorify God, and not self. Oh, that each might say when tempted, as did our Lord, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” We want to uproot from our hearts every plant that our heavenly Father has not planted, that we may not be led to utter selfish and perverse things. Oh, for more of Christ, and less of self! Oh, that the workers might be clothed with the armor of his righteousness, that they might be constantly drawing from the well of salvation, partaking of the divine nature, that they might go forth spiritual laborers, with self lost in our divine Lord.

Our standard is altogether too low. We must put away these cheap ideas of what is essential to make us laborers in the cause of Christ. We must have altogether higher views of the elevated character of our work. We want to work in the spirit in which Christ labored. We want to represent him to the world. We need to greatly humble our souls before God by confessing and forsaking our sins.

When Jesus was teaching his disciples, as they gathered closely about him, there was a moment's interruption, and one said unto him: “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Here is the relationship that exists between Christ and his followers. We occupy this exalted position, if we are indeed doing the will of God. We are to consider ourselves as constituting the family of Christ, and we are to follow him as dear children. Adopted into the household of God, shall we not honor our Father and our kindred? We have no excuse to plead, for through Jesus we may command all power in Heaven and earth that we may walk worthy of our high calling.

Satan will be constantly seeking to belittle our conception or our privileges and responsibilities. He would have us regard the work of Christ as a commonplace work, and do it listlessly and negligently.

He would keep us indifferent to the exalted and sacred positions to be attained in Christian life and character; but we must bruise him under our feet. We must establish an unyielding enmity between our souls and our foe; but we must open our hearts to the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. We want Satan's darkness to be shut out, and the light of Heaven to flow in. We want to become so sensitive to holy influences, that the lightest whisper of Jesus will move our souls, till he is in us, and we in him, living by the faith of the Son of God.

We need to be refined, cleansed from all earthliness, till we reflect the image of our Saviour, and become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Then we shall delight to do the will of God, and Christ can own us before the Father and before the holy angels as those who abide in him, and he will not be ashamed to call us brethren. But we shall not boast of our holiness. As we have clearer views of Christ's spotless and infinite purity, we shall feel as did Daniel, when he beheld the glory of the Lord, and said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption." We cannot say, "I am sinless," till this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body. But if we constantly seek to follow Jesus, the blessed hope is ours of standing before the throne of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; complete in Christ, robed in his righteousness and perfection.

March 30, 1888

Faith and Works

The tendency of the popular religious teaching of the day is to make the Christian's pathway as easy and attractive as possible. There is a great deal said concerning faith, but the necessity of performing the sacred obligations set forth in the word of God, the necessity of living consistent, godly lives, of being workers together with God, of denying self, of coming out from the world and separating from its fashions and follies, is not presented as it should be presented, from the pulpits of the land. "Believe, only believe," is the burden of the instruction from the sacred desk. Repentance, confession, and thorough reformation in life and character are not dwelt on, or required from those who would take part in the privileges of church-fellowship. The line of distinction between the church and the world has become less positive, because the great standard of righteousness has not been the standard by which the faith of men and women was tested and proven. "Only believe" is echoed by thousands who catch up the words parrot-fashion, and repeat them with no sense of their importance or significance. Says the prophet, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."

Many of these religious teachers have developed characters in harmony with their shallow appreciation of divine truth. It has been agreeable to their carnal hearts to be released from all responsibility and obligation. They did not desire the inconvenience of denying self, of taking up the warfare against besetting sins, and of correcting the defects that marred their characters. They have persuaded themselves that Christ has relieved them from the duty of purifying themselves even as he is pure. They declare that Christ has done all, that men have nothing to do but to believe, that good works are impossible and unnecessary. Such souls are deceived themselves and are agents used of Satan to deceive others. They do not believe in Jesus. If they had a connection with him, they would know that he is not the minister of sin. Those who have faith in the Son of God make manifest what is the character of his mission, by lives of devotion, integrity, and self-sacrifice, and prove to the world that he came, not to save men in their sins, but from their sins. He "gave himself for us,

that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

The apostle Paul realized what his words meant when he said, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He knew it meant the surrender of every power of his being to the service of God. It meant an entire renouncing of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It meant that he must follow in the blood-stained path of the Man of Calvary, and walk even as he walked.

How different is the faith that is presented to the world today as essential to salvation. It has no vitality, no reality. It does not unite the believers as branches to the living Vine. It is not the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. It is a formal, nominal acceptance of a popular story, and has about as much efficacy as the faith that accepted Abraham Lincoln as a good administrator of governmental affairs. Genuine faith will show definite results in the character, and will exert a controlling influence over the thoughts of the heart, and the affairs of the life. It will lead its possessor to practice the principles of his belief. Says Jesus, “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.” “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” Says the apostle, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” It is the doing of the words and works of Christ that testifies to the saving qualities of your faith.

The law of God is the great standard of righteousness, and it will measure every man's profession and progress. It is a mirror which discovers the defects of our characters, and shows us the requirements of God. It is holy and just and good. Says the wise man, “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.” When Jesus was asked by the lawyer, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? he said unto him, What saith the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.”

The law of God condemns all selfishness, all pride of heart, every species of dishonesty, every secret or open transgression. The natural heart is not inclined to love its precepts, or obey its requirements. “It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” But genuine faith in Christ converts the heart, works a change in its attitude to the law, until it delights in the law of God. The man who manifests enmity to the law has not submitted to the converting power of God. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. Says John, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.” Satan is engaged in leading men to pervert the plain meaning of God's word. He desires that the world should have no clear idea in regard to the plan of salvation. He well knows that the object of Christ's life of obedience, the object of his suffering, trial, and death upon the cross, was to magnify the divine law, to become a substitute for guilty man, that he might have remission for sins that are past, and grace for future obedience; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in him—and he be transformed and fitted for the heavenly courts. Satan knows that no transgressor of the divine law will ever enter the kingdom of Heaven, and to rob God of the devotion and service of man, to

thwart the plan of salvation, and work the ruin of those for whom Christ died, is the motive that actuates his warfare against the law of Heaven. He caused the fall of the holy pair in Eden by leading them to lightly esteem the commandment of God, to think his requirements unjust, and unreasonable, that they were not binding, and that their transgression would not be visited, as God had said, with death.

The law of God is the foundation of his Government in Heaven and in earth, and as long as the follower of Jesus imitates his Lord by exalting the divine precepts in word and life, Satan has no power to deceive or mislead his soul.

The fatal deception of the religious world is the old disregard for the claims of the law of God. The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but we must sound a note of warning. What saith the word of God? Says the apostle James, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ... Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted; it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

The Jews had faith of a similar character to that of many professed Christians today. They believed the prophecies predicting the advent of Messiah; but their faith was not of that spiritual nature which discerned in the Son of God the Saviour of their expectations. They could not accept the work of God for their time, and they rejected the truth because their faith did not see the relation of the shadow to the substance. They clung tenaciously to the offering of their sacrifices, to the rites of the church and the traditions of the fathers; but they refused the Lamb of God, the great antitype of all the services of the past. They were very zealous for the observance of form, and claimed to trust in Moses and the prophets; but he who had inspired the words of the Scriptures, and whose life was the fulfillment of their prophecies, was a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. He did not meet their ideal of what the coming One should be. They had imagined a Messiah whose power and majesty would gratify the pride of their carnal hearts, and exalt them to a position of supreme power among the nations. When Jesus unfolded to them the character of his kingdom, and what his disciples must possess in order to be elect, and favored of God, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"

The Saviour was invested with the credentials of Heaven. The word of God sustained his claims. His miracles, his holy character, his power over men and devils, all spoke conviction to the hearts of his hearers; but they refused him. He came in accordance with the prophecies they professed to believe, but he was "despised and rejected of men," as the prophets had foretold he would be.

The Jews could not give up their dreams of a great Prince who would rule all nations. They could not relinquish their hopes of temporal power and glory to take up with the Man of Sorrows, to follow in his steps of self-denial and purity. They loved darkness rather than light and the errors they loved wrought out their destruction.

There is no need of any soul being deceived. The teaching of priest and rabbi cannot make the word of God of no authority. It is the duty of each man to know what the Scriptures teach and to take his position in harmony with the truth. The Lord has commanded us to "search the Scriptures." We are instructed to "prove all things," to "hold fast that which is good." God has given us an unfailing test to apply to every man's life and doctrine. Says the prophet, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We are not to live by the doctrines of men, not by a fragment, or a perversion of the truth; but by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Genuine faith will lead men to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They will not follow the course of this world. The Spirit and works of Christ will be manifested in their lives and the word of God will be made the rule of their action. They will do and teach the commandments of God, and will walk humbly before men and angels. They will discern the work of God in the earth, and prejudice will not be permitted to close their hearts against the truth for their time. They will strive to enter in at the strait gate, they will take the narrow way and follow the Redeemer of the world.

Those who are not "doers of the word" may boast of their empty faith. They may boast of their holiness, while trampling on the law of God; but Jesus says to them, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" and the final sentence will come, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." For "faith without works is dead."

April 6, 1888

The Sin of Eli

Eli was priest and judge in Israel. He held the highest and most responsible positions among the people of God. He had been appointed to govern the nation, and to minister in their behalf before God. As a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood, and set over the land as the highest judicial authority, he was looked up to as an example, and he wielded a great influence over the tribes of Israel. But although Eli was appointed to govern the people, he did not control his own family, or rule his own household. Eli was an indulgent father. Loving peace and ease, he did not exercise his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his children. Rather than contend with them or punish them, he would submit to their will, and give them their own way. Instead of regarding the education of his sons as one of the most important of his responsibilities, he treated the matter as of little consequence. The development of their character was of the greatest importance, and God held Eli accountable for the way in which he allowed his sons to exercise the evil propensities of their nature. The priest and judge of Israel had not been left in darkness as to the duty of the father to restrain and govern the children that God had given to his care. But Eli shrank from this duty, because it involved crossing the will of his sons, and would make it necessary to punish and deny them. Without weighing the terrible consequences that would follow his course, Eli

indulged his children in whatever they desired, and neglected the solemn and sacred work of fitting them for the service of God, and the duties of life.

The course of Abraham is a complete contrast to that of Eli. "I know him," said the Searcher of hearts, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." There would be no betraying of his sacred trust; no sinful neglect to restrain the evil propensities of his children; no weak, unwise, indulgent favoritism; no yielding of his conviction of duty to the clamors of affection. Abraham's love for his children would lead him to correct his household, at whatever cost, for the good of their souls, and the honor of God. He was diligent in the cultivation of home religion, for he well knew that the blessing of Heaven rested on the habitation of the righteous. He determined that the law of God should be kept in his household, and he was called the "friend of God" and honored by God as the "father of the faithful."

Had Eli but followed his example, great and disastrous evils would have been avoided, and the blessing of God would have rested upon him and his house forever. God had said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him" "to do justice and judgment." But Eli allowed his children to control him. The family government was reversed. The father became subject to the children. There is no greater curse upon households than to allow the youth to have their own way. When parents regard every wish of their offspring, and indulge them in what they know is not for their good, the children soon lose all respect for their parents, all regard for the authority of God or man, and they are led captive at the will of Satan. Many an indulgent father or mother has reaped a harvest of sorrow from their own loose and careless government of their households, and they have regretted, too late, that they did not restrain their children in their youth.

Eli failed where many are failing today. He neglected to honor God in his family life, to teach his sons to reverence and obey God; and the consequence of this neglect was apparent throughout all the life of his sons. When the work of disciplining and training the children is not properly done, it testifies against the parents in the defective character of their sons and daughters, and will produce evil results, not only in their lives, but in the lives of others. The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments.

Because of Eli's position, his influence was more extended than if he had been an ordinary man. His family life was imitated throughout Israel. The baneful results of his negligent, ease-loving ways were seen in the families that surrounded him. His evil ways were reflected in thousands of homes that were moulded by his example. If children are indulged in evil practices, while the parents make a profession of religion, the truth of God is brought into reproach. The character formed under the influence of the home is the best testimony to its Christianity. Actions speak louder than the most positive profession of godliness. If professors of religion, instead of putting forth earnest, persistent, and painstaking effort to bring up a well-ordered household as a witness to the benefits of faith in God, are lax in their government, sparing of themselves, and indulgent to the evil desires of their children, they are doing as did Eli, and are bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ, and ruin upon themselves and their households.

Eli did not manage his household according to God's rules for family government. He followed his own judgment. He allowed Satan to take the reins in his own hands; and Eli found, when too late,

that his children had been hurried to destruction. The favor of God was removed from his house and the curse of transgression was apparent in the corruption and evil that marked the course of his sons. They had no proper appreciation of the character of God or of the sacredness of his law. His service was to them a common thing. From childhood they had been accustomed to the sanctuary and its service, but instead of growing in reverence, they had lost all sense of its holiness and significance. The course of Eli in bringing up his children had resulted in this state of mind in his sons. The father had not corrected the irreverence for his authority, had not checked their disrespect for the solemn services of the sanctuary; and when they reached manhood, they were full of the deadly fruits of skepticism and rebellion.

Though wholly unfit for the office, they were placed as priests in the sanctuary to minister before God. The Lord had given the most specific directions in regard to offering sacrifices; but these wicked men had carried their disregard of authority into the service of God, and they did not give attention to the law of the offerings, which were to be made in the most solemn manner. The sins of the people were transferred by figure to the sacrifice, which represented Christ, the Lamb of God that was to die for the sins of the world. The priests were commanded to eat in the tabernacle of certain portions of the peace-offering. By partaking of the sacrifice, and bearing their sins before God, they represented the work that Christ would do for us in the heavenly sanctuary, by bearing our sins in his own body. The sons of Eli, instead of feeling the great solemnity of this service, only thought how they could gratify appetite, and they demanded of the people whatever part they desired, even taking by violence the portion that was to be consumed upon the altar of sacrifice as a type of the great sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary. This irreverence on the part of the priests soon robbed the offerings of their holy and solemn significance, and the people "abhorred the offering of the Lord." The great antitypical sacrifice to which they were to look forward, was no longer a thing of meaning to them, "wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord."

Eli made a great mistake in permitting his sons to minister in holy office. By excusing their course, on one pretext and another, he became blinded to their sins, but at last they reached a pass when he could no longer hide his eyes from the crimes of his sons. The people complained of their violent deeds, and he was grieved and perplexed. The indulgent father had never decidedly commanded their obedience, and as they grew up, they cast off all restraint. They had been brought up to think of no one but themselves, and now they cared for no one else. They saw the grief of their father, but their hard hearts were not touched. They heard his mild admonitions, but they were not impressed, nor would they change their evil course though warned of the consequences of their sin.

The child Samuel had been brought to Eli by the godly Hannah. He was to be devoted to the services of the sanctuary, and the responsibility of his education must now rest upon the aged priest. The sons of Eli, who should have been the instructors of the pious child, were wholly unfit for such a privilege. He had to be separated from their company, lest their evil influence should pollute his mind. But although Eli feared for their influence over Samuel, yet as a judge of Israel, he still sustained his wicked sons in the most sacred positions of trust. He permitted them to mingle their corruption with the holy service of God, and to inflict injury on the cause of truth, that years could not efface. Eli's sons were called the sons of Belial, for they knew not God. They were wholly devoted to the service of Satan; and yet because they were his sons, Eli did not deal with them as transgressors, but permitted them to dishonor God, and injure his people. But when the judge of Israel neglected his work, God took the matter in hand.

“And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed... And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever.”

God held Eli responsible for the actions of his sons, and charged him with honoring his sons above the Lord. Eli had permitted the offering appointed of God, as a blessing to Israel, to be made a thing of abhorrence, rather than bring his sons to shame for their impious and abominable practices. Those who follow their own inclination in blind affection for their children, indulging them in the gratifications of their selfish desires, and do not bring to bear the authority of God to rebuke sin and correct evil, which is corrupting other souls, make it manifest that they are honoring their wicked children more than they honor God. They are more anxious to shield their reputation than to glorify God; more desirous to please their children than to please God and to keep his service from every appearance of evil.

The promise had been made that the house of Aaron should walk before God forever; but these promises had been made on condition that they devoted themselves to the work of the sanctuary with singleness of heart, and honored God in all their ways, not serving self, or following their own perverse inclinations. Eli and his sons had been tested, and the Lord found them wholly unworthy of the exalted position of priests in his service. And God declared, “Be it far from me.” He could not carry out the good that he had meant to do them, because they failed to do their part. Long had God borne with the perverse ways of the house of Eli. He had given them space to repent, but they repented not, and the delayed sentence was finally executed. They were made contemptible before the people they had oppressed, and in one day, Eli and his sons died before the Lord; and the priesthood was taken from the family of Eli.

The only way to be truly great is to be truly good. Those who are worthy will be trusted with important work, and will be placed in important positions. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Had Eli been a wise and faithful father, he would have been a wise and faithful judge and priest. If he had restrained his sons at home, he would have restrained their evil practices in the sanctuary; and Israel would not have been corrupted by their abominations. If the sons of Eli had been dutiful sons they would have honored God and his service, and lived before him; but they dishonored their father, and brought contempt upon the service of God, and they suffered the reward of their evil; for God had said, “Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

April 13, 1888

Sanctification

There are many souls who are building their hopes for eternity upon the sands of error. The word of God, "which liveth and abideth forever," is not made the rock of their salvation; but the words of man, theories that exalt humanity and please the carnal heart, are chosen instead of the doctrines of the Bible. It is a design of Satan to allure men from the truth, by leading them to accept its counterfeit; and in the doctrine of sanctification, so prevalent among those who reject the law of God, he has accomplished his work of deception in a most delusive and enchanting way.

Jesus prayed that his disciples might be sanctified through the truth; and he added, "Thy word is truth." The agent in the sanctification which our Lord desired for his followers, was the word of God. But the sanctification so popular today is independent of the truth; for men refuse to employ the word of God where it does not support their opinions and experience. Those who profess this sanctification have clothed themselves in an impregnable armor, whereby they ward off every arrow of truth that would wound their self-righteousness, and make them feel the need of a physician to heal them.

In the town of L. special efforts were made to arouse men to a realizing sense of the claims of the law of God. With open Bibles, the people examined the Scriptures for themselves, searching for the truth as for hid treasures. In reading the plain "thus saith the Lord," many became interested as never before in the word of God. They saw wondrous things out of the law, and some were taking their stand to be "doers of the word." But at this time a minister who professed sanctification, became alarmed lest some of the members of his church should see the claims of the truth, and he strove to make of none effect the commandment of God. He boastingly declared that he was sanctified, sinless, holy; and further stated that he could not sin. Says John, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law;" but this man openly avowed that no one could keep the law, and that obedience to it was not required of those who believed in Jesus. Did this sanctification stand the test of the word of truth?

Paul had faith in Jesus, but he did not claim that faith made the law of none effect. He says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." When this man was invited to examine the Scripture evidences as to the requirements of God, he refused to read or to reason on the matter; but the more vehemently urged his claim to holiness and inspiration.

This sanctification we have no hesitancy to declare unscriptural, unsound, and presumptuous. A profession of holiness, while the law of Heaven is derided and transgressed, shows that a false standard of righteousness has taken the place of the holy precepts of God. Many who profess so great attainments in the Christian life, grow impatient and angry when the claims of God are presented, and they refuse to hear the word of truth. Says the word of God, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." If the minister at L. had had a genuine experience in the things of God, he would have manifested the meek and lowly spirit of Christ; he would have acknowledged his finite and fallible nature, and would have humbly tested his experience by the word of God. His positive utterances against the truth did much toward quieting the aroused consciences of those who were hesitating in regard to the commandment of God, and, through his influence, many souls turned back into the paths of transgression and darkness. Men are greatly influenced by what their minister says; but should we not prove the truth of their assertions by the test that God has given for this very purpose? Says the Lord: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Our

Saviour warned his followers to “beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.” We are not bidden to prove them by their fair speeches and exalted professions. They are to be judged by the word of God. The true disciples of Christ will bear the divine impress. Their teaching will be in harmony with the teaching of the Son of God. Their character will be moulded after the great pattern. What message do they bring? Does it lead you to reverence and fear God? Does it lead you to manifest your love for him by loyalty to his commandments? If they tell you that they are not concerned about teaching or observing the law, be afraid of them, even though they heal the sick and cast out devils. They are doing the very work that originated with the prince of darkness, the enemy of God. The beginning of all the sin and woe and death that have deluged our earth, was this very disregard for the plain commandment of God.

This doctrine of sanctification in which the law of God has no part, is not of Heaven but of Satan, who was a liar from the beginning and “abode not in the truth.” It is Satan's policy to appear before the world in the garments of an angel of light. It is he who weaves these deceptive doctrines that our Saviour represents as “sheep's clothing.”

Those who are used as agents of Satan have an appearance of sanctity; and nothing but the law of God, which is a discernor of the thoughts of the heart, can discover of what spirit they are, and in whose cause they are engaged; but why not employ this unfailing test in proving every man's teaching and spirit. There is no need of being deceived, for the word of God is truth, and God has promised to give to those who desire truth, the Spirit of truth, that they may be guided into all truth. Let us seek earnestly for wisdom, and divine enlightenment, that we may know the truth, and be instrumental in God's hands of rescuing men and women from the snares of the evil one.

In the day of God's wrath many will discover, too late, that while professing holiness they were led into forbidden paths by not humbly obeying the commandments of Jehovah. Says Jesus: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” And the working of iniquity is the transgression of the law. John, the beloved disciple, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has given repeated tests to prove the truth of our experiences. He says: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” Jesus plainly declared, “I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.” John continues: “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.”

There are many today who seek to prove that the law of God was abolished at the cross with the abolishment of the sacrificial services of the Jewish dispensation; but the words of John, penned many years this side of the crucifixion, show that the commandments of God were not done away, but are the standard of Christian character by which we are to be judged, and by which we are to fashion our lives if we would enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

The bitterness of spirit manifested against the law of God, by many of those who claim to be sanctified, makes it manifest that they are disloyal to God, and corrupters of the doctrine of Christ. When the binding claims of the fourth commandment are presented, they bend their utmost efforts to make of none effect the requirement of God's law. They hold to their own tradition and opinion, no matter what may be the conclusion of the word of God. Jesus declares of this class, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

If we reject the word of the Bible, there is no power or manifestation that will induce us to accept the message that rebukes our sins, and would correct our cherished errors. The fault is in the rebellious heart. Said the Son of God, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There are those who reject the testimony of Moses and the prophets, declaring that the New Testament is all that we need in this dispensation; but did not Jesus bid his disciples to "search the Scriptures"? Was it not he who declared, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them"?

Christ was the invisible leader of the Hebrew host in their journeyings through the wilderness. He was the founder and supporter of the Jewish rites and observances, and his words by the mouth of Moses are no less important than his words by the mouth of the beloved disciple in the last book of the New Testament. The Old Testament is a witness to the truth of Christ and the plan of salvation, and it was "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." Those who cast contempt upon the Old Testament by ignoring its study, are casting contempt on the words and teaching of Christ, and are wise above what is written.

We are living in the most solemn period of the world's history. The coming of the Lord is at the doors, and the perils of the last days are all around us. Said Jesus, speaking of this very time, "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And if we are wise we shall give earnest heed to this warning, and try every man's words by the great standard of truth. Our lives must be brought into harmony with the law of God, if we would be truly sanctified. This law is to govern all intelligences in Heaven and upon earth. And when we can say from the heart, as did our divine Lord, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," then we are sanctified through the truth. We have the mind that was in Christ, and by faith we have drawn vital force from the source of infinite power and purity.

The word of God must be interwoven with the living character of those who believe it. The only vital faith is that faith which receives and assimilates the truth till it is a part of the being, and the motive power of the life and action. Jesus is called the word of God. He accepted his Father's law, wrought out its principles in his life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." The followers of Christ must be partakers of his experience. They must assimilate the word of God. They must be changed into its likeness by the power of Christ, and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of his disciples. This is genuine sanctification.

Men hear the words of Christ, but they are not doers of his words. The progressive character of the life of godliness is not agreeable to their ease-loving, selfish habits and desires. They do not partake of the broken body and shed blood of the Saviour of men. They are not willing to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts," that they may be renewed in true holiness, after the image of the Son of God. The word of God that tries the hearts of men, proves them wanting. They have no part in the Saviour's grace, no foundation for hope in his salvation. Says Jesus, "He that is of God heareth God's words." Those who receive the law and the testimony, and assimilate the truth of God, are partaking of the divine nature, growing up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, and the word of truth is working their sanctification. Though they make no boasting profession of holiness, but manifest a meek and quiet spirit, working the works of Christ, they will stand before the throne of God, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. They will be sanctified and glorified through obedience to the commandments of God, wrought by divine power, through the faith of the Son of God.

April 20, 1888

Visit to Lemoore

In company with my son, W. C. White, and Miss Cecilie Dahl, I left Healdsburg, March 9, for Oakland. From Oakland we took the train for Lemoore. At Goshen Junction we parted with W. C. White, who was en route for Los Angeles. We arrived at Lemoore about eight o'clock in the evening. Brother and Sister Daniels and Brother Gray were waiting to receive us at the depot. Brother Gray conducted us to his home, where we were heartily welcomed and kindly entertained.

Elder Daniels has been laboring at Lemoore, and his earnest effort to preach the truth of God has been followed by most encouraging results. A good interest has been awakened in the town and vicinity to hear the reasons of our faith. The Lord has been moving upon hearts, and we rejoice that a goodly number have had the moral courage to come out and identify themselves with those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Twenty-nine persons have taken a decided stand for the truth and have signed the covenant. I became acquainted with several of these who have recently come to the knowledge and belief of the truth, and I feel sure that they have embraced the faith after careful and candid investigation, and through solemn and thorough conviction of its divine origin and nature. I believe they will teach others the things which they have learned.

If all who accept the light of truth will let their light shine by precept and example, their influence will be as far-reaching as eternity. By humbly seeking to know and do the will of God, they may be constant learners in the school of Christ, and may be continually educating others in the principles and practices of the truth. If those who espouse the cause of God will manifest the meekness and lowliness of Christ, they may bear a testimony to unbelievers that will have more weight than either sermons or arguments in its favor. The most convincing witness to the world of the worth of our faith is the exemplary conduct and character of its advocates.

On Sabbath morning, March 10, as we approached the house of worship we found it surrounded by the carriages of those who had come to hear the word of God. There was quite a large attendance of those who were interested in our views, and I had much freedom in speaking from Colossians 1:9-14. After the discourse we had a social meeting. Many testimonies were borne, and a good spirit

characterized all that was said. A number witnessed for the first time to their belief in the present truth.

I spoke five times at Lemoore, to good audiences. Many who were unacquainted with the positions we hold, seemed much interested. There were in the congregation some infidels and saloon-keepers, who gave most earnest and respectful attention, and we know not but that the seeds of truth may take root and bear fruit to the glory of God in the lives of these men. It is my sincere hope and prayer that this may be so. Christ has said, "Joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Those who feel perfectly satisfied with their spiritual condition are not the ones who excite the joy of the angels. The Jews claimed to respect the law of God, but they did not keep it. Said Jesus, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" He said of the self-righteous Pharisees, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men;" and in this day, those who profess to be Christians and yet bear no fruit to the glory of God, denying in their works the faith they profess, are among that class who feel no want in themselves, who see no necessity of repentance, confession, or reformation in their lives. They seem in their own eyes to be righteous, and they are satisfied with their own attainments. They do not come to the great Physician, because they do not realize their need of healing. But those who come repenting of their sins, believing that Jesus is able, through the merits of his blood, to cleanse them, and make them whole, cause the angels of God to rejoice in his presence.

On Sabbath there was a decided movement made toward seeking God, by those who desired to draw near to him. The instruction for our day is, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness." This valuable treasure of righteousness and meekness will not come without sincere and earnest seeking. It is not something that will develop naturally in the human heart. There must be most diligent and persevering efforts put forth by every individual to obtain the meekness and righteousness of Christ. Says the prophet, "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." We sought the Lord by earnest supplication, and his Holy Spirit witnessed to the presence of God in our midst. Those who seek the Lord from the heart will certainly find him, for he is a present help in every time of need.

On Sunday, both morning and afternoon, I spoke to a full house. The Spirit and power of God was in the midst of us, impressing hearts with the truth. We knew that Jesus was inviting the weary and the heavy-laden to come unto him and find rest to their souls. If they would but comply with the conditions, and take his yoke, and bear his burden, and learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart, they would find his service sweet, and his paths the paths of peace. I felt anxious that all present might take the yoke of Christ, and find the peace and rest that the word can neither give nor take away. When those who have by transgressing the law forfeited all right to the favor of God, return to allegiance and keep the commandments, what but blessing and peace and rest can come to them from him who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, whose love is graciously and freely bestowed to all who turn to him to serve him with a sincere heart.

Before me was a class of men possessing no inferior talent; there were those who had no knowledge of God, and no faith in his Son, but I knew that Jesus was willing to receive these men, waiting to pardon their transgressions, to take their feet from the miry clay, and to place them upon the Rock

of Ages. I felt an intense desire to present the truth of God's word in such a way that they might be constrained by the love that Jesus had manifested for them to come to him in all their sinfulness and pollution, that they might be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The most sinful may be made fit for the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love him and keep his commandments. They may be cleansed by faith in his blood, sanctified through obedience to the truth, and glorified by the power of God to shine in his everlasting kingdom.

I had very solemn thoughts as I looked upon that assembly. I wondered how many present will hail with joy the glorious appearing of the Lord and Saviour. How many will receive the crown of life? How many will lift up their voices in glad hosannas, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints"? How anxious I felt for these souls, as I thought, Jesus loves them better than I do. His love is without a parallel; and if I feel grief of heart to see these souls employing their intrusted talents in dishonoring God, how must the pitying Saviour feel, who died that they might live?

Oh, that everyone might feel that Jesus has something in store for him vastly better than what he is choosing for himself! Would that all might realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the blessedness of righteousness! Would that all might see how powerless is all effort to contend against omnipotence! Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the mind and will of God. He is sowing to the flesh, and will of the flesh reap corruption. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by the God who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of his creatures. The path of transgression is a path of misery and destruction, and he who walks therein is exposed to the wrath of God and the Lamb.

The cross of Calvary, with its suffering Victim who bore the curse for us, testifies to the love of God for the sinner; and the voice of God calls to the disobedient, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" There is a fountain opened to cleanse the guilty souls of men. The merits of Jesus plead for the repentant sinner; and to all that receive the Saviour he will give power to enable them to walk in the paths of righteousness and peace.

The word of God is the directory to Heaven. If man will follow in the path marked out in the sacred word, he will reach the eternal city and the realms of glory. The very God of truth presents his promises to encourage man to seek for eternal life, and an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away. Let the repenting sinner believe the word of God, and come to Jesus the Saviour of men, take his yoke upon him, bear his burden, and he shall find rest unto his soul.

May 4, 1888

Home Missionary Work

Home missionaries are greatly needed. The work of winning souls to Jesus, and of training them to become workers for others, should begin in the home circle. God has claims upon the services of all,—men, women, and children; and the earlier they are led out of and away from themselves, and taught to engage in unselfish labor for others, the nearer they will come to fulfilling their holy commission. Of all our training-schools, the family should stand first. Fathers and mothers should feel that they are placed at the head of a mission. They have a work to do which no other can do for

them, in forming the characters of their children for usefulness in this life, and for the future, immortal life. God has called them to this work, and it is a sin to neglect it.

Yet this work is strangely neglected. The failure in duty on the part of parents is revealed in the deformed, one-sided characters of the children. The loose, unchristian manner in which so many bring up their children is the cause of the terrible impiety and wickedness of the youth of this age. The great burden in regard to temporal matters, which many carry who claim to be sons and daughters of God, causes them to lose sight of eternal interests. Their absorbing care for worldly things misleads their children. The sacred and the common are confused in their minds. Eternal and temporal things stand on a par. A lack of home religion leads to stumbling, to perplexing entanglements, all the way in the Christian experience, both for parents and children. The family life takes a low level. The conversation is trifling and frivolous, or even worse. There is gossip and tale-bearing, there are threats, scolding, jangling, and tantalizing. Angels see it all. Jesus, who gave his life to redeem them, beholds it. What a scene for Heaven to look upon! Will such a family be welcomed through the gates into the city of God? Never, unless they become transformed by the grace of Christ. They would carry into Heaven the same characters, the same spirit they manifest here. Thousands upon thousands will be lost because of this terrible neglect on the part of parents.

I would urge upon fathers and mothers the importance of their home missionary work. The precious hours of probation are fast passing. Parents must be changed, children must be changed, in heart and character here in this life, or they will never be permitted to enter Heaven. It should be your very first burden to see that your own souls are right before God, and to labor for the salvation of your children. Every member of the family should be the subject of special, wisely-directed effort, that the enemy of Christ may not have possession of the heart, and control the character.

Parents who give heed to God's word will not, for any consideration, neglect the work which he has committed to them. They will not take a course in any respect which will lead their children away from him. Night and day they will feel the burden to draw them away from the world's customs, its fashions, and its pride, to Jesus. They will make religion the vital question of life, and will teach their children that every worldly consideration should be made second to their eternal interests. They will make a hedge about them by prayer, pleading in faith that God will abide with them, and that holy angels will guard them from Satan's cruel power. Every day they will give them such instruction as shall lead them to become better acquainted with the claims of God, to revere his law, and to form habits of life in accordance with it.

Children will learn to love that which the parents love, and will talk of the subjects upon which they talk. If we would have the word of God the most precious of books to our children, our own lives must testify that it is precious to us. If we desire them to love and reverence God, we must make him the theme of our meditations; we must speak of his goodness, his majesty, and his power. If we would have them love and imitate the character of Christ, we must ourselves represent Christ in our homes. It is by cultivating meekness and lowliness, by performing kindly, thoughtful acts for others when no human eye can see, or human praise stimulate, by hiding self in Jesus, and letting his gentleness appear in the home life, by exercising patience when provoked, giving a soft answer when tempted to be harsh, overbearing, and vindictive, that we leave the unmistakable impression upon the minds of our children that father and mother are Christians.

Do not neglect your children while they are young. The sons and daughters of Christian parents should be educated to realize their responsibility to God in childhood and youth. There is earnest work to be done in this age, and they must be educated to share in it. We cannot estimate the possibilities of usefulness that lie undeveloped in hand, and brain, and heart. You should instruct the children in the duties of practical life. Teach them to regard the humble round of everyday duties as the course marked out for them by the Lord; as a school in which they are to be trained to render faithful and efficient service. All their powers are to be educated and disciplined to do service for God. He requires that the first, the best, and the most useful talents shall be employed to carry forward his work. The same zeal and energy, tact and order, which are exercised in counting-rooms and shops, and in the fine arts, are to be brought into the work of God. Teach them now to cultivate firmness and integrity. It was this careful training in his earlier years that enabled Joseph, when suddenly exalted from his dungeon to the throne, to fill his position with wisdom and honor. So the youth and children of our time are to be gaining solidity of character, that they may be prepared to be used as instruments of God in the missionary work.

Children should not be treated with harshness. Remember that your sons and daughters are younger members of God's family. He has committed them to your care to train and educate for Heaven. You must render an account to him for the manner in which you discharge your sacred trust. Yet while exercising tenderness and loving sympathy, you should be firm and decided to command obedience; like Abraham, requiring your children to keep the way of the Lord.

They should be allowed to form no foolish habits of self-indulgence. Teach them that Jesus loves them, that he died to redeem them, and they are to live to glorify him. His life is the pattern which they are to copy. They should be taught to waste nothing on show; to shun all display in dress. Let a spirit of sacrifice be cherished. Teach the children to contribute something which they have earned themselves as an offering to God, who has given them all Heaven in the gift of his dear Son. I am glad that they are taking a part in the missionary work in the Rivulet Societies, and by their contributions in the Sabbath-school. These are precious lessons which they are learning, of the blessedness of giving. If we desire to encourage in their hearts a love for the truth and the cause of God, we must teach them to sacrifice for it. That which costs us nothing we value lightly; but the enterprise in which our means is invested we feel an interest in, and we labor for its success.

Do not expect a change to be wrought in your children without patient, earnest labor, mingled with fervent prayer. To study and understand their varied characters, and day by day to mould them after the divine Model, is a work demanding great diligence and perseverance, and much prayer, with an abiding faith in God's promises. Make it a careful study how to discharge your duties. Counsel with those of experience. Seek counsel of God in his word; work and pray, pray and work, from the earliest hour of your children's lives, and believe that God will co-operate with you in every effort to follow the light and instruction he has given. The infinite sacrifice of Christ for our redemption places a high value upon the soul. After giving such evidence of his love he will not withhold his grace, his special help, from parents and children who seek to do his will. He will not refuse to hear the parents' earnest prayer, that is seconded by persevering labor, that their children may be blessed of him, and become faithful workers in his cause. When parents do their duty in God's appointed way, they may be sure that their requests for his help in their home work will be granted.

If fathers and mothers love the Bible, and talk of the lessons Christ has given; if they love Jesus, and make him the theme of conversation, a heavenly atmosphere will pervade the home. As the wax receives the impress of the seal, so the soul will receive and retain the moral image of God. By beholding, we become changed. If we allow the mind to dwell upon the imperfections and moral deformities of others, we ourselves shall become depraved in character, and mentally one-sided and unbalanced. But if the mind dwells upon the perfect life of Christ, and the thoughts and conversation are centered upon him, we shall be changed to the same image.

Life will become to both parents and children a humble, earnest working out of their own salvation with fear and trembling, while God is working in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure. The gates of Heaven are upon earth. Parents and children are striving together to press upward, heavenward, in the narrow way, the path of holiness, all acting their part in the family below in such a manner as to become members of the royal family above.

The teaching of the home—the mould here given to the character—extends its influence beyond the family into the church, and outside the church to the world. A well-regulated family, loving God and his living oracles, will have a fresh, living testimony to bear. Their influence will build up the church, and will win souls to Christ and the truth. In giving to the world a well-disciplined family, parents are presenting one of the strongest evidences in favor of the truth. And the parents whose wise, God-fearing labor has accomplished so much for their own family, will be able to accomplish a similar work for others.

If the home missionary work had been done in accordance with the directions God has given in his word, there would now be an army of youth to enter missionary fields. The apostle Paul, in his dying charge to Timothy, says: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." When the lessons that parents learn in the school of Christ are taught to their children; when the Saviour's meekness and love, his self-denial and humility, are brought into the life and made a part of the daily experience, and the children learn and practice these precious lessons, they in their turn will be able, by their influence and example, to teach the same to others. And who can measure the final results? How many a humble Christian, unseen and uncared for by the world, has set in motion a train of influences which have brought a blessing to hundreds and thousands of souls. Where is the missionary who has accomplished a greater work than the mother of John Wesley? Who can measure the value of those hours when Zwingle's grandmother lovingly repeated to the eager boy at her side the few precious Bible stories which she had gleaned from amid the legends and traditions of the church?

The day of God will reveal how much the world owes to the holy influences of the home for men who have been unflinching advocates of truth and reform. When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, when the "Well done" of the great Judge is pronounced, what joy unspeakable will fill our hearts, if, as we gather around the great white throne, we shall see our children, saved through our instrumentality, with the crown of immortal glory upon their brows. How shall we feel as we look upon that company and see that those whom we have won for Christ have saved others, and these still others,—a large assembly all brought into the haven of rest as the result of our labors, there to lay their crowns at Jesus's feet, and to praise him through the endless cycles of eternity?

May 11, 1888

The Presumption of Saul

After Saul had been anointed king of Israel, Samuel the prophet gave him minute directions as to what course he should pursue. He prophesied that the Lord would work a change in his heart to prepare him for the solemn responsibilities of his new office. He declared to the king, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy; and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.... And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings. Seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do." As Saul journeyed on his way, the change of which the prophet had spoken was wrought in him, and God gave him another heart; and all that Samuel had said came to pass. The heart of Saul was turned to the Lord, his mind was enlarged, and he had the blessing of spiritual understanding. He felt that the strength of Israel was the Lord God, even Jehovah, and in him he could have courage, fortitude, and resolution to govern wisely. It now depended upon Saul to work out the salvation that God had wrought within him.

It was not until the second year of his reign that the presence of Saul was required at Gilgal. At that time the Philistines were encamped against the Israelites. Saul and his followers could see the vast host that were arrayed against them, and the Israelites were appalled at the sight of the mighty forces they would have to encounter in battle. They were not prepared to meet the enemy, for they were undisciplined and poorly armed. Their forces were far inferior both as to numbers and equipment, for "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people." As Saul's army comprehended the situation they were filled with alarm, and many were so terrified that they dared not come to the test of an encounter. Some crossed the Jordan, others hid themselves in caves and pits, and amid the rocks that abounded in that region. The affairs of the army were becoming alarming. The nearer the time for an encounter approached, the more deserters increased, and those who did not withdraw from the ranks were filled with foreboding and terror. What a change would have been wrought if they had but trusted in the Lord, if they had but humbled their hearts and confessed their backsliding and iniquity.

Saul tarried day after day without making decided efforts toward encouraging the people and inspiring confidence in God. The time appointed by the prophet was not fully expired; but he became impatient at his delay, and discouraged at the trying circumstances that surrounded him. Instead of faithfully seeking to prepare the people for the solemn service that Samuel was coming to perform, he indulged in unbelief and impatience. This work of seeking God by sacrifice was a most solemn and important work, and God required that his people should search their hearts and repent of their sins, that the offering might be made with acceptance before him, and that his blessing might be bestowed upon their efforts to resist and conquer the enemy. But Saul had grown restless. The people were looking to him as the king whom they had chosen to lead and direct them. They had become dissatisfied with the guidance of the King of kings, and had desired to be like the nations around them, and God had granted their request for a ruler from among their brethren. The Lord still cared for them, and did not give them up to the disasters that would have come upon them if the frail arm of flesh had become their only support. He brought them into close places, that they might be convicted of the folly of depending on man, and that they might turn to him as their only help. The time for the proving of Saul had come. The opportunity had arrived when he was to show

whether or not he would depend on God, and patiently wait according to his command, and reveal himself as one whom God could trust in trying places as the ruler of his people, or whether he would be vacillating and weak, and unworthy of the sacred responsibilities that had devolved upon him. Would Saul heed the injunctions given him of the Lord? Would he show himself willing to be led and controlled? Would he turn the attention of his faint-hearted soldiers to the One in whom is everlasting strength and deliverance.

With growing impatience he waited the arrival of Samuel, and attributed the confusion and distress and desertion of his army to the absence of the prophet. But what more favorable moment could be given to the representative man of Israel to assert his manhood and manifest his faith in God? Was not this the very occasion when he should have believed the word of the prophet, and the commands and assurances of the Lord? But Saul made it evident that he did not discern sacred things, that he was not conscientiously careful to go according to the word of the Lord's explicit command. The priest of God was the only one authorized to present sacrifices before God; and yet Saul commanded, "Bring hither a burnt-offering," and he offered the sacrifice. In this he took upon himself the responsibilities of the priesthood. He placed himself in a position for which he was not prepared or qualified by the Lord. He presumed upon his exaltation to the throne of Israel, and acted as a priest before the people. The time for the arrival of Samuel was just at hand, but Saul, through lack of faith, had been led to take his own course, and he made it evident that he could not be trusted as the head of Israel; for under pressure of circumstances he would depart from the commandment of God.

"And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him." Samuel saw at once that Saul had gone contrary to the express directions that had been given him. He had not waited till the seven days had expired. He had not humbly fulfilled the word of the Lord, nor regarded the law of the offerings. He had been charged to wait for Samuel, who was chosen of the Lord, and fitted for the very service that Saul had performed with unsanctified hands. The work that he had done was out of harmony with the plan of God, and could not be acceptable before Heaven. The sacrifice was to be offered in the most solemn manner. The people were to be impressed by the weight of its significance, and the Lord had spoken by his prophet that at this time he would communicate through his delegated servant what Israel must do at this critical time. Saul was so well satisfied with himself and his work, that he went out to meet the prophet as one who should be commended rather than disapproved. Samuel's countenance was full of anxiety and trouble; but to his inquiry, "What hast thou done?" Saul offered excuses for his presumptuous act. He said: "I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord; I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people."

Saul had proved himself unfit to govern Israel, through lack of faith and obedience to the plain command of the Lord, and God could not establish his rule over his people. The services of religion

he had performed were not acceptable to the God of Heaven. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

There is no safety for the people of God except in implicit obedience to his word. All his promises are made upon conditions of faith and obedience, and failure to comply with the expressed commands necessitates the failure of your experiencing the fulfillment of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. Saul might have made his supplication to God in an acceptable manner and still he might have waited for the servant of God to perform his appointed work. There was no need of forcing himself to offer a burnt-offering before the Lord. The command to wait till the arrival of Samuel was given to test his loyalty to the God who had so abundantly blessed him. If the king had only shown a regard for the requirements of God in this time of trial, then God could have worked his will through him, even when his inclination and natural desire might have clamored for a different course of action. His failure now proved him unfit to be vicegerent of God to his people. He would mislead Israel. His will would be the controlling power instead of the will of God. He had been weighed in the balances and had been found wanting. Angels of God had been grieved over his unbelief and disobedience, and his failure in this small test decided the most important question of his reign. If he had been faithful, his kingdom would have been established forever; but since he had failed, the purposes of God must be accomplished by another who would be true to the word of his commandment. The great interests of Israel must be committed to one who would rule the people according to the will of Heaven.

We should be warned by the example of Saul. We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. The work committed to our hands should be performed with fidelity. We should be true to the definite commandments of the Lord. The word of God is the only safe guide for our feet. We should not follow impulse, we should not rely on the judgment of men, but look to the revealed will of God, and walk according to the commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results, and by faithfulness to God's word in time of trial you will prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust you in difficult places to carry out his will, honor his name, and bless his people.

May 18, 1888

The Relation of Christians to Christ and the Church

The apostle Paul, speaking of the church of Christ, likens it to the human body and its members. The unity existing between the members of the body represents the unity that should exist between the members of the church. The mutual dependence of the followers of Christ is illustrated by the dependence of the members of the body one upon the other. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." This figure, as representing the church, is full of the most tender significance to God's people, both as to their relation to Christ, and to one another. As in the natural body the suffering of one member is recognized by every part of the being, so in the church the weakness or sorrow of one member reaches all others with its influence; and the strength of one is the gain of all. Christ, the head of the church, is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Contemplating the intimacy of the relation between the followers of Christ, Paul writes: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

We have been brought from the world to become members of the church, the body of Christ. We are to come into perfect harmony of feeling, and unity of faith. "Speaking the truth in love," we are to "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The natural defects of our characters must not be allowed to create disunion. We must surrender our wills to God, till every thought is brought into obedience to Christ. There is a work for us to do before we shall be able to work as harmoniously together as is represented by the union of the body.

Those who profess to be members of God's family, and who expect to stand one day around his throne, should be careful to cultivate here the spirit that will prevail in Heaven. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and the love of Jesus in the heart will bind his church together in bonds of Christian fellowship, like that fellowship which will exist in the courts above. We have no need to err; for we possess a perfect pattern in the life of Jesus by which to fashion our life-actions, and the fact that we represent him so poorly should make us humble, and should lead us to exercise love and forbearance toward others who may err. Unless we do cultivate humility in view of our own deficiencies, there will be developed in us an element of hard-heartedness akin to that in the character of Satan. Criticism and coldness and disunion in the church will undo the work of the Holy Spirit of God.

We need a work wrought in our characters such as will fit us for the great responsibilities that Christ has laid upon us. There are souls to be saved on every side, and we need to love others as Christ has loved us, if we fulfill our obligations to our fellow-men. Those who indulge a spirit of jealousy, who are constantly inclined to think evil, and to judge the motives of others, are not possessors of the love of Christ, nor fitted for his holy service.

When a brother is in error, how many turn away and leave him to himself to pursue his wrong course, to depart from Christ and the truth! And not only do they treat him with neglect, but their unwise words and indifferent behavior hasten him on in the downward way. Is this the

compassionate Spirit of Christ? When one is falling away, shall we push him into greater darkness? Did not Jesus, the Son of God, come to seek and to save that which was lost? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Was not our Saviour tender and pitiful toward all? Did he not weep over the rejecters of his mercy, and stretch out his hands all day long to a rebellious people? We ought to be compassionate to our fellow-men; for they are the purchase of the blood of Christ. We are not as sympathetic as we should be. This self-esteem must be rooted out, this spirit of pharisaical importance must be subdued. We are not placed here to please or glorify self, but to glorify God by living for the good of men.

Every Christian should exercise the same pity toward the erring that he would have manifested toward himself; but in many cases, the very ones who are themselves the most sensitive under reproof, are most unfeeling toward those whom they condemn. If a brother errs, how easy it is to tell others of his fault before a word is said to him. Such a course is not in accordance with the Bible rule. God does not want us to expose the defects of others before the unbelieving world, or even before the brethren in the church, except as it may be necessary in carrying out the Bible direction.

God wants us to come into the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and then we shall do from the heart deeds of kindness that will bless others; then everyone will know that the truth of God has done something for the character and life of those who profess to believe it, that Christ dwells in the heart by faith, and that religion is a living reality.

Christ is grieved with our hardness of heart, with our lack of love and contrition. God wants us to have love; far better to have too much than too little. God himself is love; we should be like him. Christ is full of compassion; we should daily learn of him, and put in practice his lessons of love, by showing the tender spirit that he manifested. It will cost us no more effort to speak words of comfort and kindness than of harshness and jealousy. We should seek to bind up the broken heart and to heal the wounded spirit. We shall have no desire to bring others down in humiliation before us if we are actuated by the love of Christ. Our whole desire will be to lift up the thoughts and elevate the minds of those around us, to exalt the truth and draw men to the Saviour of the world.

There are those all around us who are dying for want of the love of Jesus expressed in the life of his followers. When the lifeless hands have been folded over the silent breast, how many have wished they had been more gentle, more tender. You cannot make confession in the ears of the dead, but you can exercise love and forbearance toward the living. Oh, that all might appreciate the privilege now given to sweeten the existence of those around them by the loving sympathy that so cheers and encourages the sad and lonely heart!

Men and women who occupy responsible positions should deal very carefully with those under their care, blending love with firmness, encouragement with discipline, and comfort with correction. Why should you not exercise as much tenderness and skill in healing the sin-sick soul as in treating the diseased body? When you see one wandering away from the fold, go to him, and try to turn him back. With a meek and loving spirit, show him that you are his true friend, and that in telling him of his errors you are actuated by love for his soul. Work diligently, brethren; for these souls, if saved, will be our companions around the throne of God.

Christ requires us to love one another. How much, the cross of Calvary will answer. He loved us even unto death, and he bids us to "love one another as I have loved you." "By this shall all men know

that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And when this mutual forbearance and tenderness is a reality among us we shall appreciate the significance of the figure employed by the apostle to represent the church of Christ. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." You will then bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

May 25, 1888

The Testing of Character

Saul made an appearance of great conscientiousness and devotion, as he stood before the army of Israel, offering up a sacrifice to God. He represented himself before the people as one who was unwilling to engage in battle with the Philistines, without seeking the help of Heaven, but his heart was filled with distrust, and his apparent piety was, in reality, only unbelief and disobedience. He had been directed by the prophet of God that when he was brought into just such circumstances of trial he should wait until seven days had expired, and that at the termination of the days appointed, Samuel would come unto him, and offer the sacrifice, and tell him what he should do to honor God and save Israel, but Saul had failed to bear the test that God had permitted to come upon him, and he resolved to offer the sacrifice himself, and wait no longer for the priest ordained of God to perform the sacred service. The king beheld the Philistines arrayed for battle. He saw his own soldiers filled with alarm, and his ranks thinning with frequent desertions, and, instead of trusting in the word of God, and waiting patiently for his salvation, he became faithless and discouraged. In the hope of again rallying his scattered troops, he was willing to violate the direction of God, and offer an offering before the Lord, that he might have the approval of the people, and gather them to his side to war against the enemy.

The prophet had declared that the Lord would reveal what course the king should pursue when the seven days were ended; but he did not wait for the arrival of the man of God, but took the matter into his own hands. If he had but waited in faith and patience and rested in the promise of God, what lessons of trust might have come down to inspire us as the result of his life and experience! What a help he might have been to Israel, if he had but stood the test in that hour of trial! He might have revealed the work of the Spirit of God in his heart. Through him might have been manifested the power and willingness of Jehovah to bless his waiting people. If he had fulfilled the conditions upon which the help was promised, the Lord would have wrought a marvelous deliverance for Israel, with the few who were loyal to the king. But the religious service, performed in unbelief and in direct opposition to the commandment of God, only served to weaken his hands, and to place him beyond the help that God was so willing to grant him.

There are many who are pursuing this very course today. They refuse to believe and obey the commandment of the Lord, and yet they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion; but there is no response from the Spirit of God to such a service. There is no inward work upon the heart, no reformation in the life, no transformation in the character. Outward ordinances must not be considered of value, unless they are in accordance with the expressed will of God. The Lord cannot manifest his power to deliver, no matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, if they persist in willful disobedience to his commandments.

Those who are placed in positions of trust, will be subjected to different tests, that their loyalty and trustworthiness may be proved by their course of action. The test may be a simple one, but it will be

sufficient to decide whether or not the man's spirit is under the control of the Spirit of God. It will be made manifest whether or not he will choose to carry out his own will and his own ideas, or the will of God as the supreme guide of his actions. All our actions are weighed. Their moral worth is estimated. It is known whether or not we are loyal to God, whether or not we are leading those connected with us to love and fear God, or through the natural defects of our characters, unaided by the grace of God, we are leading those who look to us for an example into crooked paths, away from the fear of God, away from the counsel he gives through his appointed servants. If we are indifferent to the instruction given through the agencies of God, our hearts will become hardened, the light ordained for our correction will appear as darkness, and we will become agents in leading others into unbelief and rebellion.

Adam was tested in a very simple matter, but his failure to endure the test opened the flood-gates of woe upon our world, and with every disobedience to God are involved consequences of fearful import and disaster. The action of the king before Israel lessened the significance of the sacrificial service, and robbed the priesthood of its sacredness before their eyes. If the king could, with unconsecrated hands, perform this holy rite, why could not the people do the same? If he thought best to perform this service, it must be the right thing to do, and they felt perfectly safe in following the example of one so exalted as the king. Those who occupy positions of honor and responsibility, should be exceedingly careful to walk circumspectly and humbly before the Lord, that they may not become stumbling-blocks to those who are influenced by their life and example.

The greatest trials that have come upon the church have been brought about through the agency of those who were its professed friends, and who had been placed in positions of trust and sacred responsibility. Our most sanguine expectations have been frequently disappointed. We have followed our best judgment in selecting men for places of trust, and they have failed time and again, when the test was brought to bear on their characters. They have exhibited weaknesses of which they gave no previous indication. They are not what they appeared to be before they were placed in the position. How often have we finite beings been led to repent that we have used our influence toward promoting men who afterwards have given no evidence of their devotion to God's word and work. We have often inquired, What has made this great change in these men? What was it that led Saul to presume upon his exaltation to dishonor God by unbelief and disobedience? It was self-sufficiency and an evil heart of unbelief. It was when Saul was little in his own sight that God chose him to be ruler over Israel, but when he lost his spirit of simplicity and humility, he was not the man for the place, and his authority was taken from him. Those who turn from their humility and begin to exalt self, are filled with the most unaccountable infatuation and self-deception in regard to their own qualifications. Like Saul, they begin to assume responsibilities that their position in nowise warrants, and for which God has not ordained them.

When circumstances are so shaped that character is tested and developed, you should seek fervently for the help of God that you may be delivered from evil. If you walk humbly before God, you will not follow your own will, but will have a teachable spirit, and will submit to instruction and correction. If you steadfastly adhere to the word of God and follow in his way, you will not imperil others nor in the least degree seek to turn their minds away from the warnings, reproofs, and instructions which God sends through his servants; but if you fail to obey the word of God, even in the most perplexing circumstances, you make it manifest that you cannot be trusted in times of peril. Like Saul, you will follow your own judgment. You will not humble your soul before God, and

make supplication, and lead those connected with you to look to God with all their hearts for the help he has promised to give in times of need.

The Lord will work for those who put their trust in him. Precious victories will be gained by the faithful. Precious lessons will be learned. Precious experiences will be realized that will be of the greatest advantage in times of trial and temptation. Those who will give all the glory to God, not taking credit to themselves, will be trusted with more and more of the blessing of God. The Lord will be magnified by those who honor him in the midst of the people. The trial that has been borne with patience, the test that has been met with faithfulness, will prove them worthy of responsibility, and God will make them agents to carry out his will. They will be made stewards of his grace, as honored servants of God.

The conflicts of earth, in the providence of God, furnish the very training necessary to develop characters fit for the courts of Heaven. We are to become members of the royal family, the sons of God, and "all things work together for good to those who love God," and submit themselves to his will. Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to him our distress, he is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of his children, and he leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weaknesses, and when reproof comes, and cautions are given, when they are rebuked, or even advised, they think that they are misjudged and unjustly treated. God knows them better than they know themselves, and he understands how to lead them. But when he undertakes to guide them in ways which seem mysterious to them, because of their blindness and lack of faith, they rebel, and bring upon themselves unnecessary grief and trouble. They have prayed to the Lord for light and guidance, and the Lord answered them as he did Jacob, and, like Jacob, they do not discern that it is the hand of the Lord leading them in a way contrary to their own choosing. If we will trust him, and commit our ways to him, he will direct our steps in the very path that will result in our obtaining the victory over every evil passion, and every trait of character that is unlike the character of our divine Pattern.

June 1, 1888

The Rejection of Saul

The relation between Samuel and Saul was one of peculiar tenderness. Samuel loved Saul as his own son, while Saul, bold and ardent of temper, held the prophet in great reverence, and bestowed upon him the warmth of his affection and regard. Thus the prophet of the living God, an old man whose mission was nearly finished, and the youthful king, whose work was before him, were bound together by the ties of friendship and respect. All through his perverse course, the king clung to the prophet as if he alone could save him from himself.

When Saul was proclaimed as king, Samuel had assured the people that the danger of the future would be that of forgetting the covenant of the Lord, and of failing to acknowledge God as the supreme Ruler of their nation. Israel had sought and obtained a monarchy after their own heart, yet Samuel had told them that the Lord in his infinite mercy was willing to forgive them, and to help

them, if they would only fear him, and serve him in truth. The question of the conversion of Israel into the royalty of the kingdom of God, was to be decided. Would the Israel of God, with their king at their head, obey God explicitly, or would they not? Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principles upon which the monarchy was founded must become spiritual, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, then the Lord would constitute a kingdom in which the will of the human and earthly would be in subjection to the will of God, and, by this means, the covenant relationship that constituted God the Ruler of Israel, would be preserved. The question may seem of little consequence to our finite minds; but it was far from this. Would the king whom Israel had chosen listen to the Ruler of all kings? Would he surrender his will, and do the will of the Father which is in Heaven? No monarchy in Israel that did not acknowledge in all its ways the supreme authority of God, could prosper. As long as the people of Israel would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long would he be their protection and defense.

The prophet Samuel had been rejected as ruler of Israel, and Saul had been chosen to fill this responsible position. Samuel was not envious and jealous of the chosen king. "God forbid," said the prophet, "that I should sin against God in ceasing to pray for you." The Lord identifies his interest with the people, and although Israel had greatly displeased the Lord, and sorely grieved Samuel, yet the prophet did not divorce his interest from Israel; but he uttered a decided warning, "If ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

Saul had failed to bear the test of his faith in the trying situation at Gilgal, and had brought dishonor upon the service of God; but his errors were not yet irretrievable, and the Lord granted to him another opportunity to learn the lesson of implicit faith in his word, and unqualified obedience to his commands. If the Lord had separated himself entirely from Saul, he would not have spoken to him again through his prophet, and intrusted him with a definite work to perform, that he might correct the mistake of the past.

Let us mark this. When anyone who claims to be a child of God, becomes careless in doing the express will of God, and through his deviation from the path of rectitude, many are influenced to become irreverent and unmindful of the injunctions of God, and if he then accepts reproof and has true contrition of soul, if he will discern his error, and no longer entertain lofty opinions of his ability, and will trust in God, who alone is able to save him, his past failure may be turned into victory, because he will become conscious of his inefficiency to do what God requires, without divine strength and wisdom.

The apostle Paul went directly contrary to the will of God before his conversion. His powers were employed in the cause and work of the enemy of God and man; but when light from Heaven shone about him, and the voice of Jesus was heard saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," he inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Love for Jesus became the ruling power in his life, and when there was work to be done for the Lord, no danger could intimidate him, no opposition hinder, no threats appall, no difficulties dishearten, no power cause him to swerve from the path appointed of God.

Before Paul experienced genuine conversion to God, selfishness controlled his mind and soul. His estimate of everything was a wrong estimate, for self-aggrandizement and selfishness had an influence upon his entire life and character. He praised his own zeal. He was carrying a mirror with him, not a mirror in which to discover the defects of his character, but a mirror in which he might

admire himself. Everything was turned into self-glorification; but after Jesus was revealed to him, his lofty opinion of himself was gone. He saw nothing in which to glory, save the cross of Christ. The Lord brought Paul over a path that was difficult to travel, but the apostle saw in it precious opportunities to prove his fidelity to Jesus, whom he had persecuted in the person of his saints.

When Samuel was called upon to deliver a most painful message of condemnation to him whom he loved as a son, Saul saw no great sin in the course of transgression which he had pursued. When reproved he manifested no repentance or contrition of soul. He was not grieved for his disobedience. He did not surrender his will to God, but began to vindicate his actions, and to offer excuses for his error. After the announcement that, because of his transgression, his kingdom should not continue, Saul became sullen and despondent. He thought he had been treated unjustly and went to great extremes in his management of affairs in the kingdom.

At one time he pronounced a curse upon anyone who should taste of food throughout a certain day of battle. This prohibition was not required by the Lord. It originated with Saul himself, and nearly cost him the life of his son Jonathan. It created a will of decided opposition to his authority in his army, and resulted in leading the people to transgress the command of God. They had engaged in warfare all day, and were fainting for want of food, and, as soon as the hours of restriction were over, they eagerly fell upon the spoil, and greedily devoured the flesh with the blood, thus violating the law that prohibited such an act; for the Lord had said, "Thou shalt not eat the blood thereof." God had given them rules which should have been respected; because the Lord knows what is for the good of man, and he should be obeyed. But there are many who will lightly regard the tests which God has given, and will assume the responsibility of creating tests and prohibitions, as did Saul, which bring dishonor to God and evil to men.

The Lord sent a last message to Saul. By obedience, he might still prove his fidelity to God, and his worthiness to walk before Israel. Samuel came to the king and delivered the word of the Lord. Said the prophet, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." And the record states that "Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

This victory over the Amalekites was the most brilliant victory that Saul had ever gained, and it served to rekindle the pride of heart that was his greatest peril. The divine edict devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction, was but partially fulfilled. Ambitious to heighten the honor of his triumphal return by the presence of a royal captive, Saul ventured to imitate the customs of the nations around him, and he spared Agag, the fierce and warlike king of the Amalekites. The people, influenced by his example, reserved for themselves the finest of the flocks, herds, and beast of burden.

Here Saul was subjected to the final test. His presumptuous disregard of the will of God, showing his determination to rule as an independent monarch, proved that he could not be trusted with royal

power as the vicegerent of the Lord. While Saul and his army were marching home in the flush of victory, there was deep anguish in the home of Samuel, the prophet. He had received a message from the Lord, denouncing the course of the king. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." The prophet was deeply grieved over the course of the rebellious king, and he wept and prayed all night for a reversal of the terrible sentence.

God's repentance is not like man's repentance. "The Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent." Man's repentance brings about a change of mind. God's repentance implies a change of circumstances and relations. Man may change his relation to God by complying with the conditions upon which he may be brought into the divine favor, and he may, by his own action, place himself outside the favoring condition; but the Lord is the same "yesterday, today, and forever." The Saul whom God made king was a humble man, little in his own eyes, and not the Saul whom God repented to have exalted to the throne of Israel. Saul's disobedience changed the condition of his relationship to God; but the conditions of acceptance with God were unaltered,—God's requirements were still the same; for with him "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

With an aching heart the prophet set forth the next morning to meet the erring king. Samuel cherished a hope that, upon reflection, Saul might become conscious of his sin, and by repentance and humiliation before God, be again restored to the divine favor. But when the first step is taken in the path of transgression, the way becomes easy. Satan leads on, and Saul, debased by his disobedience, came to meet Samuel with a lie upon his lips. He exclaimed, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord."

The sounds that fell on the prophet's ears disproved the statement of the disobedient king. To the pointed question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul made answer, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

The message of Saul's rejection brought unspeakable grief to the heart of Samuel. It had to be delivered before the whole army of Israel, when they were filled with pride and triumphal rejoicing over a victory that was accredited to the valor and generalship of their king, for Saul had not associated God with the success of Israel in this conflict; but when he saw the evidence of Saul's rebellion, he was greatly stirred with indignation, that he, who had been so highly favored of God, should transgress the commandment of Heaven, and lead Israel into sin. Samuel was not deceived by the subterfuge of the king. With mingled grief and indignation he declares, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel." He repeats the command of the Lord concerning Amalek, and demands the reason of the king's disobedience.

Saul persists in self-justification: "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal."

In stern and solemn words, the prophet sweeps away the refuge of lies, and pronounces the irrevocable sentence. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

June 8, 1888

The Anointing of David

Six miles south of Jerusalem, "the city of the great King," was Bethlehem, where David was born more than a thousand years before the infant Jesus was cradled in the manger, and worshipped by the wise men from the East. Centuries before the advent of the Saviour of the world, David, in the freshness of boyhood, had kept watch of his flocks as they grazed on the open fields of Bethlehem. The simple shepherd boy sang the songs of his own composing, and the music of his harp made a sweet accompaniment to the melody of his fresh young voice. The Lord had chosen David, and had ordered his life that he might have an opportunity to train his voice, and cultivate his talent for music and poetry. The Lord was preparing him in his solitary life with his flocks, for the work he designed to commit to his trust in afteryears.

While David was thus living in the retirement of his humble shepherd's life, the Lord God was speaking about him to the prophet Samuel. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.... Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably." The elders accepted an invitation to the sacred feast, and Samuel called them to the sacrifice, and sanctified Jesse and his sons. The altar was built, and the sacrifice was ready. All the household of Jesse were present, with the exception of David, the youngest son, who had been left to guard the sheep, for it was not safe to leave the flocks unprotected.

When the sacrifice was ended, Samuel commenced his prophetic scrutiny of the noble-appearing sons of Jesse. Eliab was the eldest, and more nearly resembled Saul for stature and beauty than the others. His comely features and finely developed form attracted the attention of the prophet. As he looked upon his princely bearing, he thought, This is indeed the man whom God has chosen as successor to Saul, and he waited for the divine sanction that he might anoint him. But Jehovah did not look upon the outward appearance. The Lord's word to Samuel was, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart."

What a lesson was given in these words, not only to the prophet, but to the men and women of every generation. No outward beauty of appearance can recommend the soul to God. The wisdom and excellence revealed in the character and deportment, express the true beauty of the man; and it is the inner worth of the heart that determines our acceptance with the Lord of hosts. How deeply should we feel this great and solemn truth in the judgment of ourselves and others. We may learn

from the mistake of Samuel, how vain is the estimation that rests on the beauty of the face or the nobility of the stature. We may see how incapable is man's wisdom of understanding the secrets of the heart, or of comprehending the counsels of God without special enlightenment from Heaven. The thoughts and ways of God in relation to his creatures are above our finite minds; but we may be assured that his children will be brought to fill the very place for which they are qualified, and will be enabled to accomplish the very work committed to their hands if they will submit their wills to God, that his beneficent plans may not be frustrated by the perversity of man. Man should stand back and let the Lord do with his own as it seems good, according to his infinite wisdom and mercy.

Eliab passed from the inspection of Samuel, and the six brothers who were in attendance at the service, followed in succession to be observed by the prophet, while all present beheld the scene with the deepest interest; but the Lord did not signify his choice of any of the seven sons of Jesse who stood before the man of God. With painful suspense Samuel had looked upon the last of the young men; the prophet was perplexed and bewildered. Turning to Jesse he inquired, "Are here all thy children?" and he answered, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." Samuel was relieved at once, for he knew that it was one of the sons of Jesse that had been selected by the Lord as the successor of Saul. In decided tones he commanded, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither."

The lonely shepherd on the hills of Bethlehem was startled by the hasty summons of the messenger who announced that the prophet had come to his father's house, and had sent for him. With surprise he questioned the reason that the prophet and judge of Israel should desire to see him; but without delay, he hastened to the altar. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." As Samuel beheld with pleasure the handsome, manly, modest shepherd boy, the voice of the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." The prophet had accomplished his appointed work, and with a relieved heart he returned to Ramah.

The great honor conferred upon David did not serve to elate him. As humble and modest as before his anointing, the shepherd boy went back to the hills of Bethlehem, and watched and guarded his flocks as tenderly as ever. But with new inspiration he composed his melodies, and played upon his harp. Before him spread a landscape of rich and varied beauty. The vines, with their clustering fruit, brightened in the sunshine. The forest trees, with their green foliage, swayed in the breeze. He beheld the bright luminary of day flooding the heavens with light, coming forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. The bold summits of the hills reached toward the sky, and in the far-away distance rose the barren cliffs, and the blue heavens garnished by day with the splendid glory of the sun, and by night with the silvery radiance of the stars. And beyond was God. He could not see him, but his works were full of his praise, and daily revelations of the character and majesty of his Creator filled the young poet's heart with adoration and rejoicing. In contemplation of God and his works, the faculties of David's heart and mind were enlarging and strengthening for the work of his after-life.

The light of day, gilding forest and mountain, meadow and stream, carried the mind up to behold the Deity, the Father of lights, the Author of every good and perfect gift. What an enlargement of mind such contemplations brought to the simple shepherd. He was daily coming into a more

intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths, for fresh themes to inspire his song, and to wake the music of his harp. He poured out the rich melody of his voice upon the air, and it echoed from the hills as if responsive to the rejoicing of the angels' songs in Heaven.

David, in the beauty and might of his young manhood, was taking a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. His opportunities of contemplation and meditation served to enrich him with that wisdom and piety that made him beloved of God and angels. As he contemplated the perfections of his Creator, richer discoveries of God opened before his soul. As his admiration increased more and more, his heart thrilled with more fervent adoration and ecstasy. As obscure thoughts were illuminated, as difficulties were made plain, as contradictions were reconciled, as perplexities were harmonized, fresh songs of melody and praise were offered before God. Each ray of new light brought forth fresh bursts of rapture, and sweeter anthems of devotion, to the glory of God and the Redeemer. The love that moved him, the sorrows which beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought, and, as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart beat with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

June 15, 1888

The Coronation of David

When David was assured of the death of Saul and Jonathan, he mourned with sincere sorrow for the king and prince of Israel. When the days of mourning were ended, after calm and earnest reflection he decided that he ought to take some immediate action in behalf of the imperiled and defeated nation. By divine appointment he had been anointed as the king of Israel, and it was fitting that he should take measures for the prosperity of the kingdom. He inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron."

Hebron was twenty miles south of Jerusalem. It was originally called Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba, the father of Anak. Later it was called Mamre, and here was the burial-place of the patriarchs, "the cave of Machpelah." The city lies in a deep valley surrounded by fertile hill country and fruitful lands. The most beautiful vineyards of Palestine we found on its borders, together with numerous plantations of olive and other fruit trees, and excellent pasturage.

David consulted with his faithful followers, and told them what the Lord, who was mighty in counsel, had revealed to him. In accordance with the instruction of the Lord, they prepared to follow the directions given, and were soon in marching order. The armed men came first, then their wives and children, and in the rear followed the flocks and herds. As the caravan approached the city, the men of Judah were waiting to welcome David as the future leader and king of Israel. On his arrival they made immediate preparations for his coronation.

The Philistines did not oppose the action of Judah in making David king, for they thought it would work for their own interest in the end, if they quietly accepted the situation. They expected that

David's power would extend, and that he would become a mighty sovereign. But although the nations around him did not interfere with his plans, David's throne and kingly reign were not to be secure from trouble. His coronation by the men of Judah was scarcely accomplished before Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, through the influence of Abner was proclaimed king, and set upon a rival throne in Israel. The dark work of conspiracy had begun. Abner had been commander-in-chief of Saul's army, and he was well qualified for the position. He was the most distinguished man in the ranks of the people of Israel. He knew that David was appointed by the Lord as the successor of Saul to the throne, but he who had marshaled every army, who had hunted and pursued David while Saul was still living, was not willing that the anointed of the Lord should be established in the kingdom over which Saul had reigned.

The circumstances under which Abner was placed, served to develop his real character, and he revealed himself as a man who was controlled by ambition, unprincipled at heart, and only desirous of exaltation to a high position before men. He acted against David without the least reverence for God's expressed command, or the slightest regard for the dictates of an enlightened conscience. Abner had a decided hatred of David. He had been intimately associated with Saul, and had been influenced by the spirit of the king to despise the man whom God had chosen to reign on the throne of Israel. Once having placed himself on the wrong side, he brought all his power and influence to bear against the servant of God. His hatred had been increased by the cutting rebuke that David had given him at the time when the cruse of water and the spear of the king had been taken from the side of Saul, as he slept in the cave. He remembered how David had reminded him of his fault before the king and the people of Israel, and had cried in their hearing, "Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster." This reproof had rankled in his breast, and he determined to carry out his revengeful purposes, and create division in Israel, whereby he himself might be exalted. To this end he employed the representative of departed royalty to advance his own selfish ambitions and purposes. He knew that the people loved Jonathan. His memory was cherished, and Saul's first successful campaigns were not forgotten by the army. With determination worthy a better cause, the rebel chieftain went forward to carry out his plans. At Mahanaim he secured the coronation of Ishbosheth, and the tribes of Israel proclaimed him their king, but Judah still acknowledged David as their sovereign. For two years the son of Saul enjoyed his honors in his secluded capital.

"There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David," for Abner was determined to gain his desire at any cost. The question may be asked, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Success, in such a case, is a terrible disaster. Far better is humility, and the loss of high-sounding titles, than to run any risk of the loss of the soul. Better far the cross and the disappointment, better far shattered hopes, and the world's neglect, than to sit with princes and forfeit Heaven. Abner had desired honor, and he was determined to have it at any cost. David had rebuked him before Israel, and his proud spirit chafed under the words of reproof. His malice and hate were directed toward him who had discovered and pointed out the weakness of his character; and those whom God leads and guides in these last days will experience trials of a similar nature to those that came upon David, the servant of God. There is a decided hatred of reproof in the hearts of men. Cautions and warnings are not thankfully received, and, as with Abner,

so those who cherish pride, will manifest a spirit of malice toward those who administer reproof. Satan seems to take possession of those who wish to rank among the highest, and yet have not those true principles that would place them in positions of trust and responsibility. They would rather be exalted by the enemies of the truth, and be poor and miserable and wretched in the high estimate of Heaven, than to submit to humiliation in the ranks of the servants of God. Such men go out from the body of the believers, denying the faith they once proclaimed; they deliberately set aside one of the simplest and most unequivocal commandments of God, that they may exalt themselves, and follow the way of the world; but those who humbly wait on the Lord, fulfilling his requirements, will be exalted in due time.

The Scriptures declare that the house of "David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." And the time came that the enemies of David were slain. After the death of Ishbosheth, there was a general desire among the leading men of Israel that David should be proclaimed as the king of all the tribes of Israel. "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh." There seemed to be an awakening among the people to acknowledge God's ways, and to yield up their own ways. They understood the purpose of the Lord concerning David, but they had worked contrary to their light and knowledge. They dare not longer hold themselves as enemies to the Lord's appointed ruler. They acknowledged now what they would have acknowledged long before if they had followed the convictions of their own hearts, and had not yielded their reason to deception and delusion. They declare of David, "Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel." When they were leavened with the spirit of Saul and Abner, they did not care to be the friend of David. They regarded him as an enemy, and treated him as such, thus acting the part of traitors, because they were deceived and blinded, and were working in darkness, contrary to the will of God. Now as their eyes begin to be opened to the real nature of the course which they have pursued, they desire to be at peace with David.

"So all the elders of Israel came to the King to Hebron; and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord." They assured the king that they recognized his divine appointment to the kingdom of Israel, and David was greatly pleased, for he knew that their hearts had been touched by the Spirit of the Lord, and their eyes had been enlightened to see light in God's light. He knew that the promises of God to him and to Israel would be fulfilled if they walked according to the counsel of the Lord. It was evident to his mind that the dealings of the Lord with him had prepared him for the duties and responsibilities of his office. Through the providence of God, the way had been opened for him to come to the throne of Israel. He had no personal ambition to gratify, for he had not sought the honor to which he had been brought.

More than eight thousand of the descendants of Aaron, and of the Levites, waited upon David. The great change in the sentiments of the people was marked and decisive. The revolution was quiet and dignified, befitting the great work they were doing. Nearly half a million souls, the former subjects of Saul, thronged Hebron. The very hills and valleys were alive with the multitudes. The hour for the coronation was appointed, and the man who had been expelled from the courts of Saul, who had fled to preserve his life to the mountains and hills, and to the caves of the earth, was about to receive the highest honor that can be conferred upon man by his brother man. David, the hero of the hour, was arrayed in the royal robe, while around him was a most imposing company. Priests

and elders clothed in the garments of their sacred office, officers and soldiers with glittering spear and helmet, and strangers from long distances, stood to witness the coronation of the chosen king. The sacred oil was put upon the brow of David by the high priest, for the anointing by Samuel was a prophetic ceremony of what would take place at the inauguration of the king. The time had come, and David, by solemn rite, is consecrated by the nation to his office as God's appointed vicegerent. The scepter, a signal of royalty and power, is placed in his hands. The covenant is written of his righteous sovereignty, and the people give their pledges of loyalty. The diadem is placed upon his brow, and the coronation ceremony is over. Israel has a king by the appointment of God.

Saul had been after the heart of Israel, but David is a man after God's own heart. And now the procession moves toward the gate of the city with the highest enthusiasm, crying, "Long live king David." The musicians express the gladness of the hour by notes of joy with voice and instrument. When David is seated upon his throne, his subjects congratulate him that God has established him as the ruler of Israel, and they declare their joy in having such a king to reign over them. The ceremonies of the day were over, and he who had waited patiently on the Lord beheld the promise of God fulfilled. "And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

June 22, 1888

David's Throne Established at Jerusalem

As soon as David was established on the throne of Israel, he began to plan for a more appropriate position for the capital of his realm. Twenty miles from Hebron a place was selected as the future metropolis of the kingdom. Before Joshua had led the armies of Israel over Jordan to the promised possession, it had been called Salem. Near this place Abraham had proved his loyalty to God. He had prepared an altar, and had laid upon it his only son Isaac, in obedience to the command of the Lord. Here had been the home of Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, nearly nine hundred years before the coronation of David. It held a central and elevated position in the country, and it was barricaded by an environment of hills. On the north rose Lebanon, with its snow-crowned summits.

Away to the south stretched the Arabian desert, with its moving sands. To the west were the waters of the Mediterranean, and to the east were the Dead Sea and the river Jordan.

In order to secure this much-desired location, the Hebrews must dispossess a remnant of the old Canaanites. King David called for men to besiege and take the city of Jebus from their heathen enemies. A large force gathered at the command of the King, and David left his throne, and his armies surrounded and took the city, and the capital of Israel was moved to Jebus. This heathen name was changed to the City of David, and it was afterward called Jerusalem, and Mount Zion. "And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

Tyre was a rich city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and Hiram, king of Tyre, sought the friendship of Israel, and rendered them assistance in various undertakings. Hiram "sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house. And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all the tribes of Israel, they "came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold." The Philistines

marshaled an immense force, hoping again to bring Israel into subjection. They spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. "David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into my hand?" And the Lord bade David go up, and promised to deliver the Philistines into his hand.

King David asked counsel of the Lord in his extremity, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and answered his servant, and Israel was victorious. But the Philistines made a more decided display, that they might intimidate Israel. Their numbers were very great. Again David sought the Lord, and the great I AM became the general of the armies of Israel. God himself laid the plan of the attack. He instructed David, saying, "Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the top of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines."

If David had chosen his own way, as did Saul, success would not have attended his warfare. But David did as the Lord had commanded, and he "smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer." Saul had been honored of God to occupy a high position of trust. He was tested and proven of the Lord, but he did not obey the voice of God. He had become tired of his simplicity, and he chose to follow his own finite judgment, and departed from the Lord. Saul had been a man of striking personal attractions, and at the beginning of his reign the Spirit of the Lord had been upon him. After his coronation he had been a changed man; but pride came into his heart, and he became lifted up in his own estimation. He thought, as some success had attended his plans and his generalship, that his prosperity was due to the wise movements he had made. The people praised him, and gave glory to him, and did not acknowledge the Lord as the prime mover in all their successes. Through his appointed agents, God had given definite instruction; but those who were self-sufficient, and puffed up with pride,—the poor, finite beings whom God had given position, and endowed with honor,—had concluded that they understood the situation of things far better than did the Lord, and they determined to follow their own way, and have their own will carried out, and unite with the godless.

The Maker of mind possesses in himself alone the principles of life and action that must regulate and govern inferior minds. The natural, selfish mind, as it exists in its carnal state, acts without reference to God, and is evil, and only evil, continually. The soul cannot be in a state of peace or safety unless it is waiting upon God and receiving instruction from him. Saul's heart was estranged from God; and when he was reproved by Samuel, he stubbornly refused to admit that he had disobeyed God, although the lowing of the oxen, and the bleating of the sheep, sounded in the ears of the king and the prophet, and the king of the Amalekites, who, with all his nation and their possessions, was devoted to utter destruction, was preserved alive in the camp of Israel. While Saul persisted in self-justification, he knew in his heart that he had decidedly transgressed the commandment of the Lord. He was displeased that the Lord did not recognize his judgment, and approve of the victory he had gained, which was the most brilliant of his successes. But the Lord does not look upon successes as men do. Obedience to his word is counted as of more value than the most brilliant conquest that is gained in opposition to his will. In heart and act, Saul was decidedly opposed to the will of God. He flattered himself that in sparing Agag he was manifesting more mercy than the Judge of all the earth. And he told the prophet that the sheep and oxen, which God had ordered to be slain, were to be presented before him as sacrifices in Gilgal.

We have often been grieved to meet this same spirit of self-justification in those who profess in this day to be doing the will of God, while they are living in transgression of his holy law. Those who depart from God's way to follow their own way, refuse to acknowledge their perversity and sin when reproved by the servants of God. As did Saul, so do these stubbornly fortify themselves in their rebellion, that they may hold fast to their errors and defects. God's voice is heard, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" but they have wandered on forbidden ground, and in place of making full and free confession they do everything that is possible to make it appear that they are rebuked without cause, and are innocent of the charges brought against them. In this way they make God out a liar. The displeasure of the Lord is kindled against them; and unless they repent, and turn to him, his wrath will certainly fall upon them. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

Those whose deeds are evil, will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved and their real characters revealed. If they continue in the path of transgression, and sever themselves entirely from the Redeemer, stubbornness, and sullenness, and a spirit of revenge will take possession of them, and they will say to their own souls, Peace, peace, when there is every reason that they should be alarmed, for their steps are directed toward destruction. As Saul resisted the reproofs of the servant of the Lord, this spirit took possession of him. He defied the Lord, he defied his servant, and his enmity toward David was the outworking of the murderous spirit that comes into the heart of those who justify themselves in the face of their guilt.

David had sought and obtained divine instruction, and he obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gave the glory of his success to the Lord, who had delivered the enemies of Israel into his hands. Oh that the people of God, at all times and in every extremity, would seek the Lord, who is the sovereign ruler of all worlds, and the general of all the armies of those who honor and serve him. We need to pray more, and to trust less in our own power. When sincere prayer is offered, and our souls are humbled in deep contrition before God, and are not lifted up in self-importance, the Lord will bless his people. The promise is given, that those who commit their way unto the Lord, shall be directed in the path of righteousness. Those who truly seek and obtain God's favor and help, and preserve their union with Heaven, will not glorify themselves, but they will glorify God for his great power and majesty that has wrought in their behalf.

June 29, 1888

Praise the Lord

The lovers of the truth of God should be the happiest people in the earth, because "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Holiness is happiness, because holiness is a part of Heaven. How can we be unhappy when we see so many evidences of the love of God to us, expressed in his created works? How many look with indifference upon the tokens of God's regard for their happiness! When I look upon the lofty trees, and contemplate the loving heavenly Father who has planted them for us, my heart is drawn out in praise and thanksgiving. We should seek to see the relation of natural things to the spiritual truths of God; then, in looking upon the works of nature, the mind will be instinctively drawn to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

The glorious things of nature seem to have been designed for the very purpose of illustrating Bible truth. It is evident that the Author of nature is the Author of the Bible. God is a lover of the beautiful,

and he has given unmistakable evidences of his love for man, in the beauties of the material world. He has garnished the Heavens with matchless and wonderful splendor. He has clothed the earth with a carpet of velvet-like green, and given to the flowers their beautiful and varied tints. Everywhere we look we see reasons for praising the God of Heaven.

Suppose that a benevolent person should provide a beautiful home, and surround it with everything to be desired, and then present it to a poor man who had nothing to give in exchange for it but a grateful heart. The benevolent man has no other motive in this act than to make the poor man happy, and give him an evidence of his love for him, and his interest in his welfare. Suppose that the recipient of these gifts should regard them with indifference, and even manifest dissatisfaction, by pointing out defects in the beautiful arrangements, would you not disapprove of this course? Would you not say this man is not worthy of such blessings, for he has no grateful remembrance of the loving giver?

Well, what are we doing with the gifts that God has so richly bestowed upon us? Do we not overlook the most precious things in nature? Do we not fail to appreciate the things that are lovely and charming to the senses, and manifest no gratitude, and have no thankfulness to return to God, who has provided these very things as an expression of his love toward us? Do we closely investigate these treasures in various ways, that we may take in all the depth of his love in providing them for our comfort and delight? Do the glories of earth, and sea, and sky, kindle in our hearts grateful, happy thoughts of God? Do you read in the lofty trees, in the waving grass, in the flowers of the field, the lesson that is taught there,—that God loves you?

I listen to the happy songsters caroling forth their hymns of praise to God above, and joy kindles in my own heart. But how does our heavenly Father regard the indifference with which men receive the tokens of his love to them? How can he look upon those who never give to him the glory that is due unto his great name? He is described in his created works, and nature teaches you of his character and majesty.

Said Jesus, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." And shall we be inconsiderate of the flowers of God? Shall we regard with indifference these tokens of the wonderful love of God toward fallen man? In contemplating the works of his hand, our imaginations are to be put to the stretch. We are to look up to the royal gifts that await the faithful and obedient child of Heaven. The apostle declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

We see the varied gifts of God in nature, but we see but the faintest gleaming of his glory. Our hearts should be filled with praise to him who will ever act in harmony with his own greatness; and in looking upon the works of God, by faith we may contemplate what we shall behold if we are fitted for the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love him. Then let us not go through the world neglecting to see and to appreciate the wonderful things with which God has surrounded us. Let us not forget to talk of the compassion of our heavenly Father, who hath provided all things richly to enjoy. Let us not begin to grumble, because we see thistles and thorns. God did not tell you to look upon these. He did not bid you grasp the thorns, that would wound and bruise your flesh, and grieve your spirit. Turn your eyes away from these things to the attractive loveliness of that which is beautiful. Think on these things, talk of the wonderful works of your Creator and Redeemer.

Talk of the price that was given to win these things for you. Dwell upon the theme of salvation. Talk of the tender love of God, who gave his only begotten Son to die on Calvary, that we might come into possession of eternal riches.

Oh, what value we may see every day in the unspeakable gifts of God! Shall we not rid the heart of the base thing that has taken possession of it, which makes us incapable of appreciating the matchless love of our heavenly Father? Shall we not now tune our hearts to praise God from whom all blessings flow? Let us stop every breath of complaint, and shape our words into songs of joy and thankfulness for the gift of his dear Son to save a perishing world. If we would be among those who will praise God in the world to come, we must begin to praise him here, and now. We must tune our hearts to the music of Heaven, which is praise to God and to the Lamb forever and ever. Let Christians show that they are Christ-like, that they are breathing in the atmosphere of Heaven.

Jesus says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." If Christians would manifest the joy that Christ is willing to give them, they would represent the religion of the Bible much better than they now do. We are to be in the world, but we are not to be of it. We are to see and appreciate all the beauties in nature, and we are to let the favors of God lift up our minds to the bountiful Giver. We are to express, by precept and example, that we are the possessors of peace, and trust, and fullness of joy. We are to cultivate gratitude and love and praise in our hearts, that through his promises, richer than precious pearls, we may discern the purposes of God toward us. As the flowers gather for themselves the hidden properties of earth and air, and develop into things of beauty to delight our senses, so Christians are privileged to gather from the garden of God's promises, faith and hope, peace, joy, and support. They are to give out again to others a life fragrant with good works.

In the promises, God withdraws the veil from Heaven, and bids us look into the glory prepared for those who love him. Why do we so constantly take our gaze away from these things of unsurpassed loveliness in the inheritance of the saints in light, and fix our eyes upon the things that are dark and forbidding? Why do we gather up the clouds of unbelief about our souls, and enshroud ourselves in an atmosphere that is only discouraging, and will bring death to our spirituality? God would have us learn lessons from the lily that opens its pure white blossoms upon the bosom of the lake. The flower reposes in spotless loveliness, while all around it, on the surface of the water, are unseemly and obnoxious things. The lily strikes its stem deeper and still deeper into the pure waters and sands, far beneath the surface of the lake, and refuses everything that would taint and pollute its purity. It only draws to itself those properties that will aid its development into a spotless lily.

Shall we not learn lessons from this lily? Although we are in a world teeming with moral corruption, we have no need to gather to our souls the disgusting pollutions of earth. We may refuse the evil. We may choose the good. We may gather to our souls the precious, the pure, the heavenly; we may put into our character-building solid timber, that will make a fit temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand we may gather to our souls evil suggestions, and doubts and impurities. We may communicate with the prince of darkness, and refuse the Prince of light. We may put unworthy, unsound timbers into our character-building; and our thoughts, our words, our influence, will lead others into darkness. Our words and works will not be a savor of life unto life, but of death unto death. While we claim to be Christians, if we do not gather with Christ we shall be agents of

Satan, to beguile souls away into the paths of destruction. God forbid that this should be the case. Let your life be a continual testimony that you belong to Christ. Represent your Lord in kindness, in forbearance, in long-suffering, in patience, in thinking no evil, in cheerfulness, in fullness of joy. You will do this, if you let your faith penetrate every cloud. Draw to yourself the graces of the Spirit, weave them into a character that will develop itself in good works. Let men see that because you have become a partaker of the divine nature, you have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

In the work of overcoming sinful habits, special grace will be given to all that sincerely desire it. We may come to the divine Helper, who is able to succor those who are in the midst of temptation and evil. The loving kindness of God is not all reserved for the future, eternal reward, but it is abundant for the present needs of his people. All the changes of life, all the hard places in the way to Heaven, will be blessed by the grace that is sufficient for every trial. We have assuring promises of protection and help. The everlasting arms will be beneath us to encourage, sustain, and uphold. Poverty or wealth, sickness or health, simplicity or wisdom, all are provided for in the promises of his grace. There is light for the intellect, love for the heart, and vigor for every faculty. If we will not lay hold on the blessings God has provided for us, if we will only grasp hold of the thorns and the thistles, to wound and bruise ourselves, we have no right to complain of God's dealings with us.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Praise God, brethren and sisters. Praise him with heart, and soul, and voice, and thus you will be learning to sing the songs of Heaven.

July 6, 1888

Steps in Conversion

He who desires salvation should fix his mind upon the cross of Calvary. It is there that the sinner may behold what sin has done. There he can see the infinite sacrifice that has been made to redeem him from the penalty of the broken law of God. As the transgressor realizes his lost condition, he sees in Christ his only hope of salvation. From the cross he learns precious lessons of the life, the self-denial, the self-sacrifice, the goodness, the mercy and love of the Son of God, who gave himself for us. Calvary portrays the matchless attributes of the divine character. As he looks to the cross, he will hate sin; for he will understand that it was sin that rejected, reproached, denied, scourged, and crucified the Majesty of Heaven. He will love the Father, who gave all Heaven to men in the gift of his only begotten Son. His heart will be filled with an eager desire for the knowledge of God, and for an understanding of the plan of salvation. He who has had a vivid view of the cross, will hate sin, and love righteousness. His doubts will vanish in the clear light reflected from the cross of Calvary.

The plain statements of the word of God declare that “sin is the transgression of the law;” and as the sinner realizes his attitude toward God, if he is truly repentant he will hasten to leave the black banner of the prince of rebellion, and will take his stand under the blood-stained banner of the Prince Emmanuel. He will receive the divine illumination, and will approve the things that are excellent. He will see that Christ is the propitiation for his sin; not that sin might become a virtue,

but that it might become exceedingly sinful. He will cease to transgress the divine law, and will take his stand with those who are loyal to the God of Heaven.

The word of God will be read with a humble and teachable spirit by him who is seeking for its hidden treasures of wisdom and truth. As men seek to come into harmony with God, they will find that the offense of the cross has not ceased. As the sinner yields obedience to all the requirements of God, he will find that principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in high places, are arrayed against him. But the follower of Christ cannot avoid shame and reproach. He cannot go with the multitude of them that do evil, who make void the law of God by their tradition. His eyes must be fixed upon the cross where Jesus died that humanity might be elevated and ennobled, and re-instated in the favor of the heavenly Father. He must follow Him whose righteousness shall be imputed unto all that are faithful and obedient.

Through the perfect obedience of the Son of God, through the merits of his blood, and the power of his intercession, man may become a partaker of the divine nature, and escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. He may again be brought into the favor of God,—not while in willful transgression, not while trampling upon the great moral standard of righteousness, but by obedience to the precepts of God's law, through faith in his Son.

The cross of Calvary tells how Christ has magnified the law and made it honorable. It required the infinite merits of his blood to make an atonement for those who receive his love, and follow in his footsteps. Man may obtain pardon and peace only through Him who has loved us, and who will wash us from our sins in his own blood. Those who have been convinced of sin before the law, and have exercised repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, cease to make void the law of God. Although the whole world were arrayed against them, they could but vindicate its righteousness, and fulfill its obligations.

We could never have known the value of Christ, except through an understanding of the exalted claims of the law of Jehovah. We could never have appreciated the depth of the pit from which Christ has rescued us, except through a comprehension of the excellence of the precepts of truth. Never could we have understood the depth of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, unless we could have beheld the marvelous character of the law of Heaven and earth. In the light of that holy law, the sinner sees the Redeemer as he is,—full of mercy, compassion, goodness, and love; and by looking to Jesus, and by contemplating his matchless love to such a sinner as himself, his heart is filled with gratitude and heavenly peace.

As the sinner grasps the promises of God by faith, a blessed confidence comes into his soul, and he receives the illumination of the Spirit of God. A contemplation of the cross of Christ on Calvary, enables the mind to form correct ideas of the plan of redemption. Those who do this will have a better appreciation of what the sinner must become in character and life if he would be accounted worthy of eternal life. The law of God will stand out in clear distinctness before the mind's eye.

Although the law of God is of a holy and unchangeable character, the adversary of God and man, the first great rebel who transgressed its precepts in Heaven, has led men in all ages to war against God. Through all manner of deceptions he has gathered them under the black banner of rebellion. But Jesus came to our world to bring to men moral power to resist the devices of Satan, and to become loyal subjects to the God of Heaven. As the sinner sees that sin is the transgression of the law, and

that the law is the foundation of God's government in Heaven and in earth, he makes haste to place his feet in the path of righteousness, that he may be without offense till the day of Christ.

Those who seek, by every effort possible, to make void the law of God, act contrary to their convictions, and use arguments that have no force, because "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But the humble, honest, sincere soul will approve the things that are excellent, notwithstanding the fact that by so doing he will have to become a partaker with Christ of his sufferings. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, the obedient child of God will manifest to the world that he is vitally connected with Christ, the living vine.

The word of truth declares that "by their fruits ye shall know them." In order to test the character of every man's fruits, it is necessary to have a standard. God has provided that standard for us in the precepts of his law, and there is nothing else by which to try men's characters and doctrines. Says the prophet, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The world has been following the prince of darkness; but those who desire to follow Christ, will have to come out from the world, and be separate from its follies and fashions. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."

Nothing in the line of fables can satisfy a soul that is longing for Bible truth, and who feels that eternal interests are at stake. A plausible supposition will not do, nor can an assertion be found sufficient to quiet an aroused conscience. The earnest seeker for truth must have a plain "Thus saith the Lord." He does not want to approve of unrighteousness, but of things that are excellent. He is determined not to rest his hope of salvation on anything that is of a doubtful nature. He must have the assurance of the word of God as to whether he is a rebel to his law, or loyal to his rules of government. Ingenious, fine-spun theories, and arguments, that seek to prove that God's law is of no further force, do not satisfy a soul tortured with conviction of sin. He cannot rest in suspense. He thinks, "Suppose that the law of God does hold its claims upon every human being as it did upon Adam in Eden, and I should receive these ingenious theories, and be found on the side of the great rebel at last. Then I would be a lost soul, and would justly share the fate of the transgressor." Groaning under the load of sin, he cries out, "Am I God's friend, or his foe? As he contemplates the cross of Calvary, the true light shines to him. He sees, in the plan of salvation, that the death of Christ is an unanswerable argument as to the immutable character of the law. The law of God is as unchangeable as its author; and because not one precept could be changed or altered to meet man in his fallen condition, the Son of God had to die, the just for the unjust. He bore the penalty of man's disobedience, that man might be re-instated in the favor of God, and by a life of humble obedience might form such a character as would be accounted worthy of a place in the kingdom of God.

As these truths flash upon the mind of the sinner, a moral revolution takes place. He realizes that the testimony of the word and the Spirit agree; and doubt is swept away. He can rejoice in Christ as his living Saviour, his substitute, his surety, his strength and righteousness. The day-star has arisen in his heart. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory; and with John, the language of the soul is, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." He has a foundation for his faith. It is Christ, the Rock of Ages. He dares to love him, for the light

reflected from the cross of Calvary reveals his Saviour to his soul, as "the chiefest among ten thousand," and the one "altogether lovely."

July 13, 1888

The Christian's Work

The true Christian will be meek, gentle, willing to learn, teachable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. Those who are truly religious will not become stubborn, set in their way, and unyielding in their opinions. They will be ready to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good. They will consider themselves as learners in the school of Christ. They will not be of that class who are ever ready to lecture others to condemn and criticise, and to impugn the motives of their friends and neighbors. The Christian is to represent Jesus, who is the light of the world. To take a position as above the brethren, is to take the position of the Pharisee. Let the meekness of Jesus appear in words of wisdom, and in an irreproachable conduct that will recommend your faith to those with whom you associate.

Heaven is open to us. Everyone may find access to the source of strength. From the gates ajar, the light of the better world is shining into the path of the just. Mothers may come to Jesus with their worries and perplexities. They may find grace sufficient to support them, and to aid them in the management of their children. They may be enabled to conduct their household affairs in a manner that will glorify God. Let them study less how to make the outward appearance attractive, and devote more time to the education and training of their children, that they may meet the approval of God. He who is high and lifted up, esteems a meek and quiet spirit as of great price. Its possessor is of more value in his eyes than the gold of Ophir. If, then, this spirit makes character so acceptable to God, how earnestly should mothers pray and labor, that their households may be adorned with this precious ornament. If the many hours that are devoted to improving the outward appearance, were devoted by mothers to prayer, and to the study of the Scriptures, in order to learn how to mould the characters of their charges, what a difference would be seen in the society of the church which is composed of these families.

The lesson which we have individually to learn in the school of Christ, is how we can use our God-given influence and ability in a manner which Christ will accept, and in a way that will make us the light of the world. You are not to study how you can please the world, or how you can enjoy the world, but how you may exert an influence that will bless man, and lead souls to Christ. Dedicate yourselves to Christ. Commit the keeping of your souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator. Take hold of his strength, and he will work with your efforts. You cannot afford to waste or misuse your God-given powers or opportunities. The time is now yours to perfect your own characters and those of your children, that you may be useful in this life, and fitted for the eternal life that is to come. A life devoted to God in works of faithfulness, is a witness to men of the power of godliness.

There are many who forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; but Christ, the Rock of Ages, invites the weary and the wandering to come unto him and find rest for their souls, to come and obtain peace and salvation. Many are walking apart from Christ, not obeying his words or working his works, and yet they are pretending to be holy; but this claim will not stand the test of the Judgment. It is true that our works will not save us, and yet no one will be saved without good works. A pure life, a holy character, must

be attained by everyone who would enter the portals of the city of God. The moralist, trusting in his own goodness, will be found wanting. Like Cain, he presents a sacrifice which does not recognize the blood of Jesus as essential to cleanse from the defilement of sin. Every sinner must have virtue that is not possessed by himself. Our door-post must be marked by the atoning blood, thus acknowledging our own inefficiency, and the merits of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Fathers and mothers, you should feel the necessity of saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Then the world would not hesitate to place you with Christians. Men will not be acquainted with the motives that actuate you, or know the principles that move you; but they will see your determination to move in the fear of God. You will not join them in the chase after pleasure, nor in following the fashions and customs of the world. You will not be in harmony with their tastes, their plans, and conversations. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

As Christ is pure in his sphere, man may be pure in his. We have a work to do for ourselves which no one can do for us, and we must appreciate the time and the opportunities that are given to us, that we may prepare for the eternal world. Fathers and mothers, it is your privilege to be sanctified to God, and to bring your children to Jesus, by earnest prayer, by living faith, by constant, untiring effort. Never was Jesus more willing to prove to you that he is the Rock of Ages than he is today. Never before have the people of God had greater encouragement to trust in Jesus than they have today. It will be very hard for us to excuse our neglect, or to bring reasons why we should not believe in our Saviour, and sing,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in thee."

The life of the true-hearted Christian will be as the light of the world. The spiritual life will not be manifested by proud boasting. It has its seat in a heart that displays the working of the Spirit of Christ in the character and thought. There will be manifested meekness, humility, tender compassion, love, faith, and hope. Teach your children to seek meekness, quietness, and purity. These are the ornaments that can be worn with the approval of God. Parents, let your adorning not be the outward adorning, but the inward adorning of the heart, in that which is not corruptible. The ornaments that God would have the Christian wear are of an immortal character.

Parents should seek to become thoroughly acquainted with their children. Oh, may the Lord impress them with the necessity of laboring for them, in order to bring them to Jesus! Oh that they might realize the far-reaching influence of the impressions of early life! These impressions are either for good or for evil, and they leave their traces in the character, which is developing day by day. Parents will be held responsible for the influence they exert, and for the development of their children. In the day of Judgment they will have to meet the record of their work.

No higher work was ever committed to mortals than the shaping of character. Children are not only to be educated, but trained as well; and who can tell the future of a growing child, or youth? Let the greatest care be bestowed upon the culture of your children. One child, properly disciplined in the

principles of truth, who has the love and fear of God woven through the character, will possess a power for good in the world that cannot be estimated. The work of wise parents will never be appreciated by the world, but when the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, their work will appear as God views it, and will be rewarded before men and angels. It will be seen that one child who has been brought up in a faithful way, has been a light in the world. It cost tears and anxiety and sleepless nights to oversee the character-building of this child, but the work was done wisely, and the parents hear the "Well done" of the Master.

Mothers, you can find no greater missionary field wherein to exercise your talents, than in the home, where your children are to be reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You are not merely to dress them, feed them, and send them to school; but you are to patiently instruct them, giving them line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. You are to restrain the evil tendencies, and to encourage the good. Day by day you are to seek the help of God by earnest importuning and supplication. To be at ease, to suffer them to go on in a wrong course, indifferent to the results, is a neglect of your God-given duties, and will reveal the worst effects for time and for eternity. Satan is at hand to crowd in evil thoughts, to lead them into evil ways. He will possess the heart that is not given to Jesus that he may impress it, and wash it, and cleanse it, and sanctify it for the courts of Heaven.

The mother should not be off guard for a moment. She is doing a work that will tell in time and in eternity. She should learn to depend upon God with implicit confidence. Children, when they become of age, will prize the parent who labored faithfully, and would not permit them to cherish wrong feelings or indulge in evil habits. Parents, you may find your children impatient of restraint, at first. They may rebel, but you should insist upon obedience. Children trained to obey their parents will be in a condition to love God, and to yield to the claims of his law.

July 20, 1888

The Need of Earnestness

We must not take the word of any man as authoritative on matters that concern our eternal interests. We must go to the Scriptures for ourselves. We must search for truth as for hidden treasures. No man can pay a redemption price for our souls; and those who stand condemned at the bar of God because they believed the testimony of man rather than the testimony of God, will appreciate the worth of the word of God. Those who deceived them cannot save their souls, nor the souls that they were instrumental in leading into error, away from Christ and the truth. God's word was given to lead men into truth, but many did not search its pages for themselves, and thus they were separated from him by wicked works.

The time in which we live is full of peril. Although Noah, and Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could not save son or daughter. They could only deliver their own souls by their righteousness. We must individually stand or fall for ourselves, as we shall be judged by the great moral standard of God's holy law. We must watch. We must pray. We must search the Scriptures. We must know that we have a foundation for our faith. The cross of Calvary reveals the fact that if sin is found upon us, we shall hear the word, "Depart, ye workers of iniquity." We want to dig deep, and lay a sure foundation. We should be in earnest to obtain a living experience for ourselves. We must be partakers of the divine nature, if we would not be found warring against the divine law. We want our

sins blotted out, and our names written in the Lamb's book of life. We must be joined to Christ, grow up in him, and become like him in character and spirit. If we are thus united to Christ, we shall feel our constant dependence upon him. We shall see that there is nothing in us to make us self-sufficient, nothing in us in which we can trust; therefore we shall be clothed with humility.

I would that our eyes could be opened to see and to realize our danger of departing from the principles of God's law. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, the adorable Son of God, agonized with the Father, with strong crying and tears. This was not on his own account; but because we feel so little our need of fervent, earnest prayer; because we see so little our danger. He wept because we have no tears to shed. Our hearts are in danger of becoming hard and unimpressible.

We should seek more and more for the light and knowledge that we so much need. We want the grace of God abundantly bestowed upon us, that we may flourish as the palm-tree. We are in danger of losing our souls, because of confidence in self. We want to see our great need of a daily connection with Christ. We want to see that he alone can cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Why are our hearts so cold? Why is our service so lifeless?

Let us arise in faith, and press closer to Jesus. Let us rejoice in his love. We may obtain the most precious victories. There is help for us in God. Let us grasp the promises, and look to Calvary. Jesus died to save us from sin; then let us cease to sin, and open the heart wide, that he may come in and abide with us.

The loveliness of the character of Christ, must be seen in his followers. It was his delight to do the will of God. Zeal for the glory of God was the controlling power in his mind. His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitter hostility of those who hated truth and righteousness. Because he would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, he aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity.

The spotless Son of God was derided and mocked because of his unswerving obedience to the principle of God's holy law. So it will be with all who live godly in Christ Jesus.

Let no one talk of an easy religion. Let no one imagine that the path to Heaven is smooth and pleasant, that there is nothing to do but to believe. We are to be workers together with God; and through diligent and painstaking effort alone, can the conditions of the promises be met. The words of inspiration declare that "faith without works is dead, being alone." We are exhorted to "fight the good fight of faith." We are to wrestle with unseen foes, to labor, to watch, to strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will be content with simple seeking, and will fail of an entrance. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;" but "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

We are enjoined to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We are required to take upon our necks the yoke of Christ, because every good impulse comes from the Spirit of God, and we are quickened to earnest effort for a higher life. We are to strive to repress every word that implies a doubt; for doubt spoken, is a seed sown in the minds of others, and eternity alone will reveal the result. Here is the conflict, to keep back words that we are inclined to speak against God and each other; for "by thy

words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Our words are influences that impress the minds of others, and they are reflected in every direction. Shall we cast suspicion upon others? Shall we start the root of bitterness whereby many shall be defiled? Religion is a principle to be carried out in practical life, and developed in character and actions. We are ever to represent Jesus. We are to comfort, uphold, and encourage our brethren. We are to strengthen those who are weak in moral power. Oh! be sure that you do not misrepresent the character of your divine Lord by claiming to be sons and daughters of God, while speaking and acting like the children of the wicked one. Do not leave a false impression upon the minds of unbelievers, that Christians are a gloomy, unhappy people. Why should we be unhappy? If our feet are in the royal path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, what is there that can make us unhappy and restless?

Have not some of you mistaken the way, and taken the wrong path? Shall we not search carefully, and see whether or not we have real Bible religion? Let us ponder the warnings, instructions, and promises of God, until our souls burn within us, and our whole desire is to stand by the side of Jesus, and wear his yoke, and bear his burden, and find rest unto our souls.

July 27, 1888

A Vital Connection with Christ

He who has genuine faith in Christ will have a knowledge of Christ. He will have a growing sense of the power and preciousness of redeeming love and grace, because Christ has been brought into his daily life. He believes in Christ as his Saviour, and hopes in the mercy of God. Although he knows that he is a sinner, and deserves the wrath of God, yet he looks to Calvary and sees the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He knows that Christ has died for him, and that in Christ it is possible to keep the commandments of God. He has the witness in his own soul of the virtue and the love of Jesus, which his faith grasps, and appropriates to himself.

His faith is not of that fraudulent character which refuses to lift the cross, and follow Christ by yielding obedience to all the precepts of Jehovah. It is not of that presumptuous nature that lays claim to the promises of God without complying with the conditions upon which they are to be granted. His is a faith that understands what the Saviour meant when he said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” True faith takes the word of God and weaves it into the life and character. Faith lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Christ explained to his disciples the meaning of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

Faith is that mysterious and mighty principle that attracts the soul of man to God. As the sapless branch is united to the living vine, so we must be connected with Christ. There are two kinds of connection between the branches and the vine stock. One is visible, but superficial. The other is invisible and vital. So there is an apparent union, a membership with the church, and a profession of religion, which, though in itself good, is too often unaccompanied by saving faith in Jesus or living obedience to the commandments of God. The branches that are connected with Christ, the living vine, will make it manifest by bearing much fruit in good works to the glory of God. But the branches which have nothing but an apparent union, will be fruitless. As the branch cannot possibly bring

forth fruit without a vital connection with the parent stock, so the Christian can be fruitful in good works only as union with Christ is made and preserved. The ruin of those who are not connected with Christ, is as complete as though they had no name to live; for they are dead. Christ compares them to lifeless branches that are gathered and burned in the fire. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

There can be no actual connection with Christ if the person who claims it has no practical knowledge of the sufficiency of the grace of God that is potent to elevate, ennoble, refine, and fit the Christian for the courts of Heaven. Those who know Christ, will make manifest the desirableness of his love and peace. Every genuine believer will taste, and see that the Lord is good, and will show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into the marvelous light of the children of God. The true believer not only has faith, but he has a knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from the defilement of sin. Christ crucified is the subject of his thought and meditation. The word of God to him is not a cunningly devised fable. Christ crucified, though unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, is to him the power and wisdom of God. When assailed by skeptics, his living experience in the things of God will furnish him with arguments that cannot be gainsaid, and will enable him to resist every dart of the wicked one, so that even the uneducated believer may have simple and genuine proofs of his position, that cannot be overborne by the doubts and cavils of infidels. He can relate that which he has himself experienced. He can say, "I know whom I have believed."

Those who connect with the school of Christ will be careful to obey the words of the Lord. Their faith will be founded upon knowledge, for they will be diligent students of the Scriptures. Like the humble fishermen who united with the Saviour to learn of him, those who love Christ today will not only listen to his words, but practice his precepts, and follow in his footsteps. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, has opened their understanding, and has given them knowledge and judgment, that they may approve things that are excellent. The most educated, as well as the most ignorant, may become partakers of the knowledge of Christ's salvation. The great apostle himself learned in the school of Christ, and strengthened his faith by his experience in following Jesus, and by acquiring knowledge of Bible history. He convinced men that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and Christ shed his glory upon the apostle, and he could speak from what he had seen and known.

It is the very knowledge that we gain daily, in our conflicts with Satan, that will be valuable to us in the future. It is the experience that we acquire in the things that Jesus is doing for us, in guarding our souls and bodies from the cruel power of our enemy, that will increase our hope and add to our power to fight our way through. In Paul's experience of suffering for his Lord, he realized the consolation and support of his Redeemer. His trials did not dishearten him, for the rich grace of God nerved him for the conflict, and with fortitude and courage, he gloried in tribulation.

What are we doing with the light God has given to us? In temporal matters, many give thought and attention, and close application of mind, in order to make a business success. Should we not give our very best talent to the service of God? Should we not seek to gain a greater knowledge, and a more intelligent manner of doing the work of the Lord? Are we content to exalt the temporal above the eternal interests?

As the apostle prayed for the Philippian brethren, so pray for yourselves, and for each other, "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." We should not be satisfied with our present spiritual attainments. If the Lord should open before us our condition as it really is, and we should see the danger there is of losing our souls, even those who now profess to be Christians would fall upon their knees, and pray earnestly, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The astonishing indifference and carelessness which many now feel, is because they are separated in their thoughts from God, and really ignorant of their own peril. If the truth does not have a sanctifying influence upon your life and character, you will be like the foolish virgins, whose lamps were gone out at the very time when the bridegroom came to go in to the marriage. A theory of the truth is not enough. There is a high standard for us to reach. Our conflict is a continual conflict with the powers of darkness, and we must put on the whole armor of God, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. But how few are willing to urge their way heavenward against every opposing force of evil in the world!

The apostle prayed that love might abound more and more. There must be a living faith, before there can be a living experience. There are many who have a certain formal knowledge of Christ, and an indefinite faith that does not have an active influence upon the life and character. This faith is not a saving faith. Our love for Jesus must commence here, if we expect to love him through the ages of eternity. All who love Christ will talk of him. How shall the world know of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of your Lord and Saviour, unless you make it the theme of your thought and conversation? If our hearts are rejoicing in the hope of beholding our coming Saviour, shall we not speak of it to others? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We shall have the Spirit of Christ, if we are in union with him; and with the same untiring love and patience, we shall seek that which is lost. One soul is worth the world. It is the purchase of the blood of Christ, and those who really love Christ will feel the value of the souls for whom he shed his precious blood.

The glory of the eternal world is just before us. Are you forwarding your treasure from this perishing earth to the land of safety? What care is taken to secure proper titles to your worldly possessions. Has your thought been exercised in regard to securing a title to the heavenly possessions? Your worldly estates will soon pass away, notwithstanding all your anxiety and toil. You must leave them all sometime. You may die before the coming of Jesus, or you may live till his appearing; however it is, the thoughts and ambitions of earth must be relinquished; but if your treasure is laid up on high, your riches will be incorruptible, undefiled, and will never pass away.

Make friendship with Christ today. Put your case in the hands of the great Advocate. He will plead your cause before the Father. Though you have transgressed the law, and must plead guilty before God, Christ will present his precious blood in your behalf; and through faith and obedience, and a vital union with Christ, you may stand acquitted before the Judge of all the earth, and he will be your friend when the final trump shall sound, and the scenes of earth shall be no more.

August 3, 1888

The Valor and Humility of David

After the rejection of Saul as king of Israel, David was anointed by the prophet as the future ruler of the people of God. But although he was aware of the high position which he was to occupy, he continued his employment as a simple shepherd, content to await the development of the Lord's plans in his own appointed time and way.

When King Saul realized that he had been rejected of God, and when he felt the force of the words of denunciation that had been addressed to him by the prophet, he was filled with bitter rebellion and despair. His health was affected by the mental worry in which he indulged, and at times he was almost insane with the thought of coming disaster to himself and his household. His counselors advised him to seek for the services of a skillful musician, in the hope that the soothing notes of a sweet instrument might calm his troubled spirit, and turn his thoughts away from his grief.

In the providence of God, David, as a skillful performer upon the harp, was brought before the king. The shepherd boy was employed to play before the ruler of Israel, and, if possible, to charm away the brooding melancholy which had settled, like a dark cloud, over the mind of Saul. The king was ever occupied in anticipating the ruin that had been brought upon his house by his own course of disobedience and rebellion. It was not true repentance that had bowed the proud head of Saul. He had no perception of the offensive character of his sin in the sight of God, and he did not arouse to reform his life and character. His heart was not humbled because he had disregarded the express injunctions and commands of the Ruler of the universe; therefore he did not return to his allegiance to the Head of all kingdoms, but brooded over what he thought was the injustice of God in depriving him of the throne of Israel, and in taking the succession to its privileges away from his posterity. He felt that the valor which he had displayed in encountering his enemies, should offset his sin of disobedience. He did not accept with meekness the chastisement of God; but his proud spirit became desperate, until he was on the verge of losing his reason.

David came before Saul, and played with all the skill that his long practice had given him; and his lofty and Heaven-inspired strains had the desired effect. The evil spirit seemed to be driven away, and the king was restored to his usual calmness. As David stood, for the first time, in the presence of Saul, there were many thoughts that filled the mind of the young musician, and served to fasten this scene upon his memory with an indelible impression. When his services were not required at the court of Saul, David returned to his flocks on the hills, and continued to maintain his simplicity of spirit and demeanor. Whenever it was necessary, he was recalled to minister before the king, to soothe the mind of the troubled monarch till the evil spirit departed from him. But although Saul expressed the greatest delight in David and his music, the young shepherd went from the king's house to the fields and hills of his pasture, with a sense of relief and gladness, to care for his flocks with a tender and faithful care.

David was growing in favor with God and man. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he now set his heart more thoroughly to do the will of God than ever before. He had new themes for thought. He had been in the court of the king, and had seen the responsibilities of royalty. He had discovered some of the temptations that beset the soul of Saul, and had found out some of the mysteries in the character and dealing of Israel's first king. He had seen the glory of royalty shadowed with a dark cloud of sorrow, and he knew that the household of Saul in their private life were far from happy. All these things served to bring serious thoughts to him who had been anointed to be king over Israel. While he was absorbed in deep meditation, and harassed by

thoughts of anxiety, he turned to his harp, and called forth strains that elevated his mind to the Author of every good, and the dark clouds which seemed to arise in the horizon of the future were dispelled and dispersed.

On one occasion, as the evening shadows gathered, and he laid aside his harp, he saw a dark form moving stealthily upon his flock. It was a bear, fierce with hunger, that sprang upon the sheep of his care; but David did not flee for his life. He felt that it was the very hour when his charges needed his protection. He lifted his heart to God in prayer for wisdom and help, that he might do his duty in this time of peril. With his strong arm he laid the bear in death at his feet. At another time he discovered a lion with a bleeding lamb between his jaws. Without hesitation the youthful shepherd engaged in a desperate encounter. His arm, nerved by the living God, forced the beast to release its bleeding victim, and as it turned, mad with disappointment, upon David, he buried his hand in its mane and killed the fierce invader. His experience in these matters proved the heart of David, and developed in him courage, and fortitude, and faith. God was teaching David lessons of trust. As Moses was trained for his work, so the Lord was fitting the son of Jesse to become the leader and guide of his chosen people. In his watch-care for his flocks, he was gaining an appreciation of the care that the great Shepherd has for the sheep of his pasture.

When war was declared between Israel and the Philistines, three of the sons of Jesse went to follow Saul in the army of Israel; but David remained at home. On one occasion his father sent him with a message to visit the camp of Saul, and to learn whether or not his elder brothers were still in safety and health. Jesse sent with his son a present to his absent ones, which was to be divided among their companions in the camp.

As David drew near to the army, he heard the sound of commotion, as if an engagement was about to begin. He felt his spirit stirred within him, and he hastened on his way. And "the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle." Israel and the Philistines were drawn up in array, army against army. David ran unto the army, and came and saluted his brothers. While he was talking with them, Goliath, the bold champion of the Philistines, came forth, and with insulting language, defied Israel, and challenged them to provide a man from their ranks who would meet him in single combat. He repeated his blasphemous challenge, and David heard him, and when he saw that all Israel was afraid of him, and would do nothing, and that his defiance was hurled in their faces day after day, without arousing anyone to go forth and silence the voice of the boaster, his spirit was stirred within him. He was fired with zeal to preserve the honor of the living God, and the credit of the children of Israel. He could not endure to see this bold idolater permitted day after day to mock the chosen of the Lord, without making an effort to overthrow his proud vaunting and derision.

The armies of Israel were becoming depressed and discouraged. They said one to another, "Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." To be sure that he understood them, David inquired of the men that stood nearest to him, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

Eliab, David's eldest brother, when he heard these words, knew well the feelings that were stirring the young man's soul. Even as a shepherd of the flocks of Bethlehem he had manifested daring,

courage, and strength not easily accounted for; and the mysterious visit of Samuel to their father's house, and his silent departure, had awakened in the minds of the brothers suspicions of the real object of his visit. David was not regarded with the respect and love due to his integrity and brotherly tenderness. He was looked upon as merely a stripling shepherd, and now the question which he asked was regarded by Eliab as a reflection cast upon his own cowardice in not silencing the giant of the Philistines. In passionate language the elder brother exclaimed, "Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." The answer of David was decided and respectful: "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

Someone carried the words of David to the king, and the youth was sent for, to appear in the royal presence. Saul listened with astonishment to the words of the shepherd, as he said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul strove earnestly to turn David from his purpose, saying, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth." The young man was not to be turned from his desire. He remained firm, courageous, and determined, only waiting for the permission of the king. He replied in a simple, unassuming way, relating his experiences while tending the sheep. "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee."

August 10, 1888

The Slaying of Goliath

For forty days the host of Israel had trembled before the haughty challenge of Goliath, the Philistine giant. Their hearts failed within them as they looked upon his massive form, measuring six cubits and a span, or ten and a half feet, in height. Upon his head was a helmet of brass, he was clothed with a coat of mail that weighed five thousand shekels, or about a hundred and fifty-seven pounds, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs. The coat was made of plates of brass that overlaid one another, like the scales of a fish, and they were so closely joined that no dart or arrow could possibly penetrate the armor. At his back the giant bore a huge javelin, or lance, also of brass. "The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and one bearing a shield went before him."

For forty days, morning and evening, Goliath had approached the camp of Israel, saying with a loud voice, "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid." No one had dared to go against this boaster, until David, stirred with

indignation at the proud words of the idolater, offered himself to Saul, as one who was willing to fight for the glory of God and the honor of Israel.

Saul decided to permit the shepherd to make the venture; but he had small hope that David would be successful in his courageous undertaking. Command was given to clothe the youth in the king's own armor. The heavy helmet of brass was put upon his head, and the coat of mail was placed upon his body, while he was girded with the monarch's sword. Thus equipped, he started upon his errand; but ere long he turned back, and began to retrace his steps. What was the trouble? Was he afraid? The first thought in the minds of the anxious spectators was that David had decided not to risk his life in meeting an antagonist in so unequal an encounter. But this was far from the thought of the brave young man.

When he returned to Saul, he begged permission to lay aside the heavy armor, and he said, "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." He laid off the king's armor, and in its stead took only his staff in his hand, with his shepherd's scrip, and a simple sling. Choosing five smooth stones out of the brook, he put them in his bag, and, with his sling in his hand, he drew near to the Philistine. The champion strode boldly and proudly forward, expecting to meet with the mightiest of the warriors of Israel. His armor-bearer walked before him, and he looked as if nothing could stand before him. As he came nearer to David, he saw but a stripling, called a boy because of his youth. His countenance was ruddy with health; and his slender form, unprotected by armor, displayed all its youthful outline in marked contrast to the massive proportions of the Philistine.

Goliath was filled with amazement and anger. His indignation burst forth in words that were calculated to terrify and overwhelm the daring youth before him. "Am I a dog," exclaimed the giant, "that thou comest to me with staves?" Then the Philistine poured upon David the most terrible curses by all the gods of his knowledge. He cried in derision, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." This haughty threat only served to inspire the youth with loftier courage, and to kindle in his breast a greater zeal to silence the enemy of his people. He did not weaken before the champion of the Philistines. He knew that he was about to fight for the honor of his God and the deliverance of Israel, and his heart was full of calm faith and hope.

David stepped forward, and addressed his antagonist in language that was both modest and eloquent. And he said to the Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

What an inspiration of courage and lofty faith was displayed by the simple shepherd before the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines. There was a ring of fearlessness in his tone, a look of triumph and rejoicing upon his fair countenance. This speech, given in a clear, musical voice, rang out on the air, and was distinctly heard by the listening thousands encamped for war. As David's rich voice uttered the words of trust and triumph, the anger of Goliath was roused to the very highest heat. In his rage, he pushed up the helmet that protected his forehead, and rushed with determined

hatred to wreak vengeance upon his opponent. The son of Jesse was preparing for his foe. Both armies were watching with the most intense interest. "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth."

Amazement spread along the lines of the two armies. They had been confident that David would be slain; but when the stone went whizzing through the air, straight to the mark, they saw the mighty warrior tremble, and reach forth his hands, as if he were struck with sudden blindness. The giant reeled, and staggered, and fell prostrate to the ground. David did not wait an instant. He knew not that life was extinct. He sprang upon the prostrate form of the Philistine, and with both hands he laid hold of Goliath's heavy sword. A moment before the giant had flourished it before the face of David with the boast that he would sever the youth's head from his shoulders, and give his body to the fowls of the air. Now it served to work the will of the servant of God. It was lifted in the air, and then the head of the boaster rolled from his trunk, and a shout of exultation went up from the camp of Israel.

The Philistines were smitten with terror. They knew that the day was lost. In horror and confusion they began an irregular retreat. The shout of the triumphant Hebrews echoed along the summits of the mountains, as they rushed after their retreating enemies, and they "pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent."

August 17, 1888

The Character and Effects of Envy

After the slaying of Goliath David was brought before King Saul, and the king inquired concerning his parentage and life. "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Saul kept David with him, and would not permit him to return to his father's house. Jonathan and David made a covenant to be united as brethren, and the king's son "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." David was intrusted with important responsibilities, yet he preserved his modesty, and everyone loved him. But there was no one so dear to him as Jonathan, because he possessed a pure and noble spirit.

"David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war." But when Saul and David were returning from the slaughter of the Philistines, "the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music." One company sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands," while another company took up the strain and responded, "And David his ten thousands." The demon of jealousy entered the heart of the king. He was angry because David was exalted above himself in the song of the women of Israel. In place of controlling these envious feelings, and manifesting a noble spirit, he

displayed the great weakness of his character, and exclaimed, "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?"

The one great defect in the character of Saul was his love of approbation. This trait had had such a controlling influence over his actions and thoughts that everything was marked by his desire for praise and self-exaltation. He permitted this evil desire to develop unchecked, and it became an instrument in his ruin. His standard of right and wrong was the low standard of popular applause. No man is safe who lives that he may please men, and does not seek first for the approbation of God. It was the ambition of Saul to be first in the estimation of men; and when this song of praise was sung, a settled conviction entered the heart of the king that David would obtain the hearts of the people, and reign in his stead.

Notwithstanding the lessons which Saul had had from the prophet Samuel, instructing him that God would accomplish whatsoever he chose, and that no one could hinder it; yet the king made it evident that he had no true knowledge of the plans or power of God. He showed that he had no true repentance for his course of rebellion and disobedience. He opened his heart to the spirit of envy and jealousy by which his soul was poisoned. He loved to hear David play upon his harp, and the evil spirit seemed to be charmed away for the time being; but one day when the youth was ministering before him, and bringing sweet music from his instrument, accompanying his voice as he sang the praises of God, Saul suddenly threw the spear which he held in his hand at the musician, for the purpose of putting an end to his life. David was preserved by the interposition of God, and he fled without injury from the rage of the maddened king.

The people were not slow to see that David was a competent person, and that the affairs intrusted to his hands were managed with wisdom and skill. Thus he was promoted from one position of trust to another. The counsels of the young man seemed to be always of a wise and discreet character, and proved to be safe to follow, while the advice of Saul was at times unreliable, and his decisions and judgments were ill-advised. As Saul's hatred of David increased, he became more and more watchful to find an opportunity to take his life, and rid himself of one so obnoxious to him. But none of his plans against the anointed of the Lord were successful. He had taken Satan as his counselor; but David trusted himself in the hand of Him who is mighty in counsel, and strong to deliver. Saul gave himself up to the control of the wicked spirit that ruled over him, while David followed the Lord, and obtained the confidence of the people. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and David's prayer was continually directed to God. His trust was in God, and he walked before him in a perfect way.

Although the king was his enemy, the servant of the Lord grew in favor with the people; and Saul, though ever on the alert, seeking an opportunity to take his life, feared David, for he was convinced that the Lord was with him. It was envy that made Saul miserable, and put the humble subject of his throne into jeopardy. Envy is one of the most despicable traits of Satanic character. It is constantly seeking the lifting up of self, by casting slurs upon others. A man who is envious will belittle his neighbor, thinking to exalt himself. The sound of praise is grateful to him who has approbateness highly developed, and he hates to hear the praises of another. Oh, what untold mischief has this evil trait of character worked in our world! The same enmity existed in the heart of Saul that stirred the

heart of Cain against his brother Abel, because Abel's works were righteous, and God honored him, and his own works were evil, and the Lord could not bless him.

Envy is the offspring of pride, and, if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to cruel deeds, to hatred, revenge, and murder. The great controversy between Christ and the prince of darkness, is carried on in everyday, practical life. David had now become the object of the king's hatred. How little did the darkened soul of Saul understand of the providences and purposes of God! If he had any comprehension of the character of the great "I AM," he would have known that he could not thwart the purposes of the Almighty.

Saul made David feel that there was no place of security for him. He finally removed him from his position of responsibility as leader of the army of Israel, and placed him in charge of only a thousand men. David made no complaint, but bore all with patience. The love of the people was with him, but Saul was determined that he should not live. He kept a strict watch upon David, longing and hoping to find some occasion of indiscretion or rashness which might serve as an excuse to bring him into disgrace before the people. He felt that he could not be satisfied until he could take the young man's life, and still be justified before the nation for his evil act.

Saul laid a snare for the feet of David, promising to give him Michal, his daughter, to wife, if he would slay one hundred Philistines. David killed two hundred, and returned in safety to the court of the king. Saul was still more assured that this was the man whom the Lord had said was better than he, and who should reign on the throne of Israel in his place. He began to discover that the Lord was with David. He began to discern that the young man was walking circumspectly before God, and that his character was worthy of respect, being truly noble and elevated. Saul became more determined in his purpose. He threw off all disguise. He would not be disappointed. David must die. He issued a command to Jonathan and to his servants to take the life of the one he hated; for he had determined that he should not live.

Jonathan revealed his father's intention to David, and bade him conceal himself, while he would go and plead with his father to spare the life of the deliverer of Israel. Jonathan succeeded in turning away the wrath of his father for the time. He presented before the king what David had done to preserve the honor and the very life of the nation, and what terrible guilt would come upon his soul who should slay the one whom God had used to scatter their enemies. He urged that his crime would not be excused should he take the life of an innocent man. The conscience of the king was touched, and his heart was softened. "And Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." And David was brought to Saul, and he ministered in his presence, as he had in the past.

August 24, 1888

Saul's Persecution of David

After Jonathan had pleaded successfully for the life of his friend, Saul's wrath against David seemed to be allayed. The young man went in before the king as formerly, and was in the favor of Saul and his court. But again war was declared between the Israelites and the Philistines, and David led the army against their enemies. Under his wise management, a great victory was gained by the Hebrews, and the people of the realm praised his valor, and wisdom, and heroism. This served to stir up the former bitterness and hatred of Saul against him. While the young man was playing before

the king, filling the palace with sweet harmony, Saul's passion overcame him, and he hurled a javelin at David, thinking to pin the musician to the wall; but the angel of the Lord turned aside the deadly weapon. David escaped, and fled to his own house. Saul sent spies that they might take him as he should come out in the morning, and put an end to his life.

Michal, the daughter of Saul, was David's wife, and she loved him, and informed him of the purpose of her father. She urged him to escape for his life, and let him down from the window, and David fled to Samuel at Naioth. The king sent his men to the chamber of David, but they found nothing but an effigy which his wife had placed in the bed. The king was very angry with his daughter, and, enraged with disappointment, he determined that his hated subject should not escape. The same spirit which had actuated Satan, filled the heart of Saul. Like the first great apostate, he was moved by unholy ambition and murderous rage. And this was the first chosen king of Israel! Since the day when the holy anointing oil had been poured upon his head by the prophet of God, how terrible had been his fall!

David found Samuel at Ramah, and told him what Saul had done. The prophet, fearless of the king's displeasure, welcomed the fugitive, and Samuel and David dwelt together at Naioth. This refuge was a peaceful place in contrast with the royal palace. It was here, amid the hills, that the honored prophet of the Lord continued his work, even when the shadows of age were gathering about him. A company of seers was with him, and they studied closely the will of God, and listened reverently to the words of instruction that fell from the lips of Samuel. The closing work of the servant of God was to instruct the seers in the school of the prophets; precious were the lessons that David learned from the teacher of Israel.

David recalled the anointing which he had received at Bethlehem, when Samuel had blessed him in his father's house. He knew that he needed divine instruction, and he believed that the troops of Saul would not be called upon to invade this sacred place. But no place seemed to be sacred to the darkened mind of the desperate, despairing king. When he learned where David was, he sent officers to drag him from his secluded hiding-place, and bring him to Gilgal, where he intended to carry out his murderous designs.

The monarch of Israel was determinedly opposing his will to the will of the infinite God. The will of God is the sole law to which the sun, moon, and stars in the firmament of heaven, yield obedience. At the mandate of Jehovah, they move in perfect order; and yet finite man will set up his will against the will of the omniscient One, and enter into conflict with him who rules the universe. Saul had not learned, while ruling the kingdom of Israel, that he should rule his own spirit. He allowed his impulses to control his judgment, until he was plunged into a fury of passion. He had paroxysms of rage and madness, when he was ready to take the life of any that dared oppose his will. From this frenzy he would pass into a state of despondency and self-contempt, and remorse would take possession of his soul. Satan displayed his own character in inciting the fury of Saul against the humble subject of his court. Saul had the sympathy and support of all the reprobate host of evil; for it was David's blameless character and noble fidelity that had aroused the wrath of the king; and he deemed that the very life and presence of David cast a reproach upon him, and presented him in unflattering contrast before the people.

The messengers of Saul went on their way to Ramah, intent upon taking David's life. But a greater than Saul controlled their spirit, and directed their actions. They were met by unseen angels, as was

Balaam when he was on his way to curse Israel. For a time the officers of Saul became imbued by the atmosphere that pervaded the sacred spot where Samuel and the prophets were studying under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. They began to utter prophetic sayings of what would occur in the future, and proclaimed the glory and majesty of Jehovah. It was in this way that God overruled the wrath of man, and manifested his power to restrain evil, while he walled his servant in by a guard of angels.

The tidings reached Saul as he waited in impatience to have David in his cruel power; but instead of feeling the rebuke from God, he was exasperated still more, and sent other messengers. These also were overpowered by the Spirit of God, and united with the first in prophesying. The third embassy was sent by the king, but when they came into the company of the prophets, the divine influence fell upon them also, and they prophesied. Saul then decided that he himself would go, for his fierce enmity had become uncontrollable. Evil angels conspired with wicked men to destroy the anointed of the Lord. He was determined to wait for no second chance to kill David. As soon as he should come within reach of him, he intended with his own hand to slay him, whatever might be the consequences.

He came to Ramah, and halted at a great well in Sechu. The people were coming together to draw water, and he inquired where Samuel and David were staying. When he was told that they were at Naioth, he made haste to reach that place. But the angel of God met him on the way and controlled him. The Spirit of God held him in its power, and he went on his way uttering prayers to God, interspersed with predictions and sacred melodies. He prophesied of the coming of Messiah as the world's Redeemer. When he came to Naioth in Ramah, he laid aside his outer garments that betokened his station, and all day, and all night, he lay before Samuel and his pupils, under the influence of the divine Spirit. Multitudes had been drawn together to witness this strange and wonderful thing, and the new experience of the king was reported far and wide. Thus again, near the close of his reign, it became a proverb in Israel that Saul also was among the prophets.

The persecutor was again defeated in his purpose. He assured David that he was at peace with him; but David had little confidence in the king's repentance and reformation. He took this opportunity to escape, lest the mood of the king might change, as formerly. David had been driven from place to place, and the king's emissaries had hunted his life as though he were a wild beast. His heart was wounded within him, and he longed to see his friend Jonathan once more. With a burdened heart, and conscious of his innocence, he sought the king's son, and made a most touching appeal. "What have I done?" he asked, "what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" Jonathan thought that his father had changed his purpose, and no longer intended to take the life of David. And Jonathan said unto him, "God forbid; thou shalt not die; behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so."

After the remarkable exhibition of the power of God, Jonathan could not believe that his father would still harm David, for that would be manifest rebellion against God. But notwithstanding the oft-repeated and confident assurances of his friend, David was not convinced. He declared that Saul knew of their attachment for each other, and that this would be a sufficient reason why the king would not make his purposes known to his son. With intense earnestness he rehearsed how he had

been driven from place to place, and now he assured Jonathan, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

August 31, 1888

David's Distrust

At the time of the new moon, a sacred festival was celebrated in Israel. This festival recurred upon the day following the sad interview between David and Jonathan concerning the certain death that seemed to wait the son of Jesse. It was expected that both the young men would be at the feast. David feared to be present, and an arrangement was made that he should visit his brothers, and on his return, he should hide himself in the field not far from the banqueting hall, and for three days he should absent himself from the presence of the king, and Jonathan would note the effect upon Saul. If inquiry was made as to the whereabouts of the son of Jesse, Jonathan was to say that he had gone home to attend the yearly sacrifice offered at his father's house. If no angry demonstrations were made by the king, but he should answer, "It is well," then it would be safe for David to return to the court. But if he should become enraged at his absence, it would decide the matter of David's flight.

David was to hide himself in a place appointed before, and after his return from the feast at his father's house, Jonathan, who was skilled in archery, was to go with an attendant to the field, near the hiding-place of David, and shoot a certain number of arrows that would be a sign to him of the temper of the king, and would decide his course of action. If Jonathan should say to the young man who gathered up the arrows, "Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee," David would have nothing to fear, but might come to the palace, and the presence of the king. But if he should say to his attendant, "Behold, the arrows are beyond thee," then David was to take his departure, for it would not be safe for him to come to the court.

On the first day of the feast, the king made no inquiry concerning the absence of David; but when his place was vacant the second day, he asked his son the reason of the non-appearance of his friend. He questioned, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor today? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem; and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there; and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me go away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table." When Saul heard these words, his anger was ungovernable. He abused his son, and cursed David. He declared that as long as David lived, Jonathan could not come to the throne of Israel, and he demanded that David should be sent for immediately, for he had determined that he should die. Jonathan again made intercession for his friend, pleading, "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" This appeal to the king for the reason of his wrath against an innocent man, only made him more Satanic in his fury, and he hurled the javelin, which he had intended for David, at his own son.

The prince was grieved and indignant, and leaving the royal presence, he was no more a guest at the feast. His soul was bowed down with sorrow, as he repaired, at the appointed time, to the spot where David was to learn the king's intentions toward him. Jonathan shot the arrow, and as the lad ran to find it, exclaimed, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" David understood the sign, and knew that he must flee for his life. When Jonathan had sent the lad home with his bow and arrows, he sought his beloved friend. They fell upon each other's neck and wept bitterly. Their united hearts were

sorely grieved at the necessity of separation. The dark passion of the king cast its shadow upon the lives of the young men, and their grief was too intense for expression. Jonathan's last words fell upon the ear of David as they separated to pursue their different paths, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever."

Jonathan watched the form of his friend until he was lost from sight, lest he should be observed by spies, and taken to the presence of his enemy. Then the king's son returned to Gibeah, and David hastened to reach Nob, a city some ten miles distant, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. The tabernacle had been taken to this place from Shiloh, and here Ahimelech, the high priest, ministered. David knew not where to fly for refuge, except to the servant of God. The high priest looked upon him with astonishment, as he came unattended, with a countenance marked by anxiety, care, and sorrow. He inquired what had brought him to the place without an attendant. The young man was in constant fear of discovery, and was perplexed as to how he should reply. In his extremity he resorted to deception. Here David manifested a want of faith in God, and his sin resulted in causing the high priest to be put to death. Had the facts been plainly stated, Ahimelech would have known what course to pursue to preserve his life. God requires that truthfulness shall mark his people, even in times of peril. David told the priest that he had been sent by the king to accomplish some secret business which required that he should go alone. He asked the priest for five loaves of bread. There was nothing but hallowed bread in the possession of the man of God; David succeeded, however, in removing his scruples, and obtained the bread to satisfy his hunger.

But a new difficulty now presented itself, which caused fresh anxiety to David. He saw Doeg, the chief of Saul's herdsmen, who had professed the faith of the Hebrews, and who was now paying his vows in the place of worship. The sight of this man decided David to make haste to secure another place of refuge, and to obtain some weapon with which to defend himself if it should become necessary. He knew that Doeg was acquainted with the purpose of Saul in regard to himself. He was aware that orders had been issued to the king's servants to take the life of David if they should find him, and he feared that this man might attempt it before he could make good his escape.

He asked Ahimelech for a sword, and was told that he had none except the sword of Goliath, which had been kept as a relic in the tabernacle. David replied, "There is none like that; give it me." His courage revived as he grasped the sword that he had once used so valiantly to destroy the champion of the Philistines. David fled to Achish, the king of Gath, for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people than with his own brethren. He decided to throw himself upon the mercies of national foes, rather than stay in the dominions of Saul.

But it was reported to Achish that David was the very man who had slain the champion of the Philistines years before, and now he who had sought refuge with the foes of Israel, found himself in the greatest peril. He feigned to be mad, and his enemies were deceived, and deemed him unworthy of their notice. Thus he made his escape.

The first error of David was his manifest distrust of God at Nob, and his second mistake was his deception before Achish. In his friendship and love for Jonathan, David had displayed noble traits of character, and his moral worth had won him favor with the people; but as the trial and test came upon him, his faith was shaken, and human weakness appeared. He saw in every man a spy and a betrayer. But his experience was serving to teach David wisdom, for he had a realization of his

weakness and frailty, and of the necessity of constant dependence upon God. While in these trying scenes, he composed some of the psalms.

We see the weakness of even noble men when they are brought into trying circumstances. This man, when in a great emergency, had looked up to God with the steady eye of faith, and had met the proud, boasting Philistine. He believed in God, he went in his name. He trusted in his power to do the work of defeating the armies of the Lord's enemies. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight. He seemed to think that he was left alone, to fight his own battles. He was confused, and knew not which way to turn. We may learn a lesson from the experience of David. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." All need the help which God alone can give. Oh, how priceless is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed, despairing souls, encouraging the faint-hearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! Oh, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring, and manifests his patience and tenderness when we are in adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow!

David ought not to have distrusted God for one moment. Wherever the children of God make a failure, it is due to their lack of faith. When shadows encompass the soul, when we want light and guidance, we must look up; there is light beyond the darkness. We must learn to trust our heavenly Father, and not allow the soul to be defiled with the sin of unbelief. In trying to save ourselves, we do not commit the keeping of our souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator. We do not expect him to work for us, but frantically beat about in our own finite strength to break through some wall of difficulty which God alone can remove for us. Man is nothing without God. The example of the good and noble men of sacred history, is to be imitated by us only where they followed the footsteps of the Lord. When man relies implicitly upon God, he will be true to himself; and he can hope and rejoice in the God of his salvation, though every friend of earth becomes a foe.

David had reason to trust God. He was the Lord's anointed. He had been protected in the midst of danger by the angels of God. He had been armed with valor and courage to do wonderful things, and if he had but removed his mind from the distressing situation in which he was placed, and thought of God's wonderful power and majesty, he would have been at peace even in the midst of the shadows of death, and could with confidence have repeated the promise of the Lord, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

September 7, 1888

In the Cave of Adullam

David sought refuge in the strongholds of the mountains from the determined pursuit of Saul. He made good his escape to the cave of Adullam, a place that could be defended against a large army by a small force. "And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him." The family of David could not feel secure, knowing that at any time the unreasonable suspicions of Saul might be directed against them on account of their relation to David. They concluded that they would be safer with him whom the prophet Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, even though he was a fugitive in a lonely cave, than exposed to the insane madness of a jealous king. They believed the Lord would protect David from the persecuting enmity of Saul, and

they determined to leave their unguarded home, and unite their fortunes with their kinsman in his lonely retreat. It was a sad leave-taking of home and flocks, as the family procession moved on toward the valley of Judah.

In the cave of Adullam, the family were at last united in sympathy and affection. The son of Jesse could make melody with voice and harp as he sang, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" He had tasted the bitterness of suspicion and distrust from his brethren; and the harmony that had taken the place of discord, brought joy and comfort to the exile's heart. It was here that David composed the fifty-seventh psalm.

It was not long before they were joined by others who desired to escape the exactions of the king. There were many who had lost their confidence in the ruler of Israel, for he no longer seemed to be guided by the Spirit of the Lord. "And everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with them about four hundred men." Here David had a little kingdom of his own, over which he ruled, and he enforced perfect order and discipline. But even in his retreat in the mountains, he was far from feeling secure; for he received continual evidence that the king had not relinquished his murderous purpose. The spirit of evil was upon Saul. He felt that his doom had been sealed by the solemn message of his rejection from the throne of Israel. His departure from the plain requirements of God was bringing its sure results. He did not turn, and repent, and humble his heart before God, but opened it to receive every suggestion of the enemy. He listened to every false witness, eagerly receiving anything that was detrimental to the character of David, hoping that he might find an excuse for manifesting his increasing envy and hatred of him who had been anointed to the throne of Israel. Every rumor was credited, no matter how inconsistent and irreconcilable it was with the former character and custom of David.

Every evidence that the protecting care of God was over David seemed to embitter and deepen his one engrossing and determined purpose. The failure to accomplish his own designs appeared in marked contrast to the success of the fugitive in eluding his search, but it only made the determination of the king the more unrelenting and firm. He was not careful to conceal his designs toward David, nor scrupulous as to what means should be employed in accomplishing his purpose.

It was not the man David, who had done him no harm, against whom the king was contending. He was in controversy with the King of Heaven; for when Satan is permitted to control the mind that will not be ruled by Jehovah, he will lead it according to his will, until the man who is thus in his power becomes an efficient agent to carry out his designs. So bitter is the enmity of the great originator of sin against the purposes of God, so terrible is his power for evil, that when men disconnect from God, Satan influences them, and their minds are brought more and more into subjection, until they cast off the fear of God, and the respect of men, and become bold and avowed enemies of God and of his people.

What an example was Saul giving to the subjects of his kingdom in his desperate, unprovoked persecution of David! What a record he was making to be placed upon the pages of history for future generations! He sought to turn the full tide of the power of his kingdom into the channel of his own hatred in hunting down an innocent man. All this had a demoralizing influence upon Israel. And while Saul was giving loose reign to his passion, Satan was weaving a snare to compass his ruin, and the ruin of his kingdom. While the king and his councilors were planning for the capture of

David, the affairs of the nation were being mismanaged and neglected. While imaginary foes were constantly presented before the minds of the people, the real enemies were strengthening themselves without arousing suspicion or alarm. By following the dictates of Satan, Saul was himself hastening the very result which, with unsanctified ability, he was endeavoring to avert.

The counsel of the Lord has been disregarded again and again by the rebellious king, and the Lord had given him up to the folly of his own wisdom. The influences of the Spirit of God would have restrained him from the course of evil which he had chosen, that eventually worked out his ruin. God hates all sin, and when man persistently refuses all the counsel of Heaven, he is left to the deceptions of the enemy, to be drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed.

The Lord had brought his servant David to the court of the king, that Saul might be benefited by association with the sweet singer of Israel. The king was a lover of music, and an opportunity was granted to him of becoming impressed and subdued by the same spirit that was the life and inspiration of David's melodies. But the subtle suggestions of Satan were insinuated into his mind, until David became an object of suspicion and jealousy. On two occasions, as David ministered before the king, he had only escaped with his life by gliding away from before the javelin that the king had hurled at him with murderous purpose. But Saul was not moved to relent because of the evidences of God's protection of the son of Jesse.

David and his friends were far from feeling secure in the cave where they had sought refuge. The determined pursuit of Saul assured David that the king would not relinquish his plans, until he had accomplished his destruction. As far as appearances were concerned, the struggle on the part of David seemed to be hopeless; for the armies of Israel were urged on by the enmity of Saul to hunt the fugitive, nor give up the pursuit until he should become their captive.

David's anxiety was not all for himself, although he realized his peril. He thought of his father and mother, and he concluded that he must seek another refuge for them. He went to the king of Moab, and the Lord put it into the heart of the monarch to courteously grant to the beloved parents of David an asylum in Mizpeh, and they were not disturbed, even in the midst of the enemies of Israel. From this history, we may all learn precious lessons of filial love. The Bible plainly condemns the unfaithfulness of parents to their children, and the disobedience of children to their parents. Religion in the home is of priceless value.

Almost as soon as the safety of his parents was assured, a prophet of the Lord came to David, saying, "Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah." Pursued from place to place, and persecuted without cause, David's soul at times was full of bitterness and discouragement. It seemed certain to him that he must, at last, fall into the hands of his pursuer and persecutor. But could his eyes have been opened, he would have seen the angels of the Lord encamped round about him and his followers. The sentinels of Heaven were waiting to warn them of impending danger, and to conduct them to a place of refuge when their peril demanded it. God could protect David and his followers; for they were not a band in rebellion against Saul. David had repeatedly proved his allegiance to the king.

The experience through which he was passing was not unnecessary and vain. God was giving him a course of discipline to fit him to become a wise general, as well as a just and merciful king. This little band of fugitives were being qualified to take up the work that Saul was becoming wholly unfitted to

do, because of his murderous passion and blind indiscretion. Men cannot depart from the counsel of God, and retain their peace and restfulness of soul. There is no insanity so dreadful, so hopeless, as that of following human wisdom, unguided by the wisdom of God.

David and Saul stand before us in this history as men widely different in character. The course of David makes manifest the fact that he regarded the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom. But Saul was shorn of his strength, because he failed to make obedience to God's commandments the rule of his life. It is a fearful thing for a man to set his will against the will of God, as revealed in his specified requirements. All the honor that a man could receive on the throne of a kingdom, would be a poor compensation for the loss of the favor of God through an act of disloyalty to Heaven. Disobedience to the commandments of God can only bring disaster and dishonor, at last. God has given to every man his work, just as truly as he appointed to Saul the government of Israel; and the practical and important lesson to us is to accomplish our appointed work in such a manner that we may meet our life-records with joy, and not with grief.

September 14, 1888

The Council at Gibeah

Saul was greatly disappointed and enraged when it was discovered that David had left his place of refuge in the cave of Adullam. The king had made all possible preparation to come upon him as a vulture would come upon its prey, when lo! the intelligence was received that the object of his search had escaped from under his hand. His well-laid plans had been in vain, and he had again failed to accomplish his purpose of capturing David.

The flight of David was a matter of mystery to the king. He could account for it only by the belief that there had been traitors in the camp, who had informed the son of Jesse of his proximity and design. But the all-seeing eye was upon Saul; God, who was acquainted with all his thoughts and purposes, sent his prophet to warn his servant to escape from the hold, and flee into the land of Judah. David had heeded the message, and had found refuge in the forest of Hareth before Saul could come upon him. The fact that David was preserved, and that he escaped from time to time from his hand, while his own plottings had never met with success at any time, was a mystery to the king.

The monarch determined to take some decided action that would insure the ruin of David, and a royal council was held under a favorite tree on a hill-side of Gibeah. Saul held his spear and scepter in hand, while around him were gathered his councilors, among whom was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen. With his mind filled with jealous suspicions, Saul addressed his officers of State, saying, "Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

Saul appealed to the selfish nature of his men. He presented before them the advantages to be gained by serving him, in contrast with the disadvantages of the service of the poverty-stricken David, who was obliged to find his home in the caves and dens of the mountains. Satan and his evil angels were in that assembly, prepared to act a prominent part, and the power of these evil

influences was working upon the mind of the willful and disobedient king. He had so long yielded himself to the control of evil angels that he did not discern that he was following their leading when he eagerly took advantage of circumstances to hold up to contempt the condition of David and his servants. How much this appeal to the selfish desires of his men, savors of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. "And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Jesus repulsed the tempter with, "It is written;" but the evil one has better success when he approaches man with his bribes and inducements. The question that each one of us will have to answer in his individual life is, Shall right triumph over wrong, no matter what shall be the cost? Every soul will have to venture much, as Satan plies his specious temptations; but the voice of duty must be obeyed, if you would be an overcomer. Many other voices will urge a course in harmony with the selfish desires and inclinations of the carnal heart. To every soul will come the time of trial, and it will need divine wisdom to distinguish the voice of the adversary from the voice of God. It is impossible to tell how much may be lost by once neglecting to comply with the requirements of the word of God. It points out the path of obedience as the only safe path for man to walk in. Nothing will help us more in these strait places than to consider that we are standing in the presence of God, and that we do not want to do anything that will offend him.

The Benjamites and those in the council of Saul, when they heard the words of the king, accusing them of sympathizing with those whom he regarded as his enemies, only saw before them an exasperated, human monarch, who had it in his power to enrich and advance them or to punish and degrade them, as their course should be approved or disapproved before him. But could the veil have been swept aside, they would have beheld the Sovereign whose empire is the universe, and who holds in his hands the destinies of time and of eternity. If they had felt that they were the servants of God, that they were to be obedient to the King of kings, how different would have been the result and record of that day which was filled with deeds of darkness and atrocity. The presence of the Infinite One was not felt; but he who is not only an accuser of the brethren, but a liar and a murderer from the beginning, manifested his presence and power through his human agents, Saul the king of Israel, and Doeg the chief of his herdsmen.

Saul had received as truth every lying report concerning the motives and movements of David, and, in his disappointment at the escape of his supposed enemy, Saul began to suspect everyone around him of being a conspirator and traitor. He declared, "All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse. "Then he appealed for their sympathy. "There is none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day."

Saul represented David as one who was his deadly enemy, and accused Jonathan, his dutiful, and God-fearing son, of urging on the rebellion, because he would not join in the pursuit of his friend. This was an entirely false accusation. It was not David and Jonathan only who were accused, but the king's own tribe, and the people of his realm were all included in his suspicions as traitors and conspirators. He declared that they were all blind to their own best interests, and were destitute of

compassion for him, the king of Israel. He had been informed by spies of the interview between David and Jonathan, of how they had entered into a covenant of eternal friendship; and, as Saul knew nothing of the particulars, he was filled with evil surmising as to their loyalty, and deemed that they were plotting against himself and his kingdom. At one time when Saul had furiously condemned David to death, and Jonathan had asked, "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" the king, in a moment of intense anger, had hurled a javelin at his own son, as he had previously thrown one at David. Jonathan had lost all confidence in his father. He was afraid of him, and could not be free and confidential with him; for he saw with sorrow that God had departed from him, and that another spirit had taken possession of him.

That a conspiracy had been formed against him, Saul affirmed to his councilors as a settled fact, and he had arrived at the conclusion that it must be one that was thoroughly organized, or the chief conspirator would not have been so successful in eluding his search. From this he argued that the people must be involved in it, or its success would not be so evident. He put darkness for light, and light for darkness. His reasoning and its conclusions were all erroneous. The plotting was all on the side of Saul himself. Because he had changed his position from time to time, and had thought to have secured his prey long before, and had been defeated time and again, he could understand his failure only by attributing evil motives and actions to his people. Those who had been in communication with him, and had known of his plans, must, he thought, have informed David of his movements.

Saul had become so blinded through the deceitfulness of sin, that he could not discern spiritual things. He did not recognize the fact that God was present at all his councils, and that he was in communication with his servant David. God did not intend that the murderous designs of Saul should prove successful to accomplish their ends. The evil of the king's heart was to be manifested before Israel, that they might see to what terrible lengths a soul would go, after breaking away from the restraining influence of the Spirit of God. The king had had sufficient evidence to prove to him, beyond a doubt, that David had no evil intention toward him. He had had opportunity to take the life of his enemy, if he had desired to do so, but the son of Jesse would not lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed. But all this went for nothing, for it was in the heart of Saul to accredit evil purposes to David, and he did according to all that was in his heart.

There was a Watcher who was marking the motives, the words, and the actions of King Saul. The Lord was an unseen witness to every secret design, every open plan, and every murderous movement. When Nebuchadnezzar took his proud survey of the works of his hands, and boasted of his power and glory, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty"? the Watcher's voice came to the king, saying, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee." When Belshazzar lifted himself up against the God of Heaven, and made a great feast, and, in his intoxication and pleasure, deemed nothing too sacred for his use, making merriment against the living and the true God, a bloodless hand traced upon the wall in living characters, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." At the sacrilegious feast of Belshazzar, there was a Watcher whom he had not invited, and whose presence he had not discerned or welcomed. The doom of his kingdom was written in an unchangeable decree, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."

The eye of the Lord is upon every scene. His eye beholds every transaction in business. He hears every word that is spoken. He is a silent witness to every slanderous statement, and every falsehood is faithfully recorded in the books of Heaven. We have an attendant in public and private life. We have a companion in our private chamber. To every word and action of our lives, the holy, sin-hating God stands as a witness. We cannot escape our accountability to him, for God is everywhere. Why should we not live in such a manner that we may render up our account with joy, and not with grief. God has given us our appointed work, and we are to do it under his direction. If we place our powers under the control of Satan, we are rebels against God, and there will be found in our life-records, as there was found in Belshazzar's, a fatal deficiency when the accounts are balanced.

September 21, 1888

Doeg the Edomite

When Doeg the Edomite heard the words of Saul offering as a bribe the gift of vineyards, and the position of captain over thousands and hundreds, his ambition was stirred, and he determined to turn informer. He had been at Nob and had witnessed the action of the priest when he provided David with bread, and gave him the sword of Goliath. He cherished hatred toward the man in holy office, because he had reproved him for his sins; and now a favorable opportunity presented itself, not only to gain riches and position, but to be avenged on the priest.

Doeg responded to the words of Saul as one who would prove himself the friend of the distressed monarch. He said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." Doeg knew well that the action of the priest toward David did not proceed from any malice toward the king. The priest thought that in doing a kindness to an ambassador of his court, he was showing respect to the king. He was altogether innocent of any evil intention toward Saul or his realm. David had not taken a straightforward course before the priest, he had dissimulated, and on this account he had brought the whole family of the priesthood into peril.

But Doeg was a slanderer, and Saul had such a spirit of envy and hatred and murder, that he desired the report to be true. The partial and exaggerated statement of the chief of the herdsmen, was suited for the use of the adversary of God and man. It was presented to the mind of Saul in such a light that the king lost all control of himself, and acted like a madman. If he had but calmly waited until he could have heard the whole story, and had exercised his reasoning faculties, how different would have been the terrible record of that day's doings!

How Satan exults when he is enabled to set the soul into a white heat of anger! A glance, a gesture, an intonation, may be seized upon and used, as the arrow of Satan, to wound and poison the heart that is open to receive it. If the Spirit of Christ possesses us wholly, and we have been transformed by his grace, there will be no disposition to speak evil, or to bear reports freighted with falsehood. The falsifier, the accuser of the brethren, is a chosen agent of the great deceiver. Ahimelech was not present on this occasion to vindicate himself, and to state the facts as they existed; but Doeg cared not for this. Like Satan his father, he read the mind of Saul, and improved the opportunity of increasing the misery of the king by the words of his mischievous tongue, which was set on fire of hell. He stirred up the very worst passions of the human heart. All tenderness, pity, and humanity were extinguished from the breast of Saul.

Like his master the devil, Doeg did not hesitate to accuse even the priest of the most high God. It was believed that there was a conspiracy between David and the priest, and that the priest had taken a leading part in helping the escape of the enemy of Saul, and in aiding him by giving him provisions, and by arming him with the sword of Goliath. Saul was beside himself with rage. When he had been brought under the influence of the Spirit of God, as David played rich and sacred melodies, he seemed to catch the inspiration, and would break forth in impulsive and earnest expressions of praise and adoration. But when the influence was withdrawn, he would manifest the most opposite spirit. He seemed to be desperate, and was ready to do the most rash acts of daring and cruelty. The spirit of jealousy, which proceeded only from Satan, took possession of his heart. Good and evil seemed for a time to alternate in their control of the king. But on this day so dark a register was made in the books of Heaven by the divine Watcher, that the influence of good seemed to grow less and less perceptible in the life of Israel's monarch. He determined to pursue with the utmost fury the object of his hate and jealousy; for he thought that he now had an occasion for giving full vent to the worst passions of his heart.

He sent for Ahimelech and all his father's house, and they presented themselves before him in their priestly robes of office that they might do him honor. And Saul said to Ahimelech, "Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" The priest then presented the matter in its true light to the king. "Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me; let not the king impute anything unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for thy servant knew nothing of this, less or more."

It was evident that Saul was in one of his worst moods; but the priest and his household did not for a moment realize the danger that threatened them. They trembled when Saul set aside the testimony of Ahimelech. The king was so blinded with passion that the words of reason had no influence whatever upon him. He was so filled with Satanic frenzy that all regard for sacred things was lost. In his language he not only accused the priest of deception, but virtually charged God with counseling a traitor through his high priest.

The action of Saul made manifest what a despot a king may become who has forsaken his God, and has given himself up to the control of the evil one. The explanation of the facts in the case of David and the priest was treated with contempt; the truth only served to infuriate the king, for it took away his excuse for following the dictates of his own evil heart. Saul preferred to believe the words of a wicked man, rather than the words of the servant of God. Thus it has always been and always will be in our world with those who serve the cause of the great adversary. "Justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.... And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." When we understand how perseveringly Satan works to gain control of the hearts of men, we shall know why men have acted with such Satanic fury and determined hate toward the servants of God in every age.

In tracing down the history of the church from the fall of Adam to our own time, we see that the righteous have been the objects of the assaults of evil angels and evil men. It is a settled plan of the enemy to seek for the corruption of the souls of those who would vindicate the honor of God; and

when he could not accomplish this, he has caused them to be put to death. Satan has manifested the greatest activity in order that the true worshipers of God might be swept from the earth; but he has not fully carried out his designs, for God has put a limit to his power. There have been tares sown with the wheat, but the wheat has been preserved. Faithful men have passed through fire and sword, heresy and delusion, and have come forth from great tribulation with their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Thousands have fallen at the stake, but others have arisen to take their places. Staunch advocates of truth have stood the conflict of battle, and the controversy has been brought down to our own day. The light of truth has shone upon us, that we may reflect it upon others.

The world's Redeemer knows all about the warfare that must be waged between good and evil. He has felt the malice of Satan to a greater extent than have any of his followers. As Saul refused the words of a priest and took the testimony of a sinner, so the statements of false witnesses were received against Jesus, and his own testimony was thrust aside. When Jesus was presented by Pilate to the people, and Barabbas was presented with him, and the ruler asked, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" the multitude, under the control of Satan, cried out like madmen, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas"! "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands." And the demon-like cry arose, "Crucify him, crucify him!" This was the man in whom no fault was found when he was brought to trial; and yet a robber and a murderer was preferred before him.

Satan takes advantage of circumstances. At times evil men seem to triumph without hindrance. They do their dark deeds and there is no interposition of Heaven. When men separate from God by transgression, Satan has no further conflict to wage with them, and they have no more opposition to offer to the adversary of God and man. Had there been no interference on the part of God. Satan and man would have united in an unbroken alliance against Heaven. There can be no enmity between fallen men and fallen angels. Both are evil, and both have become so by apostasy; and evil always leagues with evil against God and in opposition to those who keep his commandments. They have refused to fulfill the requirement of Heaven, and they are at enmity with those who love and obey God.

We shall yet find that the same spirit of opposition to God and his people that existed in ages past exists in this day of boasted light and privilege. Satan is engaged in doing his own work. His angels will conspire with evil men today, and the combined energies of apostasy will gather together their forces to tear down that which they once built up, and to destroy the influence of those who are champions of the truth.

The warning which Samuel had given Israel when they clamored for a king was beginning to be understood. They saw the prophet's statement demonstrated in the despotism of Saul. After he had heard the calm, truthful words of the priest, instead of acknowledging his error of imputing evil to the servant of God, he shouted like a madman, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house."

The inconsistency of jealousy was shown in this verdict. Without proving the guilt of any one of the priests, the king commanded that all the line of Eli should be slain. He had determined upon this course of action before he had sent for them or heard their side of the case. And no amount of proof

could undo his malignant purpose. To vent his wrath upon one man seemed too small a matter to satisfy the fury of his revenge.

“And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.” The footmen had looked upon the priests of the Lord with the greatest reverence. They were convinced of the innocence of Ahimelech, and they could not consent to do this inhuman deed, although by refusal they placed their own lives in peril.

If anything could have aroused the conscience of the king, it would have been the refusal of his servants to fulfill so barbarous a command. But jealousy is cruel as the grave; and the heart of Saul was blinded because he had gone away from the light which God had given him; and “if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Satan is never at a loss to find allies in his work. The most blood-thirsty tyrants have found instruments by which to carry out their hell-born designs. Saul's rage was not appeased by the noble stand of his footmen, and he turned to the man whom he had connected with himself as a friend, because he had reported against the priests. Thus this Edomite, who was as base a character as was Barabbas, slew with his own hand eighty-five priests of the Lord in one day; and he and Saul, and he who was a murderer from the beginning, gloried over the massacre of the servants of the Lord. Like savage beasts who have tasted of blood, so were Saul and Doeg. The king, not yet satisfied with his horrible cruelty, “said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.” And men, women, children, and cattle were all slain by this cruel Edomite.

This is what Saul could do under the control of Satan. He could go to any lengths of barbarity. When God had said that the iniquity of the Amalekites was full, and had commanded him to destroy them utterly, he was too compassionate to carry out the order of the Lord, and spared that which was devoted to destruction; but now, without any command from God, under the guidance of Satan he could put an end to the priests of the Lord, and bring ruin upon the inhabitants of Nob. Thus is shown the perversity of the human heart that has refused the guidance of God.

This deed filled all Israel with horror. It was the king whom they had chosen who had committed this outrage; and he had only done after the manner of the kings of other nations that feared not God. The ark was with them; but the priests of whom they had inquired were slain with the edge of the sword. What would come next?

October 5, 1888

David's Flight from Keilah

After the slaughter of the priests, “one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.”

Saul had cut himself off from every means whereby the Lord could work in his behalf to save him from himself. In the facts of sacred history, there are lessons showing what a dangerous thing it is to cherish a jealous, revengeful spirit. It is impossible to determine to what length this spirit will lead its possessor if it is not overcome. When an evil report is circulated concerning the character of those who are striving to serve God, a power from beneath seems to move the minds of those who cherish enmity. He who has prided himself on possessing a high sense of honor, by taking this path of enmity will often fall into error, and will say and do things of which he deemed himself incapable. If a prophet of God should portray before him the course he would be led to pursue by cherishing such a spirit, he would indignantly inquire as did Hazeel, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" But let him turn from the straight path of right, and follow where the promptings of Satan would lead him, and he will manifest the spirit of his captain until truth, honor, and justice are sacrificed through the lusts of passion.

Christ declared to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." When men take the first step after the suggestion of Satan, they do not think that they will take another and another; but it will become easier and easier to follow, and finally they break away from all the bounds of honor and conscience, and do the work of the enemy, under a pretense of doing the work of righteousness. The plainest evidences of the truth and purity of the character of him who they wish to defame, are misconstrued. The most positive assurances of his faithfulness and nobility have no weight or power to control their slanderous reports. The most innocent works of conscience and charity are looked upon as actuated by selfish motives and unholy desires. The only safety for him who is thus assailed is to trust fully in God, not seeking to vindicate his own cause, but when falsely accused to his face to state only the plain facts of the case, and then leave the result with God. The Judge of all the earth will do right. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

While David was in his refuge in the forests of Hareth, he was informed that the Philistines were warring against the men of Keilah, and that the people were in great distress, for their enemies were robbing the threshing-floors. "Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines." The men who had cast in their lot with David, looked at their small force,—only a few hundred men,—and they were filled with dread at the thought of an encounter with the superior numbers of their enemies. They were also afraid that Saul would attack them, and that between the two armies they would be overwhelmed.

David again sought the Lord. It was the manifest fear and reluctance of his men that led him again to inquire of the Lord. He had been anointed as king, and he thought that some measure of responsibility rested upon him for the protection of his people. If he could but have the positive assurance that he was moving in the path of duty, he would start out with his limited forces, and stand faithfully at his post whatever might be the consequences. David was well aware that while Saul was occupied almost entirely with planning and with executing his plans for his discovery and capture, he could not be strengthening his kingdom, or promoting the good of his subjects.

The people of Keilah were being grievously oppressed, for, while their enemies were encamped without their walls, they were being robbed of the necessities of life. In answer to the inquiry of David, the Lord said, "Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So

David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.”

“And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah.” When the king heard the part that the son of Jesse had acted in the siege of Keilah, instead of being grateful that a champion had been raised up to defeat the enemies of Israel he was filled with a more determined enmity toward David. He thought that the action of David brought his own inaction into an unfavorable light before the people, and placed him in the discreditable position of one who was negligent of his duty as the ruler and protector of Israel. He could not but see that this was the truth of the matter; but he was angry with David because his works were righteous and his own were evil. The additional evidence that God was favoring David, in the fact that he had with only a handful of men gained a complete victory over a large force, served to make him the more furious. If his heart had not been poisoned with envy and jealousy, the manifestation of God's favor to David would have had a convincing power upon his mind, and would have led him to change his course.

The king anticipated the speedy destruction of him whom he hated. He intended to inclose the city with his troops, and demand that the inhabitants of Keilah give up the son of Jesse as his captive and prey. Saul was elated with the thought of successfully achieving his plans in securing David. He was so blinded by the great deceiver that he exclaimed, “God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.”

Although a great deliverance had been wrought for Keilah, and the men of the city were very grateful to David and his men for the preservation of their lives, yet so fiendish had become the soul of the God-forsaken Saul, that he could demand from the men of Keilah that they yield up their deliverer to certain and unmerited death. Saul had determined that if they should offer any resistance they would suffer the bitter consequences of opposing the command of their king. The long-desired opportunity seemed to have come, and he determined to leave nothing undone in securing the arrest of his rival.

After the defeat of the Philistines, David felt that at last he had found a place in which he could be secure from danger without seeking to the caves and dens of the earth. If the people who appeared to be so grateful for their deliverance, would but be true to him and his interest, they could hold the city against Saul and his army. But he remembered the destruction of Nob and the massacre of the priests because one of them had shown him favor, and he became alarmed for himself and for the inhabitants of Keilah, lest they should all suffer in a similar manner. He dared not confide in their earnest assurances of fidelity, fearing that when driven by circumstances they would purchase peace and safety for themselves by delivering him over to his enemies. He could no longer feel secure in a city inclosed by gates and bars.

David went to the Lord for counsel. He made his supplication before God, saying, “O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up.”

David could feel no sense of security in remaining at Keilah, even in the midst of the people who owed their lives to his efforts in their behalf. The inhabitants of the city did not for a moment think themselves capable of such an act of ingratitude and treachery; but David knew, from the light that God had given him, that they could not be trusted, that in the hour of need they would fail.

“Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.”

October 12, 1888

David and Saul at En-gedi

“And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life; and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.” Satan was constantly at work to destroy the anointed of the Lord; but the Lord worked to disappoint the enemy, and to preserve David and his men. And now, when bright and cheering spots were few in the experience of the son of Jesse, he was surprised and rejoiced to receive a visit from Jonathan, who had learned the place of his refuge. How precious were the moments that these two friends passed in each other's society. They related their varied experiences, and Jonathan strengthened the heart and confidence of David, saying, “Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.” As they talked of the wonderful dealings of God toward David, the oppressed and hunted fugitive was greatly encouraged. “And they two made a covenant before the Lord; and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.”

After the visit of Jonathan, David encouraged his soul with songs of praise, accompanying his voice with his harp as he sang, “In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? for, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in Heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.”

The Ziphites, into whose wild regions David went from Keilah, sent word to Saul in Gibeah that they knew where David was hiding, and that they would guide the king to his retreat. “Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.” Saul, who had recently been uttering blasphemous curses, now said, “Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me.” The king pronounced a blessing upon the wicked betrayers of David; but of what advantage were praise and flattery from such lips?

A new company was prepared and sent out to hunt for the Lord's anointed, and Saul gave a special charge to the wicked Ziphites: “Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there; for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.”

The citizens of Keilah, who should have repaid the interest and zeal of David in delivering them from the hands of the Philistines, would have given him up because of their fear of Saul rather than to have suffered a siege for his sake. But the men of Ziph would do worse; they would betray David into the hands of his enemy, not because of their loyalty to the king, but because of their hatred of David. Their interest for the king was only a pretense. They were of their own accord acting the part of hypocrites when they offered to assist in the capture of David. It was upon these false-hearted betrayers that Saul invoked the blessing of the Lord. He praised their Satanic spirit in betraying an innocent man, as the spirit and act of virtue in showing compassion to himself. Apparently David was in greater danger than he had ever been before. Upon learning the perils to which he was exposed, he changed his position, seeking refuge in the mountains between Maon and the Dead Sea.

Saul and his men had planned well, and they felt that success was already assured. But when the enemies of David flattered themselves that there could be no escape, there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, "Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines."

The disappointed king was in a frenzy of anger to be thus cheated of his prey; but he feared the dissatisfaction of the nation; for, if the Philistines should ravage the country while he was destroying its defender, a reaction would be likely to take place, and he would become the object of the people's hate. So he relinquished his pursuit of David, and went against the Philistines, and this gave David an opportunity to escape to the stronghold of En-gedi.

As soon as the encounter with the Philistines was over, word was again sent to Saul, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." David had only six hundred men in his company, while Saul advanced against him with an army of three thousand. In a secluded cave the son of Jesse and his men waited for the guidance of God as to what should be done. As Saul was pressing his way up the mountains, he turned aside, and lay down to rest in the entrance of the very cavern where David and his company were hidden. When his men saw this, they urged their leader to kill Saul as he slept. The fact that the king was now in their power, was interpreted by them as a certain evidence that God himself had delivered the enemy into their hand that they might destroy this relentless foe, who without cause was continually seeking the life of David. David was tempted to take this view of the matter; but the voice of conscience spoke to him, saying, "Touch not the anointed of the Lord," and he could but yield obedience. His men were impatient that David hesitated to grant the permission they so much desired; but he firmly restrained them from doing any harm to Saul.

The course of David made it manifest that he had a Ruler whom he obeyed. He could not permit his natural passions to gain the victory over him; for he knew that he that ruleth his own spirit, is greater than he who taketh a city. If he had been led and controlled by human feelings, he would have reasoned that the Lord had brought his enemy under his power in order that he might slay him, and take the government of Israel upon himself. Saul's mind was in such a condition that his authority was not respected, and the people were becoming irreligious and demoralized. Yet the fact that Saul had been divinely chosen king of Israel kept him in safety, for David conscientiously served God, and he would not in any wise harm the anointed of the Lord.

David's men could scarcely consent to leave Saul in peace, and they said to their commander, "Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily." But his tender conscience smote him afterward, because he had marred the garment of the king.

Saul rose up and went out of the cave to continue his search after David. But a voice fell upon his startled ears, saying, "My lord the king." He turned to see who was addressing him, and lo! it was the son of Jesse, the man whom he had so long desired to have in his power that he might kill him. David bowed himself to the king, acknowledging him as his master. David addressed Saul in these words: "Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave; and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee."

Saul was both astonished and humbled as he heard the statements of David, and admitted their truthfulness. His feelings were greatly stirred as he realized that he had been so fully in the power of the man whom he had injured. He saw David standing before him in conscious innocence, and yet he had charged him with plotting against his life, and had pursued him with relentless hate to destroy him. He was deeply agitated as David presented the skirt of his robe as unmistakable evidence to the king that his accusations had been without foundation. Here was proof that David was not seeking the life of the king. Then David presented the course of Saul in its true, undignified, and ungenerous light, and Saul exclaimed with trembling lip and softened spirit, "Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept." Then he declared to David. "Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.... For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand." And David made a covenant with Saul that when this should take place he would favorably regard the house of Saul, and not cut off his name.

David had no reason to put confidence in the assurances of Saul, or to deem that his penitent condition would be permanent: He knew that his feelings would change, and that the king would be more thoroughly intent than ever upon taking his life. So when Saul returned to his home, David remained in the strongholds of the mountains.

The enmity that is cherished toward the servants of God by those who have yielded to the power of Satan, changes at times to a feeling of favor and approbation; but this is not always an evidence that the change is a lasting one. The enemies of righteousness have been moved by a power from beneath to accuse and stigmatize those whom God has chosen to do his work. False impressions have been made through false statements; but after evil-minded men have engaged in doing and saying many wicked things, the conviction that they have been in the wrong takes deep hold upon their minds. The Spirit of the Lord strives with them, and they humble their hearts before God, and

before those whose influence they have sought to destroy, and they change their course toward them. But as they again open the door to the suggestions of the evil one, the old doubts are revived. The old enmity is awakened, and they return to engage in the same work which they repented of, and for a time abandoned. Again they speak evil, accusing and condemning in the bitterest manner the very ones to whom they made most humble confession. Satan can use such souls with far greater power after such a course has been pursued than he could before, because they have sinned against greater light.

The history of Saul is a lesson to all who would walk in the counsel of God. They should take warning from his proud and rebellious spirit, and learn to walk with humility before Heaven, placing their whole dependence upon God. Many have apostatized who have once been zealous advocates of the truth, and whose faith and teaching have been published throughout the world, verifying the words of Paul when he declares, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith."

October 19, 1888

The Death of Samuel

"And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." The death of Samuel was regarded as an irreparable loss by the nation of Israel. A great and good prophet and an eminent judge had fallen in death; and the grief of the people was deep and heart-felt.

The life of Samuel from early childhood had been a life of piety and devotion. He had been placed under the care of Eli in his youth, and the loveliness of his character drew forth the warm affection of the aged priest. He was kind, generous, diligent, obedient, and respectful. The contrast between the course of the youth Samuel and that of the priest's own sons was very marked, and Eli found rest and comfort and blessing in the presence of his charge. It was a singular thing that between Eli, the chief magistrate of the nation, and the simple child so warm a friendship should exist. Samuel was helpful and affectionate, and no father ever loved his child more tenderly than did Eli this youth. As the infirmities of age came upon Eli, he felt more keenly the disheartening, reckless, profligate course of his own sons, and he turned to Samuel for comfort and support.

How touching to see youth and old age relying one upon the other, the youth looking up to the aged for counsel and wisdom, the aged looking to the youth for help and sympathy. This is as it should be. God would have the young possess such qualifications of character that they shall find delight in the friendship of the old, that they may be united in the endearing bonds of affection to those who are approaching the borders of the grave.

From his youth up, Samuel had walked before Israel in the integrity of his heart; but he was no longer to go in and out before his people. Although Saul had been the acknowledged king of Israel, Samuel had wielded a more powerful influence than he, because his record was one of faithfulness, obedience, and devotion. We read that he judged Israel all the days of his life. The closing years of the prophet could not but be years of sadness and burden of soul. His own children had not followed the example which he had given them. They had not heeded the precepts which he had sought to impress upon their minds. They had not copied the elevated, pure, unselfish life of their father. Through their impious and selfish life they had forfeited the confidence of the people, and this was a

cause of great grief to Samuel. He had been to some extent too easy and indulgent with his sons, and the result that is usually seen where this is the case, was made apparent in his family. The characters of his children were marred with selfishness, and their course was such that it made them a dishonor to the cause of God. If the warning given to Eli had exerted the influence upon the mind of Samuel that it should have done, it would have aided him in the government of his household.

The Lord said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." If Samuel had been like Abraham, and had commanded his children after him, how different would have been the moulding of the lives of his children. Their characters were fashioned after the sight of their eyes and the hearing of their ears. The associations which they chose, the company which they kept, left an impress upon their minds; and reverence for God and sacred things was weakened.

The aged prophet had loved Saul with intense affection; but before he died, he saw the scepter dishonored in the hand of him whom he had anointed in the name of the Lord to rule Israel. He saw him as one who could not rule himself, much less a nation. With some consolation he recalled the fact that he had anointed the son of a shepherd in Bethlehem as the future king, and he looked forward to David's reign as the time when Israel would revive. The bright and morning Star was to come of the seed of David, and his throne was to be established forever.

After Israel had rejected Samuel as ruler of the nation, though well qualified for public labor, the prophet sought retirement. He was not superannuated, for he presided as teacher in the school of the prophets. This service for his God was a pleasant service. David's connection with Samuel during his stay at Naioth aroused the jealousy of Saul lest he who was revered as a prophet of God throughout all Israel, should lend his influence to the advancement of his rival. As the character and management of Saul were viewed in contrast to the character and management of Samuel, Israel saw what a mistake they had made in desiring a king, that they might not be different from the nations around them. The people looked with alarm at the condition of society, fast becoming leavened with irreligion and godlessness. The influence and example of their ruler was leaving its impression on all sides, and well might Israel mourn that Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, was dead.

The nation had lost the founder and president of their college, but that was not all. They had lost him to whom they had been accustomed to go with their great troubles. They had lost one who had constantly interceded with God in their behalf. Israel had felt more secure while the prayers of this good man ascended to Heaven for them; for "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." They felt now that they were being forsaken of God. The king seemed little less than a madman. He was abandoned of God; but he was not filled with godly sorrow for the evil course he had pursued. He was remorseful, passionate, and unable to exercise reason. The Lord had declared by the lips of Samuel the condition of the disobedient: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." These words found their verification in the life of Saul. The uncontrolled passions of his wicked heart made him unfit to receive counsel or advice. He refused all instruction, and acted as if possessed of a demon. Justice was perverted to cruelty, and order was turned into confusion. Oh, that Saul had humbled his proud heart before God! But anger rests in the bosom of fools, transforming those who have been made in the image of God, into the image of the evil one.

Saul had a mind and influence capable of governing a kingdom, if his powers had been submitted to the control of God, but the very endowments that qualified him for doing good could be used by Satan, when surrendered to his power, and would enable him to exert widespread influence for evil. He could be more sternly vindictive, more injurious and determined in prosecuting his unholy designs, than could others, because of the superior powers of mind and heart that had been given him of God. He had ruined his own soul, and had wrought the ruin of his house; but he was impenitent and hardened. He had brought injury and disgrace upon himself, and yet he desired that David when he should come to the throne, should preserve his house and honor his name. But his very course in pursuing his successor from place to place, and of proclaiming him an outlaw and a rebel, brought infamy upon the name he desired to have honored.

It was while Israel was racked with perplexity and internal strife, at a time when it seemed that the calm, God-fearing counsel of Samuel was most needed, that God gave his aged servant rest. Oh, how bitter were the reflections of Israel as they looked upon his quiet resting-place, and remembered their folly in rejecting him as their ruler; for he had had so close a connection with Heaven that he seemed to bind all Israel to the throne of Jehovah. It was Samuel who had taught them to love and obey God; but now that he was dead, the people felt that they were to be left to the mercies of a king who was joined to Satan, and who would divorce the people from God and Heaven.

David could not be present at the funeral of Samuel; but he mourned for him as deeply and tenderly as a faithful son could have mourned for a devoted father. He knew that his death had broken another bond of restraint from the spirit and actions of Saul, and he felt less secure than while the prophet lived. While the attention of Saul was engaged in mourning for the death of Samuel, David thought it necessary to seek for a place of greater security; so he fled to the wilderness of Paran. It was here that he composed the one hundred and twentieth and twenty-first psalms. In the desolate wilds of the wilderness, realizing that the prophet was dead, and the king was his enemy, he sang: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.... The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore."

October 26, 1888

The Work of a Peace-Maker

While David and his men were in the Wilderness of Paran, they protected from the depredations of marauders the flocks and herds of a very wealthy man named Nabal, who had vast possessions in Carmel. Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, but his character was churlish and niggardly.

David and his men were in sore need of provisions while at this place, and when the son of Jesse heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep he sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, "Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name; and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers; now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favor in

thine eyes; for we come in a good day; give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.”

David and his men had been like a wall of protection to the shepherds and flocks of Nabal as they pastured in the mountains. And he courteously petitioned that supplies be given them in their great need from the abundance of this rich man. They might have helped themselves from the flocks and herds; but they did not. They behaved themselves in an honest way; but their kindness was all lost upon Nabal. The answer he returned to David was indicative of his character. “And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?” When the young men returned empty-handed, disappointed and disgusted, and related the affair to David, he was filled with indignation. “Surely,” he said, “in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him; and he has requited me evil for good.” David commanded his men to gird on their swords, and equip themselves for an encounter; for he had determined to punish the man who had denied him what was his right, and had added insult to injury. This impulsive movement was more in harmony with the manner of Saul than with that of David, but the son of Jesse had yet to learn lessons of patience in the school of affliction.

One of the servants of Nabal hastened to Abigail, the wife of Nabal, after he had dismissed David's young men, and told her what had happened. “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household.”

Without consulting her husband, or telling him of her intention, Abigail made up an ample supply of provisions, and started out to meet the army of David. She met them in a covert of a hill. “And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be; and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience.” Abigail addressed David with as much reverence as though speaking to a crowned monarch. Nabal had scornfully inquired, “Who is David?” but Abigail called him, “My Lord.” With kind words she sought to soothe his irritated feelings. She did not reproach him for his hasty action, for she felt assured that a little time and reflection would work a change in his purpose, and that his conscience itself would condemn the violent measure which he was about to take. She pleaded with David in behalf of her husband. With utter unselfishness of spirit, she desired him to impute the whole blame of the matter to her, and not to charge it to her poor, deluded husband, who knew not what was for his own good or happiness. What a spirit is this! With nothing of ostentation or pride, but full of the wisdom and love of God, Abigail revealed the strength of her devotion to her household. Whatever was her husband's disposition, he was her husband still, and she made it plain to the indignant captain that the unkind course of her husband was in nowise premeditated against him as a personal affront; but it was simply the outburst of an unhappy and selfish nature. Nabal was naturally unreasonable and abusive, and when aroused he knew not what he said or did.

“Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal,” Abigail did not take to herself the credit of this reasoning to swerve David from his hasty purpose, but gave to God the honor and the praise. She then offered her rich provision as a peace-offering to the young men of David, and still pleaded as if she herself were the guilty party who had so stirred the indignation of David. “I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid; for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.” Abigail presented by implication the course which David should pursue. He should fight the battles of the Lord. He was not to seek revenge for personal wrongs, even though persecuted as a traitor. She continued: “Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; ... and it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart unto my lord, neither that thou hath shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.”

These words could only have come from the lips of one who had partaken of that wisdom which cometh down from above. The piety of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul. Her heart was full of purity, gentleness, and sanctified love. Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. Better impulses came to David, and he trembled as he thought what might have been the consequences of his rash purpose. An entire household would have been slain, containing more than one precious, God-fearing person like Abigail, who had engaged in the blessed ministry of good. Her words healed the sore and bruised heart of David. Would that there were more women who would soothe the irritated feelings, prevent rash impulses, and quell great evils by words of calm and well-directed wisdom. “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.”

A consecrated Christian life is ever shedding light and comfort and peace. It is purity, tact, simplicity, and usefulness. It is controlled by that unselfish love that sanctifies the influence. It is full of Christ, and leaves a track of light wherever its possessor may go. Abigail was a wise reprover and counselor. David's passion died away under the power of her influence and reasoning. He was convinced that he had taken an unwise course, and had lost control of his own Spirit. He received the rebuke with humility of heart, in harmony with his own words, “Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil.” He gave thanks and blessing because she advised him righteously.

There are many who, when they are reprov'd or advised, think it praiseworthy if they receive the rebuke without becoming impatient. But how few take reproof with gratitude of heart, and bless those who seek to save them from pursuing an evil course.

Abigail rejoiced that her mission had been successful, and that she had been instrumental in saving her household from death. David rejoiced that through her timely advice he had been prevented from committing deeds of violence and revenge. Upon reflection, he realized that it would have been a matter of disgrace to him before Israel, and a remembrance that would always have caused

him the keenest remorse. He felt that he and his men had the greatest cause for gratitude. He had had a horror of bloodshed, and had prayed that he might be delivered from blood guiltiness; and yet, when his feelings were injured, he had planned to avenge himself with his own hands. In this he had taken it upon himself to act in the place of God, who has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

David had taken an oath that Nabal and his household should perish; but now he saw that it was not only wrong to make such a vow, but it would be wrong to keep it. If Herod had had the moral courage of David, no matter how humiliating it might have been, he would have retracted the oath that devoted John the Baptist's head to the ax of the executioner, that the revenge of an evil woman might be accomplished, and he would not have had upon his soul the guilt of the murder of the prophet of God.

When Abigail returned to her home, she found her husband and his guests participating in the enjoyment of a great feast. Nabal thought nothing of spending an extravagant amount of his wealth to indulge and glorify himself; but it seemed too painful a sacrifice for him to make to bestow compensation which he never would have missed, upon those who had been like a wall to his flocks and herds. Nabal was like the rich man in the parable. He had only one thought,—to use God's merciful gifts to gratify his selfish animal appetites. He had no thought of gratitude to the giver. He was not rich toward God; for eternal treasure had no attraction for him. Present luxury, present gain, was the one absorbing thought of his life. This was his God.

Abigail found her husband in a state of intoxication, joining in the drunken revelry of those around him. She knew it would be useless to tell him of what had happened when his reason was dethroned; but the next morning she related to him the occurrence of the day before. Nabal was a coward at heart, and his excessive indulgence of appetite, both in eating and drinking, had affected his physical and moral powers, and when he had realized how near his folly had brought him to a sudden death, his entire energy and power seemed smitten with paralysis. Fearful that David would still pursue his purpose of revenge, he was filled with horror, and sank down in a condition of helpless insensibility. After ten days Nabal died. The life that God had given him had only been a curse to society. In the midst of his rejoicing and merry-making, God had said to him, as he said to the rich fool of the parable, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

When David heard the tidings of the death of Nabal, he gave thanks that God had taken vengeance into his own hands. He had been restrained from evil, and the Lord had returned the wickedness of the wicked upon his own head. In this dealing of God with Nabal and David, men may be encouraged to put their cases into the hands of God; for in his own good time he will set matters right.

David afterward married Abigail. This was not according to the original plan of God; it was in direct opposition to his design, that a man should have more than one wife. David was already the husband of Ahinoam. The gospel condemns the practice of polygamy. The custom of the nations of David's time had perverted his judgment and influenced his actions. Great men have erred greatly in following the practices of the world. The study of everyone should be to know what is the will of God and what saith the word of the Lord. The bitter result of this practice of marrying many wives was permitted to be sorely felt throughout all the life of David.

November 2, 1888

David Spares Saul

After the death of Samuel, David was left in peace for a few months. Saul did not pursue or trouble him, and the son of Jesse returned to the solitude of the Ziphites, thinking they would not now molest him since the king had desisted from following him. But the people knew too well the character of Saul to credit him with sincerity repenting of seeking David's life. These enemies of the son of Jesse hoped to be favored by informing the king of David's hiding-place. They told Saul that David was within their reach, and that they would do their utmost to put him into his power.

This intelligence aroused the demon of passion that had been slumbering in Saul's breast. He thought an opportunity was offered which should not be left unimproved. He summoned his men to arms, and once more led them out in pursuit of David. After the solemn covenant that Saul had made with David, the son of Jesse was not inclined to believe that the king would still seek his life. In company with a few of his men, he started out to see if indeed Saul was pursuing him again. David and his companions beheld the tents of the king and his attendants. They were unobserved; for the camp was quiet in slumber. David called upon his friends to go with him into the very midst of the foe. In answer to his question, "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?" Abishai promptly responded, "I will go down with thee."

David and his attendant hastened into the shadows of the hills, and entered the encampment of the enemy. As they sought to ascertain the exact number of their foes, they came upon Saul sleeping, his spear stuck in the ground and a cruse of water at his bolster, while Abner and the people were slumbering on every side. Abishai raised his spear, and said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." The servant waited for the word of permission; but there fell upon his ear the whispered words: "Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? ... As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed; but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awakened; for they were all asleep; because a dead sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them."

How easily the Lord can weaken the strongest, remove prudence from the wisest, and baffle the skill of the most watchful. Then David went over to the other side, and when he was at a safe distance from the camp, he stood on the top of a hill, and cried with a loud voice to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Art thou not a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy Lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other

gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord; for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.”

David assured Saul that he would be glad to serve him as a servant; but without cause he was pursued as a rebel, and compelled to fly from him whom he would follow. He was cut off from the service of God, separated from the holy land, and driven away from his own people to live with strangers and idolaters. He presents the course of Saul in pursuing him as that of the king taking the flower of his army to seek a flea, or to hunt a partridge of the wilderness.

David urged that the real reasons of the king's enmity be searched out, and the controversy come to an end. He knew that it was jealousy [jealousy] that prompted Saul to hunt him from place to place, until there was no security for him, not even in the rocky home of the goats. He declared that if the Lord had stirred Saul up against him to punish him for his sins, God would accept an offering from him. He would make peace with God. If it was wicked counselors that advised the king to take such cruel measures against an innocent man, let them be excluded from his presence as men accursed of God.

David pleaded for his life before the relentless Saul. Again the acknowledgment fell from the lips of the king, “I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day; behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.” Although Saul had made the promise, “I will no more do thee harm,” David did not place himself in his power. This second instance of David's respect for his life, made a still deeper impression upon the mind of Saul, and brought from his lips a more humble acknowledgment of his fault. He was subdued and astonished at the manifestation of David's mercy and kindness toward him. The son of Jesse might have deprived him of his life, but his soul had been precious in the eyes of him to whom he had thought he must be odious and abhorrent.

Saul had meant all that he had said, yet his relenting and confession came not from genuine repentance and conversion of heart. How many have acted in a similar manner. They have been enlightened by the Spirit of God in regard to the truth, but envy and jealousy and unholy ambition have been welcomed to the soul, and the light of truth has been permitted to grow dim. Men whom God has blessed, who have had new light, new purposes, and new hearts, who have meant to be sincere, have been placed in temptation, and by failing to resist the suggestions of Satan, they have allowed self-esteem, and desire for the highest place, to color all the thoughts and actions of their life. Light and darkness, good and evil, strive for the victory. Oh, that these souls might place themselves in right relation to God, and come into harmony with his law! Jealousy has found an entrance into their hearts, and has woven itself into their characters. Envy and jealousy are like two sisters who blend together in their workings. Envy will lead a man to desire some good which another possesses, and will urge him to use every means in his power to bring down and injure the character and reputation of one in whose place he desires to be. Falsehood, hearsays, and slanderous reports are circulated, and everything that can be made use of will be employed to place the envied man in an unfavorable light before the people. Jealousy leads a man to suspect another of seeking to deprive him of advantages and position. Saul had both envy and jealousy.

November 9, 1888

David Becomes Weary in Well-Doing

“And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel; so shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.”

David's conclusion that Saul would certainly accomplish his murderous purpose, was formed without the counsel of God. He had at last become weary of waiting upon the Lord, and in a moment of discouragement placed himself in an unfavorable light before the people of God by his course of unbelief. It was not the Lord who had sent him for protection to the Philistines, the most bitter foes of Israel. This very nation would be nothing less than his worst enemies to the very last; and yet he had sought to them for help in his time of need. Yet having lost all confidence in Saul and in those who served him, he threw himself upon the mercy of the enemies of his people, to escape the treachery of the very men whom he afterward would be called upon to rule when God's appointed time should come.

The Lord had recently worked in David's behalf by aiding him to obtain a decided victory over Saul. The Lord's hand was in all this, and, if David had looked upon the dealings of God with him, he would not have taken this step of seeking unto the Philistines. The Lord had so arranged matters in the past, that the true spirit of David was made manifest before all Israel, and the false accusations brought against him by Saul were proven to be without foundation. Saul had represented David as a traitor and a conspirator, lying in wait to take the life of the king, that he might possess the kingdom himself. The king had represented the matter to the people in such a light that it seemed necessary to deprive David of his life, that the prosperity of Israel might be preserved.

But in working against David, he was working equally against himself in the course that he was pursuing. Through the curse of envy and jealousy, he had weakened his own kingdom by expelling David from his service; for, in so doing, he had driven him into the enemies' ranks. But even while Saul was plotting and seeking to accomplish his destruction, the Lord was working to secure to David the kingdom. And after he had seen that God was caring for him, and had preserved his life again and again, he should have been courageous, and should have left his case in God's hands.

David looked on appearances and not at the promises of God. He doubted that he should ever come to the throne. But had not God sent Samuel to anoint him king of Israel? and would not the Lord perform his word? Although he could not rely on Saul's assurances, he might have safely trusted in the promises of God. The particular care that God had exercised over him in preserving him from all danger, so that he had not been harmed, should have given him confidence and comfort. But cruel unbelief had taken possession of David's heart.

God works out his plans though they are veiled in mystery to human eyes. Men cannot read the ways of God; and, looking at outward appearances, they interpret the trials and tests and provings that God permits to come upon them as things that are against them, and that will only work their ruin.

David took counsel with his own heart. Long trials had tried his faith and exhausted his patience. But these very trials were designed to work him blessing, to strengthen his faith in the belief that angels were encamped round about him, and that he was under the guardianship of Heaven. God was dishonored by his course of unbelief.

David was a brave general, and had proved himself a wise and successful warrior; but he was working directly against his own interests when he went to the Philistines. God had appointed him to set up his standard in the land of Judah, and it was want of faith and confidence that led him to forsake his post of duty without a command from the Lord. How could he expect that the God of Israel would give him protection, when he had placed himself with the bitterest foes of his people? Could he expect safety with the Philistines, when only shortly before he had barely escaped with his life by feigning himself to be a mad man? Could he reasonably hope to save himself by seeking an asylum with a people whom God had appointed to extinction? When he should come to the throne, he would be employed as the agent to carry out this purpose of destroying the Philistines.

In fleeing to the enemies of Israel, David encouraged the Philistines to take further measures to oppress his people, and the impression was received by his brethren that he had gone to the heathen to serve their gods. By this act he gave occasion for misconstruing his motives, and many were led to hold prejudice against him. This demonstrates the fact that great and good men, men with whom God has worked, will make grievous mistakes when they cease to watch and pray, and to fully trust in God.

There is a precious experience, an experience more precious than fine gold, to be gained by everyone who will walk by faith. He who will walk in the way of unwavering trust in God will have a connection with Heaven. The child of God is to do his work, looking to God alone for strength and guidance. He must toil on without despondency and full of hope, even though he is placed in most trying and aggravating circumstances.

David's experiences are recorded for the instruction of the people of God in these last days. In his warfare against Satan, this servant of God had received light and direction from Heaven, but, because the conflict was long continued, and because the question of his receiving the throne was unsettled, he became weary and discouraged. He was provoked that he was hunted from place to place as though he were a wild beast. The very thing that Satan desired to have him do, he was led to do; for, in seeking refuge among the Philistines, David caused great joy and triumph and exultation to the enemies of God and his people. David did not renounce his worship of God nor cease his devotion to his cause; but he sacrificed his trust in him for his personal safety, and thus tarnished the upright and faithful character that God requires his servants to possess.

November 16, 1888

David's Experience in Philistia

David was cordially received at Gath by the king of the Philistines. The warmth of his reception was partly due to the fact that the king admired him, and partly to the fact that it was flattering to his vanity to have a Hebrew leave his own nation to seek his protection. Achish hoped to be successful not only in gaining David as an ally, but in gaining others also, for he felt assured that many would be influenced through David's example to rally under his standard. David felt secure from betrayal in

the dominions of Achish. He brought his family, his household, and his possessions, as did also his men, and to all appearances he had come to locate permanently in the land of Philistia. All this was very gratifying to Achish, who solemnly promised to protect the fugitive Israelites.

At David's request for a residence in the country removed from the royal city, the king graciously granted Ziklag as a possession, and it was afterward annexed to Israel's dominions. For a year and six months, David made his home in the country of the Philistines. He had tasted the bitterness of envy at Saul's court, and he feared that he might have a similar experience in the court at Gath. But it was for far weightier reasons that he desired to leave the royal city. He realized that it would be dangerous for himself and [his] men to be under the influence of those who were connected with idolatry and transgression. In a town wholly separated for their use, they might worship God with more freedom than they could if they remained in Gath, where the senseless, heathen rites could but prove a source of evil and annoyance.

While dwelling in this isolated town, David made war upon the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, and he left neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to Gath. When he returned from battle, Achish inquired as to where he had been, and David gave him to understand that he had been warring against those of his own nation, the men of Judah. But by this very dissembling, he was the means of strengthening the hand of the Philistines, for the king said, "He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever." By placing himself under the protection of the Philistines, he had discovered to them the weakness of his people; for the Philistines had feared David more than they had feared Saul and his armies. Although David knew that it was the will of God that the Philistines should be destroyed, and although he knew that he was appointed to do this work, yet he was not walking in the counsel of God when he practiced deception. Moreover, he had been anointed to stand in defense of the people of God; and the Lord would not have his servants give encouragement to the wicked by disclosing the weakness of his people, or by an appearance of indifference to their welfare.

David's faith in God had been strong, but it had failed him when he placed himself under the protection of the Philistines. He had taken this step without seeking the counsel of the Lord; but when he had sought and obtained the favor of the Philistines, it was poor policy to repay their kindness by deception. In the favor they had shown him they had been actuated by selfishness. They had reason to remember the son of Jesse, for his valor had cost them their champion, Goliath, and had turned the tide of the battle against them. The Philistines were glad of an opportunity to separate David's forces from the army under Saul. They hoped that David would avenge his wrongs by joining them in battle against Saul and Israel.

"And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men." David had no intention of lifting his hand against his people, but he was not certain as to what course he would pursue until circumstances should indicate the direction of his duty. He answered the king evasively, and said, "Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do." Achish understood these words as a promise to assist him in the approaching war, and the king pledged his word that if he would do this, he would bestow upon him great honor, and give him a high position among his officials.

But although David's faith had staggered somewhat at the promises of God, he still remembered that Samuel had anointed him king of Israel. He recalled the victories that God had given him over his enemies in the past. He reviewed the great mercies of God in preserving him from the hand of Saul, and he determined that he would not betray any sacred trust, or imperil his soul's salvation. He would not join his forces with the enemy against Saul, even though the king had sought his life.

How many would have yielded to the temptation that Achish presented to David! How many have fallen, and how many will fall, into the snare of Satan for temporary advantages! Ambitious for exaltation, they will unite their influence with the avowed enemies of God's truth if they can only be honored among those who are honored of men. For present advantages, they will sacrifice the eternal good that God has in store for them. They will not endure the proving of God, and show themselves true in every place, and under all circumstances. God has promised that his faithful, obedient servants shall be exalted to be priests and kings. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

Satan succeeds in making many grow restless, even after they have wrestled against difficulty, and have run well for a season. He presents temptation in a new way, and under a different aspect, and places before men human honors and advantages, and they fall, as did Adam and Eve when the serpent said, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Stretching beyond their capacity, they seek a more exalted position; desiring the highest seat they will finally, with shame, have to take the lowest seat. They sell their souls to the enemy, that they may be lifted up, and they will find, at last, that they are slaves to the one who degrades and ruins mankind. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

November 30, 1888

God's Requirement of His People

The Lord cannot use men and women in his service, in any branch of his work, unless they possess a meek and teachable spirit. Those whom God employs in his service must be true to principle, but, while they must not swerve from the plain path of duty for any selfish interest, they are not to be bigoted and puffed up with self-esteem. Unless the heart is in connection with the Source of all wisdom, there will not be an abiding sense of the sacredness of the work. Workers for Christ must derive all their life and inspiration from God. They must seek to be conformed to his will and his ways, and not seek to have their own will and way. He who would become a living channel of light, must be governed by something more than habit or opinion. He must live hourly in conscious communion with God. His life must be brought into contact with the principles of truth and righteousness. He must become a partaker of divine nature.

The servant of God must be continually seeking for intellectual power, and every acquisition of the mind must be devoted to glorifying God. We must have enlarged conceptions of what the requirement of God is of his people. We are to love God with all our heart, might, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. This love will elevate the taste, subdue the appetite, and control the passions. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, these are the fruits of the Spirit. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." They are endowed with the heavenly endowment, even with the ornament of

a meek and quiet spirit which is of great value in the sight of God. God requires us to reach the highest standard.

We must not be content with anything short of the divine illumination from the central Light of the universe. When we have this illumination, we shall see the necessity of pressing onward and upward, of elevating the standard, of cultivating the loftiest ambition, and of reaching the highest attainments. We shall constantly draw from the Source of all wisdom, and live as in the sight of the Lord. We should consecrate all our powers to the service of Christ. He has loved us; he has died to redeem us, and to wash us from our sins in his own blood. Self must die. All success and honor must be accredited to Him who has died that we might live. Christ must be inscribed upon our banners. How slow we are to understand that God requires the service of our whole heart, an unreserved consecration of all the powers of our being. He claims all there is of us. All that mortal man can render of service in any direction, must be devoted to the work of Christ, if we would meet the requirement of God.

Your talent has been intrusted to you by the Lord, and you will be held responsible for its employment and improvement. It is the design of the Giver that it shall be used in accordance with his divine will. We are not only to work out our own salvation, but we are to love our fellow-men as we love ourselves. We must manifest the glory of God. This is the high aim of our existence. We must be in such a condition that we can appreciate the light that God has brought into the experience of others. Our lives and characters are influenced by the physical, intellectual, and moral acquirements of past generations. If we remain in ignorance, we have no one to blame but ourselves. If we put to the stretch every power, and task every ability to the utmost, with an eye single to the glory of God, we shall not fail of doing a valuable work for God.

The time in which we live is full of the most solemn importance. There is nothing that can be more acceptable to God than to have the youth dedicate their lives to his service in the bloom and freshness of their years. Their talents may become a power for God, when they are properly cultivated. Their characters may be characters that will be acceptable to Heaven; but they must be shaped by line upon line, and precept upon precept. They must be modeled after the divine pattern.

Those who are educating the youth in the service of God, are doing a solemn and sacred work. They are channels through which flows the current of spiritual light from the throne of God. Without being conscious of it, they are doing a work that is far-reaching in its influence. In the work of saving souls, we are to know whereof we speak. The words of John are full of significance when he says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." He affirmed that he had known him that was from the beginning, and because of this, he was able to impart knowledge to those whom he sought to teach. We are to remember the experiences of the past, to recall the days of old, and then to be able to give the trumpet no uncertain sound, because we can affirm whereof we know. We can encourage others to reach forward for a better life, because we have had an experience ourselves in the things of God.

When your soul is the temple for the indwelling Spirit of the Saviour, the gross elements of your nature will be consumed, and the whole being will become a living purpose. He who is truly Christ's will have an experience like that of Daniel, and the fruits of the Spirit will appear in his life. There are powers within us that are paralyzed through sin, that need the vivifying influence of the grace of Christ, that they may be restored. A mighty power from the Life-giver must quicken them to life, and

rouse them to action. When this is your experience, you can work as Jesus has given you an example. Divine light and love will be reflected upon those who feel that they are sick in both soul and body. Jesus invites his own presence to your soul. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Shall we not open the door of our hearts to the divine guest?

Those who engage in the work of God must be pure in heart, and circumspect in deportment. The souls of God's people should not be like a barren waste, as are so many souls at this time. God has given to every man some ability to use in his service, and it is God's design that it should be employed to his glory, and man's good. Many are losing much, simply because they will not learn in the school of Christ. They might gain eternal treasure, but, in turning away from the divine Teacher, their consciences are violated and seared, and the admonitions of God's word lose all power to stir their hearts. But there is no need of making such a failure. Christ will come into the heart and abide there if you will but cleanse the soul temple of every defilement.