

Ellen G. White 1896 Sign Of The Times

January 2, 1896

Christ Revealing the Character of the Law

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The Son of God clothed divinity with humanity. Isaiah describes him, saying: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." God in human nature is the mystery of godliness. Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, was the express image of his Father's person, the brightness of his glory, and he came to the world not to condemn the world, but to save it. God was in Christ in human form, and endured all the temptations wherewith man was beset; in our behalf he participated in the suffering and trials of sorrowful human nature. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." In his human nature he was "tempted in all points like as we are," he "suffered being tempted," but there was no taint of sin upon him.

The condescension on the part of the Son of God was included in the plan of God for the unfolding of divine wisdom to fallen men. Divinity united with humanity could alone reach humanity, and impart spiritual life to those who were "dead in trespasses and sins." In order to work the restoration of the fallen, it was necessary that man's will should come into harmony with the divine will. God purposed that men should conform to the divine Model. The glory of the wisdom of God continually shines forth to humanity in the Son of God. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Every step that Christ advanced from the manger to Calvary established his character as the One who could say without any qualification, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." What exalted ideas of the law of God do we obtain as we behold Jesus fulfilling every precept, and representing the character of God before the world! It was by fulfilling the law that Christ made known the Father to the world.

The plan of redemption is perfect in all its parts. It does not lessen the claims of the law of God in one jot or one tittle, in saving the sinner from the just penalty of the law. Through the provision of the death of God's only-begotten Son in sinners' behalf, the immutability of the law of God is demonstrated for time and eternity. Justice honors the law of God in providing a substitute for the transgressor; for Christ gave his own life a ransom in order that God might be just and yet be the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. The work of saving the lost through the merit of Christ magnifies the law, and harmonizes with every perfection of Jehovah. In the plan of salvation the highest honor is paid to the law of heaven's government, and yet mercy is freely dispensed to the fallen sons of Adam. Every believing soul, cooperating with the Great Restorer, is blessed with heavenly grace and endowed with the richest treasures of the glory of God. The imagination can not

picture anything more glorious than that which is attained through the plan of redemption. Well may we exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Through the obedience of the Son of God, through his submission to bear the death penalty for human transgression, the law is magnified and made honorable before the universe. Angels, cherubim, seraphim, and worlds unfallen behold the law vindicated and exalted. Through the unfolding of the perfection of the divine nature they see the image of God restored to man, and the honor of the divine government maintained. The wisdom of God has abounded towards all the sons and daughters of Adam. Christ laid down his life, shed his blood, suffered the death penalty for the sinner, and became the sin bearer for every repenting, believing soul. We see sin fully punished in the Substitute, and the sinner fully saved through His merit. We see the law of God highly exalted, with no jot or tittle of its authority laid aside, while the transgressor, relying upon the merit of the Substitute, is justified by the law. Through the plan of salvation we see mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embracing each other. There is no vacillation in the principles of God's commandments; but they are pronounced by the angels of heaven, by the inhabitants, of our fallen world, and by souls justified, as "holy, and just, and good."

Christ, the highly exalted of God, God dwelling in humanity, is to be loved and obeyed. His life is a pattern for the whole world to copy. Every one of us may know God in Christ, one with every believer. Every one may exclaim with Paul, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." In the cross of Christ is the sure evidence that there is pardon for sin. Christ crucified is the source of all wisdom and virtue for man.

We may say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." But, though we rely upon God, we shall not be exempt from trial and temptation. Oftentimes we will have to suffer severe disappointment and endure heaviness of heart because of the world's misunderstanding and misinterpretation of our motives and purposes. But, while cast down, we shall not be forsaken of God, unless we shall sever the golden link of the chain which binds us through Christ to God. Jesus is our Pattern. The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, was tempted in all points like as sinful man is tempted. But through Christ we may be placed upon vantage ground, and become partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust.

January 9, 1896

Obedience Better than Sacrifice

The word of the Lord is to be obeyed without question; it is to be the supreme authority in our life. Saul departed from the express commandment of the Lord, and sought to quiet the compunctions of conscience by persuading himself that the Lord would accept his sacrifice, and overlook his disobedience. When Samuel, the prophet, came to meet him, Saul acted as though he regarded himself as a righteous man, and exclaimed, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But the unmistakable tokens of his disobedience were so manifest that his assertion of obedience was of little weight. "And Samuel said, What meaneth then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, 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 Samuel said, 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."

Though disobeying the express command of the Lord, Saul claimed to have performed the directions, that had been given him; and in this day there are those who claim to be the children of God who take a similar course. But John tells us that "he that committeth sin is of the devil."

There are those who claim to be wholly sanctified, and yet they persist in keeping up an unrelenting warfare against the law of God. We do not need to specify to what class they belong, for John has plainly declared that "he that committeth sin is of the devil." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," that is, is not found in transgression of the law of God. We are not to be deceived by the high pretensions of those who claim advanced piety; for our Saviour has given us a rule by which to measure their claims. He says: "By their fruits ye shall know them." "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned all thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes.... Give me understanding, and I will keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.... Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.... O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

The language of David will be the language of every truly obedient and sanctified heart. But those who are continually pouring out bitterness against the law of Jehovah, have another spirit. They are following the leadership of him who first brought sin into the world, and who has worked, and is still working, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. Through his misrepresentations of the law of God, Satan led many of the angels of heaven to take his side in apostasy and rebellion, and by this same method he has secured the world, and even the largest share of the professedly Christian church, to be at enmity with the law of Jehovah. But the fact that Satan has the world on his side, does not argue that the truth is error, or that error is truth. Numbers can not make sin anything but sin,—the transgression of the law of God.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Every character must be brought to the test of this measurement; but it has been the determined purpose of Satan to tear down the standard of the law of God, and erect in its stead a lower standard, a finite measure by which men

may measure themselves among themselves; and thus their ideas as to what constitutes righteousness have become lowered and confused. This is the reason that so large a number who profess to be followers of Christ, claim to be perfect and sanctified when they are sinners in the sight of God.

“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” John refers in these words not to a new commandment, but to the old commandment, which ye heard from the beginning, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.” Those who are unreconciled to the law of Jehovah, are unreconciled to those who magnify the law of God, calling it holy, just, and good. They manifest the same spirit of bitterness, malice, and hate, as did Cain toward Abel. The younger brother carried out the express direction of God in bringing the sacrifice to the altar; but Cain, exalting his judgment above that of the Infinite, determined to bring an offering according to his own ideas. When the Lord manifested his approval of Abel's course, and refused to accept the offering of Cain, Cain was filled with envy, jealousy, and hate, and slew his brother, whose righteous works condemned his sinful course.

Many, many in the Christian world are following a course after the order of that which Cain followed. The Lord has given to men his law, and has promised that he will bless those who keep his commandments. In the fourth commandment he has enjoined upon men the keeping of the Sabbath, a memorial of his creative works and power; but men have sought out many inventions, and Satan has been permitted to wind his way into the faith and doctrine of the professedly Christian church, until the Sabbath of the Lord, the memorial of creative power, has been set aside, and the law made void by sinful men, while a spurious sabbath has been instituted in its place. Men declare that the first day of the week is commemorated in honor of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, when not one line in the word of God can be found requiring this at their hands. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” But many sweep away the Ten Commandments entirely, announcing that they were nailed to the cross with the ceremonial law of types and sacrifices. While professing to honor the Son by keeping a day in honor of his resurrection, they pour contempt upon the law of Jehovah, and are following the course of Cain in offering that which God has never commanded, and in ignoring a plain command which he has given. Those who obey the voice of God, as did Abel, receive from the hands of the disobedient, treatment similar to that which Abel met with from the hands of Cain. John says, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

The word of God is to be of supreme authority. The Lord says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” God could not change one tittle of his law without ceasing to be supreme. Men can not bend the law of God to suit their ideas, and, failing to bring it into harmony with themselves, they break its commands and violate its precepts. All too late the world will learn that they can not judge the word of God, but that the word of God will judge them. Would that men would consider how foolish and how wicked it is to contend with God! Would that they would cease to oppose their will against the will of the Infinite! Those who oppose God will yet learn that in so doing they have forsaken the only path that leads to holiness, happiness, and heaven.

January 16, 1896

Sin Condemned in the Flesh

“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God. Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the head and representative of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges. He was subjected to the fiercest temptations that human nature can know, yet he sinned not; for sin is the transgression of the law. By faith he laid hold upon divinity, even as humanity may lay hold upon infinite power through him. Altho tempted upon all points even as men are tempted, he sinned not. He did not surrender his allegiance to God, as did Adam.

The Pharisees accused Christ of breaking the Sabbath because he had healed a man upon the Sabbath day; but his words made it evident that he had not violated the command of God. He declared that they were ignorant both of the Scriptures and the power of God, and reminded them that if they had known what this meaneth, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,” they would not have condemned the guiltless. He carried their minds back to the law and to the testimony, to the words which he himself had spoken when enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, and revealed to them the principles of the law of God. He showed them that to relieve the suffering of either man or beast on the Sabbath day was in harmony with the commandment of God. He said to them: “What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.” He pointed them to the action of David, how when he was hungry, and they that were with him, “he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests.” It was their own ignorance of the true import of the law of God that emboldened them to charge upon Christ the sin of Sabbath-breaking. Could they have found one action that violated any commandment in the Decalogue, they would have lost no time in condemning Christ. But it was because no fault could be found in him that they had to hire men to bear false witness against him. In their anxiety and determination to put him to death, they had to perjure their souls.

Christ took human nature upon him, and became a debtor to do the whole law in behalf of those whom he represented. Had he failed in one jot or tittle, he would have been a transgressor of the law, and we would have had in him a sinful, unavailing offering. But he fulfilled every specification of the law, and condemned sin in the flesh; yet many ministers repeat the falsehoods of the scribes, priests, and Pharisees, and follow their example in turning the people away from the truth.

God was manifested in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, by manifesting perfect obedience to all the law of God. Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He corrupted not human nature, and, tho in the flesh, he transgressed not the law of God in any particular. More than this, he removed every excuse from fallen man that he could urge for a reason for not keeping the law of God. Christ was compassed with the infirmities of humanity, he was beset with the fiercest

temptations, tempted on all points like as men, yet he developed a perfectly upright character. No taint of sin was found upon him.

Through the victory of Christ the same advantages that he had are provided for man; for he may be a partaker of a power out of and above himself, even a partaker of the divine nature, by which he may overcome the corruption that is in the world through lust. In human nature Christ developed a perfect character. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; tho he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

The humanity of Christ is called "that holy thing." The inspired record says of Christ, "He did no sin," he "knew no sin," and "in him was no sin." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He tabernacled among men. This testimony concerning Christ plainly shows that he condemned sin in the flesh. No man can say that he is hopelessly subject to the bondage of sin and Satan. Christ has assumed the responsibilities of the human race, and the sins of all that believe are charged to him. He has engaged to be liable for them. He obeyed every jot and tittle of the law, to testify before unfallen worlds, before holy angels, before the fallen world, that those who believe in him, who accept of him as their sin-offering, who rely upon him as their personal Saviour, will be advantaged by his righteousness, and become partakers of his divine nature. He testifies that through his imputed righteousness the believing soul shall obey the commandments of God.

John pointed to Christ, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The Son of the infinite God does not remove from man his obligation to keep all of God's commandments. But with Christ formed within, the apostle declares, "Ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power." All our transgressions are transferred to Christ. While he who knew no sin was made sin for us, and the sinless is accounted sinful, the righteousness of Christ is placed upon the undeserving, so that the repenting sinner is declared to be sinless before God. But if a man blinds himself to the light, and hardens his conscience, and will not acknowledge himself as a sinner lost and undone, and in need of a Savior, his sin will remain. He does not believe in the only-begotten Son of the infinite God. Like Cain he refuses to offer to God the blood of the Son of God. He refuses to acknowledge that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is all-important that we understand the art of believing, that we individually accept the provision which has been made whereby we may have eternal life. Divine compassion was moved by the ruin of man, and God sent Christ into the world in order that his own arm might bring salvation to the human race, who were found in peril, in helplessness, and bound in captivity to Satan's chariot car. God beheld man lost and ruined, and with no possibility of recovering himself. His intrusted capabilities and powers were perverted from their intended design, and degraded in the service of self, Satan, and sin. He saw men dropping the solemn realities of eternity from their reckoning, and, viewing the ruin to which they were hastening, divine compassion is moved for a fallen world, and

provision for their recovery is made from the limitless resources of divine love. Provision is made that those who discern their apostasy may return to their allegiance. Those who return will find the Father's heart open to receive them, full of yearning tenderness and compassion towards them. Human agents are all too precious to God to be left without every possible effort on his part for their recovery. In the recovery of every soul, God will realize a peculiar joy. "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Evidences of Faith:

It was for the recovery of the law that Christ exhibited holy integrity in the midst of universal corruption, and manifested unwavering adherence to the right when truth, equity, and righteousness were objects of popular contempt and scorn. He lived out the law of God, thus giving fullest recognition of the supreme right of God to govern and to be obeyed even in a world sunken in unbelief and making void his law. The more severely he was tried, the more faithfully did he adhere to the truth of God. This must also be our experience, and if we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, the more surely will we be partakers of his glory. The more decided the unbelief and corruption of the world become, the more clear and conspicuous should the integrity and loyalty of the followers of Christ shine forth. The more generally apostasy prevails, the more steadfast should the children of God stand in defense of the laws of God's government. Christ is our example. When wickedness was swelling like a roaring torrent around him, he stood like a rock. He was a true, faithful, authoritative, unbending witness for God. What a character was that of Christ! By beholding him, we shall become changed into his image, from character to character. If we would indeed be witnesses for Christ, we must behold him, work as he worked, pray as he prayed. We must fight the fight of faith, clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness. Christ declared that he did nothing of himself, but only that which he saw his Father do.

Ministers of God, study the lesson of the life of Christ. Jude describes Christians as those "that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." To those he gives this salutation: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

January 23, 1896

Grace Will Result In Liberality

Those who love and serve God will manifest the fact by loving and serving their fellow-men. Paul presents before us the example of liberal-minded converts, who in their deeds of charity exceeded his most sanguine expectations. Their love to their fellow-men was the result of giving themselves to the Lord. They surrendered themselves to the working of the divine Spirit, and their hearts were drawn out in tender, Christlike compassion for the relief of those who were needy and suffering. They recognized the obligation that rested upon them, and worked in harmony with the will of God, and thus glorified their heavenly Father.

Those who have the mind of Christ can not look with indifference upon human suffering. They can not be heartless, cold, and selfish. Those who are naturally inclined to tenderness and sympathy

when unreservedly surrendered to God will cooperate with him in doing deeds of mercy, in relieving the distressed, tho it may call for the practice of self-denial. But those who do not cultivate gratitude to God for his mercy and love to them, who do not appreciate the great gift of Christ to our world, will not manifest sympathy for the suffering and needy, will not seek to comfort the bereaved, to minister to the fatherless and the widow. They may, like the Pharisees, make long prayers, and yet rob the widow and the fatherless, forgetting in their hardness of heart that the Lord will judge those who neglect the needy and the suffering as though they had neglected him in the person of his saints.

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Lord has intrusted his goods to his human agents, and when the individual members of the church become doers of the words of Christ, they do not live to please and glorify self; but they live to do the highest service possible for Jesus Christ in serving their fellow-men. In so doing they gain an experience that is of more value than great riches. Tho the work calls for self-denial, tho their means may be limited, they seek for the relief of suffering humanity. They cherish the faith that works by love and purifies the soul from selfishness, and which brings them into close relation with God. When the truth first finds men, it finds them possessed of the spirit of the world; but it does not leave them with this spirit. When the truth is received, it begins to work the work of sanctification upon heart, and mind, and character. The truth purifies, elevates, and transforms the soul until men reveal a likeness to the character of Him who gave Himself to save a perishing world. Selfishness, self-serving, pride, extravagance, and display are the natural results of rebellion against God; but it is the work of Christ to subdue our evil practices, to detach our tendrils from earthly things, and to entwine them about God. He who receives the love of truth will be transformed in character; but if the truth is not welcomed into the heart, if the door closed against the entrance of the word of God, the heart and character remain unchanged. Those who resist truth, still cherish the love of the world.

It was the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia that resulted in liberality and unselfishness. Paul writes of their benevolence, saying, “How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” He says: “For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” The people of whom Paul writes were under the oppressive hand of poverty, but even “their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” The Holy Spirit wrought great changes in the character of those who sought after truth as for hidden treasure. The church of Macedonia became representative of what a church may be when enlightened by the word of God. They had tasted of the heavenly manna, and had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and were transformed into the likeness of Christ. But the grace of God is able to do the same transforming work for the human character today. Paul says: “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness); being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the

administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.”

February 6, 1896

Lawful to do Good on the Sabbath

“And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.”

Jesus had been invited to the house of this chief Pharisee, and he had accepted the invitation in order that, as his custom was, he might sow seeds of truth in his conversation at the table. There were many who through this means had been privileged to become acquainted with Christ. He met them on familiar terms, and disclosed truth to their minds. They were convicted of the truth not only by what he said, but by the purity and elevated nobility of his character. The occasions when men met with him at the homes of their countrymen were not to be forgotten; but even after his humiliation, his trial, rejection, condemnation, and crucifixion, after his resurrection, when he came forth from the tomb a triumphant conqueror, men would remember the words which he had spoken at the times when they had shared with him the hospitality of the people.

The Pharisee who had invited Christ to his house on this occasion was a ruler in Israel, a member of the Sanhedrin, a man of repute and influence. Jesus had not accepted his invitation for the purpose of gratifying his appetite, or to furnish himself with an hour of amusement; but he had accepted it for the purpose of representing the character of God. He was to bear witness of the truth, and (as far as possible) to leave the impress of his own divine image upon human souls. He was the Teacher sent of God, the Light of the world, who had risen to shed divine rays of light upon all who were in the darkness of error. He was the Revelation of God, and was to speak words that the Holy Spirit should afterward bring to their remembrance.

Christians may safely accept invitations to dinners where a promiscuous company shall gather, if they will but follow the example of Christ, and act from the same motives as did our Saviour. Their influence will be on the right side if they speak words that will impress with divine truth those who are assembled, and thus sow seed unto eternal life.

But the Pharisees had not invited Christ for the sake of hearing of eternal things. Filled with jealousy and envy, he and his guests had laid plans by which they hoped to bring Christ into disfavor. The man with the dropsy who sat before Christ had been purposely chosen as a means by which to bring Christ under condemnation. The suffering man was placed directly before Christ, “and they watched him” to see whether he would violate their traditions and heal the man on the Sabbath day, in order that they might find occasion to condemn him to death. They knew that Christ always expressed sympathy for human woe, and that he ever exercised his power to relieve suffering humanity. Jesus read their hearts as an open book. They had no need to tell him what were their thoughts. He forestalled all their arguments, and revealed the fact that he read their questionings and purposes. “And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, and saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?” If he had healed the man without closing the mouths of his accusers, they would at once have charged him with Sabbath breaking. He asked this question before the guests in order

that these men might not venture to take the position that it was not lawful. They would have been obliged to answer, if they answered honestly, "The law does not forbid the work that relieves the suffering of man or beast on the Sabbath day." Jesus gave them an opportunity to disclose their sentiments, and to point out the ground of their objection to his works of mercy. But "they held their peace." They were wise enough to see that this was the best policy. They knew that their Guest understood the law perfectly, and that he was able to make plain their misrepresentations and to unveil their subterfuges before those who were present. And he took the man with the dropsy, "and healed him, and let him go."

But, notwithstanding their silence, Jesus knew that the Pharisees were planning in their minds just how they might fasten guilt upon him. And he "answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" When he asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" the record says, "They held their peace." And when he presented his argument, "they could not answer him again to these things." But, although they could not answer him, they were none the less displeased because their scheme to condemn him had called forth their own condemnation. They knew that it was the practice of their people to save the life of a dumb creature, even if it required attention on the Sabbath day. They felt it in accordance with the Sabbath commandment to lead their ox or their ass to water, and why was it not altogether proper to relieve human suffering on the Sabbath?

Christ had spoken in a calm, convincing manner. By restoring the sick man to health he had given evidence that in him was life. By the lessons he had given, by the miracle he had performed, he had answered the question as to whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. He showed the fallacy of the arguments of the scribes and Pharisees which they had advanced on several occasions previous to this in accusing him of violating the Sabbath in healing the sick and relieving the suffering. They were constrained to keep silent, for they could find no argument by which to answer the Lord Jesus which would not place them in a most unfavorable light. The reasoning that they had used when among themselves had seemed very conclusive, and they had leavened the minds of many who were present by the subtlety of their arguments. But now, before they could present their arguments, Christ had answered them, and they were left helpless; for all recognized that Christ had spoken words of truth and righteousness.

Christ understood how to act in a calm, intelligent manner, and to bring to naught their plans to bring him into condemnation. The words of the Lord were as sharp arrows that went to the mark, and wounded the hearts of his accusers. Every time Christ addressed the people, whether his audience was large or small, his words took saving effect upon the souls of some of his hearers. No message that ever fell from the lips of Christ was to be lost. Every word he spoke placed a new responsibility upon those who heard it. Ministers who are giving the last message of mercy to the world, who are presenting the truth in sincerity, who are relying upon God for strength, need never fear that their efforts are in vain. No one can say that the arrow of truth has not sped to the mark, and pierced the souls of those who are listening. Although no human eye could see the flight of the arrow of truth, although no human ear heard the cry of the wounded soul, yet the truth has silently cut its way to the heart. God has spoken to the soul, and in the day of final account God's minister will stand with the trophies of redeeming grace to give honor unto Christ, to whom honor is due. God, who seeth in secret, will openly reward those who have declared the truth in his name.

February 13, 1896

The Test of Loyalty

“But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It can not be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It can not be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal can not equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?... Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

We shall learn how to depart from evil by studying the word of God, and by fulfilling the directions that are given us in the Scriptures. The psalmist says, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” Those who ever bear in mind the fact that they are learners, those who are willing to be instructed, those who open their hearts to receive every ray of light that shines from the word of God, or that is presented to them by messengers whom God has commissioned to preach the Gospel, will learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. We are to study both the Old and the New Testament, for it takes the complete Scriptures to unfold the Gospel. The Bible is the treasure-house of wisdom.

The character of sin, and God's treatment of sin, are first unfolded to us in the transgression of Adam. Sin is the transgression of the law, and when Adam and Eve sinned, they opened the floodgates of woe upon our world. The promise given to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and that it should bruise his heel, was the first proclamation of the Gospel. But while a way was provided for the forgiveness of sin, yet in no way did this provision lessen its hateful character in the sight of God, or do away with the dire consequences that would fall upon impenitent transgressors. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and men could always say, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Christ became our substitute and surety. He took the case of fallen man upon himself. He became the Redeemer, the Intercessor. When death was proclaimed as the penalty of sin, he offered to give his life for the life of the world, in order that man might have a second probation, and that individually he might enjoy the privileges that would come to us through this divine provision, and receive power to form a character after the divine image. But God has a day in which he will judge the world by that Man whom he hath ordained. All judgment is given into the hands of the Son. Christ has engaged to become the sinner's surety, but he does not engage to lessen or detract from the obligation to the divine law. Should Christ change the law in any particular, the demands of Satan would be fulfilled, and God and Christ and the universe would be brought under bondage to his claims. Christ is the star of hope. He is the one to contest the claims of Satan; he is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head. He overcame Satan in heaven, and cast him out because of his rebellion and apostasy.

It was when he was in conflict with man that Satan gained his first victory. Changing his appearance, assuming the disguise of a serpent, in the most subtle, artful-manner he assailed Eve, saying, “Yea,

hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." The woman erred when she entered into controversy with the serpent. The Lord had not said, "Ye shall not touch it." He had said, "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," she began to be charmed with Satan's representations, and thought that God was unnecessarily restricting their liberty, and holding them back from that which would be for their advancement. "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat." She told her husband what the serpent had said, "and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." They forgot the great love that God had manifested toward them in giving them life, in providing them with a beautiful garden, in furnishing them with pleasant employment. They forgot his mercies, and thought him selfish and unkind. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." The garments of light which had enveloped them disappeared when they sinned against God.

There was nothing poisonous in the fruit of the tree of knowledge itself, nothing that would cause death in partaking of it. The tree had been placed in the garden to test their loyalty to God. The Lord designs that we shall contemplate the lesson that Adam failed to learn in his first experience, and would have us realize that the claims of God in this age are no less than they were in the Garden of Eden. The Gospel, first given to Adam in Eden, has lost none of its high claims since that time. We are required to obey all the commandments of God. The Sabbath commandment is placed in the midst of the Decalogue, and it was instituted in Eden at the same time that God instituted the marriage relation. God gave the Sabbath as a memorial of his creative power and works, "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." He made its observance obligatory upon man, in order that he might contemplate the works of God, dwell upon his goodness, his mercy, and love, and through nature look up to nature's God. If man had always observed the Sabbath, there would never have been an unbeliever, and infidel, or an atheist in the world. If Adam and Eve had contemplated the works of God in creating the world, if they had considered the reason that God had in giving them the Sabbath, if they had looked upon the beautiful tokens he had given them in withholding nothing that would add to their happiness, they would have been safe, they would have adored him for his goodness and love toward them, and in place of listening to the sophistries of Satan in casting blame upon God, in ascribing to him motives of selfishness, they would have considered the works of his hands, and songs of melody and thanksgiving and praise would have burst forth from their lips in adoration of him who had bountifully supplied them with every good thing. If they had considered how he had made them the object of his overflowing love, they would not have fallen; but they forgot the presence of God. They forgot that angels surrounded them to guard them from every danger, and they looked away from their great Benefactor.

The Sabbath is a test to this generation. In obeying the fourth commandment in spirit and truth, men will obey all the precepts of the Decalogue. To fulfill this commandment one must love God supremely, and exercise love toward all the creatures that he has made. The Lord exhorts us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;" and since this is his exhortation, will any one charge us with wearying them in bringing this commandment to their remembrance?

February 20, 1896

What is of Value with God

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Those who are one with Christ, will present their petitions to the Father in the name of Christ, and will ask nothing that it is not his good pleasure to grant. Jesus continues: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. 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." This is Bible election; for if we keep his commandments, we abide in him, and are elected in him.

The Saviour is our substitute and surety. He stands at the head of the human family. He has been subject to all the temptations that annoy and oppress us. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and therefore he is able (knows just the method) to succor those that are tempted. He was afflicted in all our afflictions. Christ is our refuge, our source of strength. In him all power is provided for us if his word abide in us, and it is for us to choose whether we will serve God or Baal.

Christ says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." How few comprehend the fullness of this promise! The disciples did not take it in, they did not comprehend the meaning of these words, until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. Of him Jesus had said: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." As we contemplate these words, our hearts should glow with love to our Saviour, because he has left nothing unsaid that concerns our salvation. Though we may be harassed and beset with trials and temptations that come to us through the devices of the synagog of Satan, yet we have one who is fully able, and always willing, to give us the very help that we require in the time of need. We have been invited to ask help, to come boldly to the throne of grace, to ask what we will, that it may be done unto us. And if the words of Christ abide in us, we are the elect of God, and will bring forth fruit in steady faith, cherishing the faith that works by love and purifies the soul from every moral defilement. "Much fruit" is the evidence that the words of Christ abide and work in the soul.

Those who live the life of the world, though they may be looked upon as educated and refined, manifest that they are selfish, that the words of Christ do not abide in them. They separate themselves from the needy and distressed, and use the gifts which God has intrusted to them to bless their fellow-men in exalting and glorifying themselves. They are interested only in that which will bring them the most money. The value of the man is measured in the world by the amount of money he possesses, and so men cultivate the love of money, place the world first, and make it manifest that the words of Christ do not abide in their hearts. They do not follow in the footsteps of our Redeemer, who gave his life for the ransom of the world. They separate themselves from those

who are in poverty, from those who have not been favored with advantages to obtain an education. They value men according to the amount of money they have, but Jesus places an altogether different estimate upon the human soul. He is weighing men in the golden scales of the sanctuary, and inquires, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Christ announced that his mission was "to preach good tidings unto the meek." He said, The Lord "hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." How perfectly these words harmonize with the words of Christ in the fifteenth chapter of John! If we may judge of men by their actions, we may think that the worldly-wise man looks upon himself as made of better material than the uneducated and uncultured, and esteems himself as altogether too high for association with this class. But his spirit, his attitude and actions, are delineated on the record above, and will determine whether or not he can be trusted with the eternal riches of heaven. Angels of God are marking the development of character, and weighing moral worth. No one will be trusted in heaven who has the spirit of the first great apostate, who lifted himself up, and became exalted in his own esteem, became envious of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom he derived his glory, his wisdom, and beauty.

The Spirit of Christ

The character of the mission of Christ is delineated in the words of Isaiah which we have quoted. He did not come to minister simply to the highest grade of society. The Lord pitied those who felt their need of a Saviour, and those who are touched with the Spirit of Christ, if they have had better opportunities than others for cultivation, for refinement and nobility of character, will feel that they are debtors to those who have been less favorably situated, and they will minister as far as possible of their benefits to those who are wanting in these things. God has given this manner of work to his elect people. They are to reveal to the world that they are disciples of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew, and that they are working along the same lines as he worked. They are to open their treasures to those who need them, and this will bring them in contact with the very ones who appreciated the labors of Christ; for we read that the common people heard him gladly. Their hearts were not engrossed with the things of the world, and they could discern the things of eternal value. Those who are in high positions, who are intrusted with rich capabilities, are likely to worship themselves, to make themselves a center, to indulge themselves in intemperate desires, to fear to give back to God his own, and to neglect the example of Christ, who took upon himself the garb of humanity, in order that he might reach and lift humanity by his divine influence.

Christ designs that men shall be agents through whom his words of truth, hope, and forgiveness may come to the people. The disciples of Christ are to be channels for his righteousness, his gentleness, and love. They are to be Christ's representatives. This means that they are to act in Christ's stead. He has ascended on high, but he has commissioned his disciples to work along the very lines along which he worked when he was in the world. Christ followed the very best methods for reaching the hearts of men. The scribes and Pharisees did not approve of the kind of work that Christ was doing.

His example cast reflection upon them, and laid bare their selfishness. They regarded themselves as educated and refined, and they brought accusation against him, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." They asked the people what they thought of a man who was guilty of this. They classed him with sinners because he associated with sinners; but Jesus did not seem at all abashed by the charge. He looked keenly at his accusers, and said, "I came not to call the [self] righteous, but sinners to repentance." They passed by the very ones who needed help, who would receive the light that they rejected, and who were nearer the kingdom of heaven than were those who looked upon them as sinners, whose society would contaminate their morals.

Christ came to lift up the fallen. He presented the parable of the Pharisee and the publican to represent to us the way in which Heaven regards the proud, pretentious boaster, and how God looks upon the soul who feels his true need, who knows himself a sinner, and longs for greater nearness to God. Such a one has more discernment of heavenly things than has the man who thinks himself an important personage, and esteems himself righteous. The further men separate from God, and the less they render obedience to his commandments, the more confidence they will place in themselves. Their thoughts will be selfish, and their actions after the same character. They will pride themselves upon their judgment in managing business, but will be very ignorant of the things which concern their future well-being. So infatuated will they be with the things of this world that the words which Paul addressed to the Galatians are applicable to them, when he says, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" They cast aside the things that are imperishable as matters of very little consequence. They think that riches mean greatness and honor, that they mean love of ease, selfish gratification, and display. They desire to command positions of power, to have the flattery and reverence of the world. They freely indulge in sin until their moral power is palsied. They make wealth an idol. At the shrine of wealth thousands upon thousands are laying idolatrous sacrifices. But it is not temporal wealth that makes men of value. Heaven does not estimate men in the same way as does the world. He who abides in Christ is found of value with God. The promise is fulfilled in him, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir."

February 27, 1896

The Time of Thy Visitation

"Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee; and people for thy life."

God brought his chosen people out of Egypt with mighty signs and wonders. He laid the land desolate by plagues, and slew the firstborn of the Egyptians in order to bring deliverance to his people. He opened to them a path through the Red Sea, and in the pillar of cloud and fire he stood as a wall of protection between his people and Pharaoh, who with his armies, chariots, and horsemen came in pursuit of Israel. At the word of command the Red Sea rolled upon the hosts of the Egyptians, while Israel sang songs of triumph and praise.

The Lord brought his chosen people out of Egypt in order that they might keep holy the Sabbath day, and fulfill the precepts of his law. He fed them with manna in the wilderness, and by a double miracle placed his seal upon the sacredness of the Sabbath institution. In awful grandeur the Lord came down on Mount Sinai and proclaimed his law to the people. The Israelites had so long lived in the midst of idolatry that they were shaping their religious life after the idolatrous customs of the land of their bondage. The Son of God gave to them his law of Ten Commandments, and proclaimed to them the rules and statutes of God in heaven and earth.

He represented his people as a wild vine that he had taken from Egypt, and planted in Canaan, where he nourished and cared for it; but when he looked for it to bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. His people forgot God, and went into rebellion, but he did not withdraw his love. He sent his prophets to warn them, he instituted the sacrificial system so that they might have before their minds the one great Sacrifice, the one efficient Offering that was prefigured in their typical system. But for all his love and care, Israel abused their privileges from age to age, and their religion became a hollow formalism. Christ saw Pharisaical pride, self-exaltation, cruel, Satanic attributes, developed and cherished by the people who bore his name. They would not accept his invitation of mercy, and from national apostasy came a spirit of cruel persecution that ended in killing the very messengers that he sent to warn them of the result of their evil course. Christ saw his vineyard spoiled through cruel husbandmen until it became fruitless through ingratitude, through grace resisted, through their refusal to accept the opportunities and privileges which the God of compassion and love provided for them. For a thousand years they multiplied transgression upon transgression, and even rejected the Son of God, and were ready to put him to death. The cloud of God's retributive judgment was about to burst upon them in unrestrained fury.

Jesus had dealt with Israel as would a loving father with a son. His love to Israel was represented in the parable of the prodigal son; but they had beaten back the waves of mercy, and, knowing what would fall upon Jerusalem, as he stands upon the mount of Olivet, his form is shaken with sobs of anguish. His heart is breaking with yearning. Tears flow forth from his eyes as he says, "How can I give thee up?"

The careless and the impenitent go on in their reckless course of disobedience, and harden themselves in rebellion against God; but they do not consider the value of the human soul. The world's Redeemer was constantly seeking to lead men to a true appreciation of the value of the soul. He asked the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" A world sinks into insignificance in comparison with the soul. When Christ wept upon the mount of Olivet, he beheld with prophetic eye, not only the loss of one soul, but the destruction of a nation.

The world's Redeemer had come from his royal courts, stepped down from his royal throne, had clothed his divinity with humanity, and for our sake had become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. In accepting Christ the sinful nations who were about to be destroyed might have accepted the riches of heaven, obtained an eternal weight of glory. Must his offering be in vain? In his mission on earth among men he had displayed the same power as he had displayed in delivering the nation from Egyptian bondage, in opening a path through the Red Sea, and in discomfiting the army of Pharaoh. He had revealed enough of his divinity to show them that he was the Son of God, and that he was able to deliver them from the Roman yoke, if it so pleased him,

and to give them temporal triumph; but it was the fact that he did not exercise his power in bringing to them temporal benefits in the way they desired, that led the scribes and the Pharisees to reject the world's Redeemer. He bore a message denouncing every abomination in the land. He exposed their hypocrisies, and revealed the fact that their sanctity was only a cloak to iniquity.

The untainted purity of his life, the faultless character of his words and works, was a bitter reproof to the self-righteous but unclean pretenders to religion. He rebuked their course in weaving human traditions and the maxims of men into the laws of God, so that men were confused in regard to the laws of God's government, and were led to make void his law through following human inventions. He said to them: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, ... making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." He charged the religious teachers with being ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God.

The Jews hated Christ because he bore a beautiful, spotless character. He could hate but one thing, and that was sin. This hatred of sin on his part provoked their bitterest hostility. If he had given license to their pride, had fostered their ambition, and passed over their evil passions, their injustice, their fraud, their robbery of the poor, they would have applauded Jesus. They would not have been displeased that he healed the sick, that he had compassion on the suffering, that he raised the dead; but they were displeased because he condemned their evil works, and put them to an open shame by exposing their evil motives. He rebuked their long prayers on the corners of the streets, and the wearing of their long robes for the purpose of making people think they were very pious, when at the same time they would devour with exactions widows' houses. They would not consent to reform and to be transformed in character; but they were determined by any possible means to get rid of Him who revealed their true character to the people, and paid no regard to their claims of superior sanctity. The fiercest and most inveterate enmity was put between Christ and these bigoted pretenders. The whole energy of the ranks of apostasy was called forth, and evil men conspired with evil angels for the destruction of the Champion of God and truth.

On the mount of Olivet Christ took a retrospective view of the ages and centuries that had passed, and realized what would be the crowning act in the nation's apostasy. In putting to death the Son of the Infinite God they would add the last figure to the sum of their guiltiness. Can we wonder that the heart of Christ was filled with grief, and that while he wept in agonizing sobs, his form swayed as a tree before the tempest? He saw the retribution that would fall upon Jerusalem, and exclaimed: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

The sheep gate was before Christ, and the path which led to the temple, and for centuries the victims had been conducted thither for sacrifice. The lambs that had been slain had been a

representation of the great anti-typical sacrifice that in a few hours would be made for those who rejected his grace and compassion, the refusers of his offers of mercy. The only-begotten Son of the Infinite God would be led through the sheep gate as a lamb to the slaughter, while through the priests and rulers and through the common people would be manifested Satanic attributes. For a few moments the Son of God stands upon Mount Olivet, expressing the intense yearning of his soul that Jerusalem might repent in the last few moments before the westering sun shall sink behind the hill. That day the Jews as a nation would end their probation. Mercy, that had long been appointed as their guardian angel, had been insulted, despised, and rejected, and was already stepping down from the golden throne, ready to depart. But, O, that the rejecters of God's mercy, full of zeal to sustain themselves in their own way, might yet turn from their man-made inventions, repent, and seek reconciliation with God! The shadows of twilight are beginning to gather, and, O, that Jerusalem might know the things that belong unto her peace! But now the irrevocable sentence is spoken, because "she knew not the time of her visitation."

Jesus hears the tramp of the besieging army. He sees the temple in ruins. He sees famine and distress in the city. His prophetic eye sees Calvary, the hill upon which he shall be lifted up, planted with crosses as thick as the forest trees. He sees the very ones nailed thereon who clamored for his condemnation, and who cried out under their Satanic delusion, "His blood be on us and on our children." The retribution that has fallen upon them is most terrible; for they are left to the mercy of the leader they have chosen, and Satan and his confederacy of evil angels wreak their spite upon the human family.

All this Jesus sees as the result of their refusal to accept his offers of mercy. Thus they have worked their own present and eternal ruin, and as a nation divorced themselves from God. He could say to the whole nation as he had said to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" They had refused the messages of warning, of reproof, and mercy, that had been sent to them through the prophets, God's delegated servants, tho these messengers had been sent to save them from taking such steps as would prove their ruin. At last God had sent his Son, and they had said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours."

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" These words are applicable to very many in our own day. Many do not know him, tho he has been lifted up for us and crucified. They do not know him, tho a mighty angel from heaven parted the darkness from his track, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher, and Jesus, the Lord of light and glory, came forth from the rent sepulcher proclaiming himself the resurrection and the life.

March 5, 1896

Divinity in Humanity

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Christ dwells in him who receives him by faith. Tho trials may come upon the soul, yet the Lord's presence will be with us. The burning bush in which was the Lord's presence did not consume away. The fire did not extinguish a fiber of the branches. Thus will it be with the feeble human agent who

puts his trust in Christ. The furnace fire of temptation may burn, persecution and trial may come, but only the dross will be consumed. The gold will shine brighter because of the process of purification. Greater is He that is in the heart of the faithful, than he that controls the hearts of unbelievers. Complain not bitterly of the trial which comes upon you, but let your eyes be directed to Christ, who has clothed his divinity with humanity, in order that we may understand how great his interest in us since he has identified himself with suffering humanity. He tasted the cup of human sorrow, he was afflicted in all our afflictions, he was made perfect through suffering, tempted in all points like as humanity is tempted, in order that he might succor those who are in temptation. He says, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." He will make a man precious by abiding with him, by giving unto him the Holy Spirit. He 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?"

The Lord has instructed us to call God our Father, to regard him as the fountain of paternal affection, the source of the love that has been flowing from century to century through the channel of the human heart. All the pity, compassion, and love which have been manifested in the earth have emanated from the throne of God, and, compared to the love that dwells in his heart, are as a fountain to an ocean. His love is perpetually flowing forth to make the weak strong, to make the faint-hearted firm, and give moral courage to the wavering. God works through Christ, and man may come unto the Father in the name of the Son. Our science and our song is, "Hear what the Lord hath done for my soul.

Who can comprehend the gift of Infinite Love? "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." For centuries before the manifestation of Christ to the world, God exercised forbearance toward a rebellious world. He saw his holy law trampled in the dust, and he let his judgments fall upon the world in a flood; but man did not learn the lesson from this experience, and turned to his rebellious ways.

Again men multiplied upon the earth, and again they took the attitude of rebellion against God. Loyalty to the law of God was not only condemned, but punished as a crime. Men made void the law, and naturalized the principles of sin. Those who did not disregard the law of God were subject to the strongest enmity; for every species of sin was legalized. Satan boasted before the angels of heaven that he held dominion over the creation of God. The unity of society was made by enmity to God. A corrupt harmony existed among men in their aversion to God, which bound them together in one vast army. The universe of heaven, and the angels of God, were watching for the exhibition of justice, but when the unfallen worlds expected retribution to be administered, mercy prevailed, and the counsel of God was with the Prince of heaven. He was to unfold the scheme of redemption, to make manifest the plan of salvation. He who was equal with God, who was great in counsel, mighty in working, was equal to the emergency that had arrived in the government of God. God sent his Son into the world, not to pass sentence of condemnation upon a rebellious race, but to make manifest his love, and to hold out the hope of eternal life to those who should believe in his Son.

Here was love, and amazing grace that triumphed over justice. Retribution fell upon no less a personage than the Son of the Infinite God, and the universe of heaven rejoiced in the glory of God's benevolence and self-denial in giving the Prince of heaven to our world. Such love was beyond the

comprehension of heavenly angels. Christ came to the world to seek his lost pearl, and he had to go through the gates of death to recover his lost jewel. For "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." All who look to him in faith will be healed of their spiritual maladies. He is the Balm in Gilead, he is the great Physician. Christ was the one who consented to meet the conditions necessary for man's salvation. No angel, no man, was sufficient for the great work to be wrought. The Son of man alone must be lifted up; for only an infinite nature could undertake the redemptive process. Christ consented to connect himself with the disloyal and sinful, to partake of the nature of man, to give his own blood, and to make his soul an offering for sin. In the counsels of heaven, the guilt of man was measured, the wrath for sin was estimated, and yet Christ announced his decision that he would take upon himself the responsibility of meeting the conditions whereby hope should be extended to a fallen race. He understood the possibility of the human soul, and united humanity to himself, even as the vine knits the grafted branches and twigs into its being, until, vein by vein, and fiber by fiber, the branches are united to the living Vine.

The merchant man sold all to buy the pearl of lost humanity. The sinner also is to lay down his all in order to become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. He who unites with Christ has his life hid with Christ in God. Christ and the believing soul are joined by the bands of love, and the Lord calls this union "continuing in his love." He 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." "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love."

Jesus takes man into copartnership with himself, and the unity and love between Christ and his Father bear the credentials to the world of Christ's divinity. Transformed in character, the believer presents the fact that Christ alone can reshape, purify, and ennoble the soul. The love that God has manifested toward men has no parallel. Jesus says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life" for the sheep. In this expression he would prove to man that the Father's love is so large, so unbounded towards man, that he even loves the Son for the sacrifice which he made for the recovering of humanity. God himself suffered in the suffering of his Son. While Jesus walked the earth in the habiliments of humanity, he could say, "I and my Father are one." Having undertaken the work of redemption, the Lord spares nothing, however costly, which is essential to the completion of his design. He withholds not heaven itself, but continues to surround men with its favors, heaping gift upon gift, until the world itself is flooded with its boundless mercy and love. Jesus says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

March 12, 1896

God's Law Immutable

The law of God is the expression of his character. God possesses absolute, invariable, and immutable independence, and his law is without variableness, unalterable, eternal, because it is the transcript of his character. No event can take place that will in any sense make it necessary to declare a law of a contrary nature. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Any change in the law would mar its perfection. The slightest variance in its precepts would give reason to the hosts of heaven and to unfallen worlds to think that God's counsels and declarations are not to be relied upon, but

need to be remodeled, because they are of a faulty character. Should any change be made in the law of God, Satan would gain that for which he had instituted controversy.

Satan has sought to cast contempt upon the law of God, and to fasten reproach upon God before his created intelligences. He has sought to make men believe that the law must be modified, because it does not meet the needs and possibility of men. But God is truth itself, and in no instance can Satan find a flaw with his will or character. If his law could be changed in one jot or tittle, Satan would have an advantage in the controversy, and would carry the human family with him in fastening reproach upon God; for if one jot or tittle is in need of change, all may be faulty. But in the future the evil one himself will have to confess that his charges against God have been unjust, for with God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He will make this confession before the fallen world, before unfallen worlds, before the hosts of heaven. He will acknowledge that God has spoken immutable, eternal truths, and that he can not alter the thing that has gone out of his lips.

Satan and his confederacy of evil have tempted the world to believe a lie as they tempted Adam and Eve in Eden. It has been the purpose of the enemy to unsettle the whole fabric of truth, and to set the world adrift in the mazes of skepticism; but truth is immutable. A wily foe has perverted the senses of men so that they have chosen falsehood rather than truth. The Christian world has accepted the falsehoods of Satan, and has believed and advocated a change in the fourth commandment, which was given as a commemoration of God's creative power in making the world. This falsehood has been working out its baleful results in making of no effect the whole law, in placing upon the human mind the impression that God is not invariable, invincible truth. This is the cup of intoxication that the Christian world is drinking, with which the inhabitants of the earth are becoming drunken. Satan is seeking to destroy the force of the Ten Commandments, urging his agents to declare that Christ nailed them to his cross. The cross is an immutable argument of the unchangeable character of the law of God. Christ died in order that a way might be provided for saving the sinner, in meeting the demands of the broken law. The law was written with the finger of God upon tables of stone, and John saw the temple of God open in heaven, and in the temple the ark of his covenant. "I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; ... and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

In the book of Revelation the prophet describes the scenes of the Gospel age, and he sees in heaven the ark of the testimony. There the holy law of God shines in holy dignity, just as when God wrote it with his own finger on tables of stone. John describes the work that will be done in the last days, when the Protestant churches form a confederacy with the Catholic power, and work against the law of God and against those who keep his commandments. John says, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The Protestant world have cherished an institution of the Papacy,—they have observed Sunday in preference to the Sabbath of the Lord their God,—and in compelling men to keep Sunday, under penalty of law, they are exalting the first day of the week, a spurious sabbath, and casting dishonor upon the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. But the Lord says: "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto

himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them."

Had the generations in the past given the religion of the Bible a welcome, had they received the message born by Christ and his apostles, we should see a different state in the world that we see today. The Gospel would long since have been preached to every family under heaven; but men have not followed on to know the Lord, that they might know that his goings forth are prepared as the morning. It is men that have ceased to make progress. God has been willing to fulfill his word to his people. The promise is, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Everything was provided whereby men might have become laborers together with God in spreading the knowledge of the truth to those who are nigh, and to those that are afar off. The Gospel has been published to a large part of the human race; but the law of God, the foundation of his government, has been clouded by the superstitions and inventions of men. Even the priests, who should have published the law of God, have presumed to declare that it has no claims upon the human race. At the very time when it is most essential for us to understand the sacred claims of the law, and conform to its claims as the standard of righteousness, so that we might be justified in the judgment, false shepherds are educating the world to make void the law of God through their traditions.

The Lord would have his people take a different course. He says: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God." The Lord speaks to his people, saying: "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.... My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arm shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation."

March 26, 1896

Human Traditions Unprofitable

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus presented the manner of spirit and works that will be manifested by those who love God and who keep his commandments. His followers were to sustain to the world the relation brought to view in his words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." But the Pharisees thought that this new Teacher was dwelling altogether too lightly on the law and its requirements. They had expounded the requirements of the law in altogether a different way from that of the world's Redeemer, and had made the law a body of rigorous exactions; for they were "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Our Lord came to strip from the truth the external observances which had been supplied to take the place of true religion. He preached his sermon on the mount in order to clearly define the true principles of the law of God, which had been misapplied and misinterpreted, and which had been strained to mean that which God had never designed. The Lord Jesus cleared away the rubbish of "they say," swept out the old traditions of former teachers, and brought to light the teachings of the prophets and of holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Christ himself had communicated the truth to these representative men, and in his lessons which he gave to the people he was clearing away the rubbish of man's opinions by the truth which he himself had imparted to the writers of the Scriptures.

Jesus preached the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures with freshness and power, and elevated the word of God above the traditions and maxims of men. All that he said fell upon the ears of his hearers as a new revelation. He did not repeat the common-place traditional maxims after the manner of the rabbis, nor did he speak with hesitation and uncertainty as they did. He spoke with calm assurance and with marked independence. The religion that prevailed at the time of Christ's public ministry was lifeless. Tho it was taught by men of education and talent, yet their instruction in a large degree consisted in senseless repetitions; but the words of Christ, spoken so earnestly and in such power, stirred the hearts of the people, and created an intense interest. They listened in vain for the senseless repetitions of the unchangeable exactions, and they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes.

But when the Pharisees saw what a vast difference there was between the teaching of Christ and their own teaching, when they began to realize that the majesty, beauty, and purity of the truth which he taught was exerting a gentle but powerful influence, and was taking hold of the minds of men and working a reformation in their characters, they saw that their own instruction was made of no effect, and they reasoned that unless something was done to put a stop to the ministry of Christ, all the world would believe on him. They saw that his bearing of divine love and tenderness was drawing the hearts of all the unprejudiced to him. The frowning countenances of the priests and rulers, their sneers and vindictiveness, set off in favorable contrast Christ's patience and forbearance; for he was calm under the most unjust criticism and hostility. It was evident that their enmity arose from the fact that Christ did not exalt them as teachers of piety and godliness. The teachings of Christ continually rebuked their ungodly practices. He presented truths of the most vital importance, and they did not harmonize with the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees; for these instructors had taught that which misrepresented the character of God. They had misinterpreted his commandments, and because Christ did not teach the commandments as the rabbis did, they decided that he was destroying the law. Upon their astonished ears fell the words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men

so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Then, stretching his hands toward his disciples, he said, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

At another time he said to the people, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" Our heavenly Father requires that his people shall walk in the light that he gives them. His requirements are always reasonable and just, and he can not accept less than he claims, which is perfect obedience to his commandments. In the sermon on the mount the Lord revealed that it was failure to walk in the light that was separating the Jewish people from God, and as a sure result darkness was coming upon them in the same proportion as the light had been permitted to shine upon their pathway. Had the chosen people of God improved their God-given responsibility, and rendered obedience to the plainly revealed will of God as it had been made known to them through patriarch and prophet, they would have been prepared to have exhibited to the world character and works of an elevated order, in harmony with the light which had accumulated upon their pathway.

The traditions of men, to which they gave so much heed, were as chaff to the wheat. Christ cleared away the rubbish of men's opinions, the multiplied exactions with which men had surrounded the commandments of God, so that the true character of the law was revealed. Jesus had given the law, and he was the one who could expound its true principles. It was essential that this should be done in order that the character of God might be vindicated before the inhabitants of a fallen world, and before the inhabitants of worlds unfallen. Jesus showed the contrast that there was between error and truth, between the words of finite men and the word of God. The word of God was plain, but men's words had made it mysterious and unintelligible. But the instruction which Christ gave was unmistakable. His disciples were to obey the precepts of the law, and to represent the character of God to the world. He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

April 2, 1896

Heart Piety Essential

"This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."

Wherever the holy precepts of God are observed, it is an evidence that the word and the Spirit of God have penetrated the human heart and transformed the natural character. The law of God is the true standard of character, and the commandments can not be disregarded and ignored without detriment to character. Wherever there is departure from the precepts of Jehovah, the moral attributes are deformed. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

As the law of God was in Eden, so it stands today. It requires of us what it required of our first parents,—“purity of heart.” Through Jesus Christ moral power may be imparted to man, and when it is combined with human effort, we may reach the divine standard. The faith that works by love is an active agent, and purifies the soul, separating from the character everything that is out of harmony with the standard of righteousness. Outward conformity to the law is not sufficient. In his sermon on

the mount, Jesus says, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The Pharisees, tho professing to keep the commandments of God, were exalting their own traditions above the law, and requiring needless exactions from the people. Many in our day are doing as did the Pharisees, and, while laying claims to high piety and sanctification, they are following their own ideas, and refusing to meet the condition upon which God has promised eternal life. Paul presented the true steps by which men may come to God. He says: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God [because of the transgression of God's law], and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," by which men may return to allegiance to the law of heaven.

Christ came to our world because the human race had departed from God, broken his law, and multiplied transgression upon transgression. Among the religious teachers at the time of Christ, deception and hypocrisy were practiced. Men built themselves up in their own self-righteousness, and misled the people by presenting before them a false standard. That which they presented as true piety was a spurious article; it misinterpreted the percepts of God to the people, and broke the principles of the divine law. While claiming to be the people of God, they transgressed his word, and, instead of a Thus saith the Lord, they substituted their own requirements. They were zealous in carrying out a round of ceremonies, and satisfied themselves with forms, while their lives were corrupt before God. Jesus came to exalt the law and make it honorable. In his sermon on the mount he weeded out the traditions of men, and proclaimed the truth, placing it in sharp contrast with errors that were hoary with age. He made truth appear in its preciousness and value before the multitude.

The Pharisees substituted external ceremonies for true heart piety, and made occasions of religious observances serve for their own exaltation. They made a show of paying tithe, and of abstaining from food, and taught that these outward semblances of humility met the demands of the whole law of God. Self-flattery became woven with every phase of their religious life, and thus they lifted up their souls unto vanity. But Christ described the religion of the Pharisees as like salt that had lost its savor. Christ, the Author of truth, was fully able to separate truth from the companionship of error, and to place it where it would shine in its original brightness.

Christ was a teacher from his youth up. At twelve years of age he was found among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions. He asked such questions as suggested the discovery of deep truths that had been lost from the doctrines that were taught, and yet which were vital to the salvation of souls. Wherever he went, he presented himself as one hungering and thirsting for a knowledge of God. His questions were of such an order as baffled the wisdom of the wise men, yet every question he asked put before them a divine lesson, and placed truth in a new aspect. They could see that their teachings were out of harmony with the real meaning of the Scriptures. But while presenting deep truths to their minds, his manner was modest and humble. Tho perplexing the scribes and learned doctors with his deep questions, yet he was gentle and unassuming.

Curious to test his knowledge, the doctors and the scribes turned upon him with questions, and they were amazed at his answers. He expounded the inspired word, giving a spiritual significance to the utterances of the prophets that the wise men had not seen nor conceived. While in the temple he

had laid out lines of truth which, if followed, would have worked a great reformation in the religion of the day. But he looked in vain to see the leaders of the nation leading the people upward by presenting to them in simplicity the word of the Lord. The Old Testament Scriptures which he had expounded to them were vital with truth, and would have made both teachers and learners wise unto salvation.

If these truths had been presented and obeyed, a deep interest in spiritual things would have been the result. But the truth, which should have brightened and expanded through contemplation and practice, became the condemnation of the priests, scribes, and Pharisees. Instead of becoming elevated, ennobled, and sanctified through the truth which had been presented to them, they allowed its precious, vital influence to pass away from them, and let the truth slip. If they had opened their hearts to receive the truth which Christ presented in his sermon on the mount, their minds would have been illuminated, and they would have seen that their sacrificial system was but a shadow and example of the life and teachings of Christ. If they had not turned their hearts from God, they would not have become envious of Christ, nor would they have refused the precious truths which he came to unfold to them. They would not have exalted their human inventions and traditions as sacred; they would not have set aside the Scriptures, and made them a confused jumble of inconsistencies; but they refused Christ, and, tho they had been made the depositaries of sacred truth, yet they persisted in misinterpretation of the Bible, and thus closed the word of God to the people.

In our day there is similar danger of closing the Bible to the people through misinterpretation of the word of God. Many are casting contempt upon the Old Testament Scriptures, but these are not to lose their sacredness; throughout all time they are not to be dropped out of our instruction. Paul writes concerning the experiences of the people of God in ancient times, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The prophets spoke less for their own time than for the ages which have followed, and for our own day. Peter says: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

In this age of the world we find the same influences at work to make of no effect the word of God. The traditions of men are again exalted above the commandments of God. But Christ declares, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Christ declared that he came to our world not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill every specification of the law by living out its precepts. "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 light that shines from the Old Testament Scriptures is the light that was imparted to the prophets and wise men by Jesus Christ.

Let us see to it that we study the words of Christ in both the Old and the New Testaments, and take heed that we be not agents who shall work to make of no effect the word of God by exalting the traditions and opinions of men.

April 9, 1896

The Christian Mother a Coworker with God

“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them.” Mark gives a little different version of the circumstance, and says: “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

The disciples thought that the work of the Master was altogether too important to be interrupted, or, as they thought, hindered, by the introduction of a company of children who were being conducted by their mothers into the presence of Christ. The disciples supposed that these children were too young to be benefited by an interview with Jesus, and concluded that he would be much displeased and annoyed by their presence. But it was the disciples with whom he was displeased. The Saviour understood the care and burden of the mothers who were seeking to train their children according to the word of God. He knew their travail of soul; he had seen them engaged in earnest prayer in behalf of their little ones. He himself had drawn them into his presence. One weary mother had left her home with her little ones clinging to her. As she went on her way, she met a neighbor, and made known her errand, and created a desire in her neighbor's heart to have Christ also bless her children. Thus several mothers came together, leading their little ones along. Some of the children had passed beyond the age of babyhood to childhood and youth. When they made known their errand, Jesus heard with sympathy and compassion their timid, tearful requests. But he waited to see how the disciples would treat these mothers and their little ones. When he saw them sending them away, mistakenly supposing that they were doing the Master a great favor, he showed them their error, and tenderly received the mothers and their little ones. He took the children in his arms, and laid his hands upon their heads. He pillowed the weary heads of the little ones upon his breast of infinite love. He gave them the blessing for which they came.

On the occasion of receiving the children, Christ gave his disciples a lesson which they never forgot. They listened with amazement to the words, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” The mothers who had led their children to Jesus, were comforted by his compassion. But the mothers of today are also to understand and cherish these words. They are to lay hold of them with the same faith as did the women who brought their children to Jesus, who had sought Christ with trembling fear and yet with eager earnestness. These mothers were encouraged to take up with new cheerfulness their burden of care and love, and to work hopefully for their children. Every care-burdened mother should receive the words of Christ in the same spirit.

But he also stated truth that is of general application. He said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child [ready to be taught and led of Christ, ready to believe in him as a personal Saviour], he shall not enter therein." Men and women are only grown-up children. They are under discipline to God even as children are under discipline to their earthly parents. The church is composed of men and women who have the same nature, the same dispositions, as did the little children who were brought to Christ. The members of our churches are composed of persons who have like impulses, who manifest the likes and dislikes, who display the same passions, as did the children who upon receiving Christ were to compose his heavenly kingdom.

How appropriate it was that these children should be brought to Christ for his intercession and blessing! They were types of what the members of his church should become. The children of God are to possess the humility, the loving trust, the teachable spirit, the innocence, uncorrupted by worldly deception, that were possessed by the little children.

Christian mothers should realize that they are coworkers with God when training and disciplining their children in such a manner as will enable them to reflect the character of Christ. In this work they will have the cooperation of heavenly angels; but it is a work that is sadly neglected, and for this reason Christ is robbed of his heritage,—the younger members of his family. But through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, humanity may be a coworker with divinity. The lessons of Christ upon the occasion of receiving the children, should leave a deeper impression upon our minds. The words of Christ encourage parents to bring their little ones to Jesus. They may be wayward, and possess passions like those of humanity, but this should not deter us from bringing them to Christ. He blessed children that were possessed of passions like his own. We often err in training our children. Parents often indulge their children in that which is selfish and demoralizing, and instead of having travail of soul for their salvation, they let them drift along, and grow up with perverse tempers and unlovely characters. They do not accept their God-given responsibility to educate and train their children for the glory of God. They become dissatisfied with their children's manners, and disheartened as they realize that their faults are the result of their own neglect, and then they become discouraged. But if parents would feel that they are never released from their burden of educating and training their children for God, if they would do their work in faith, cooperating with God by earnest prayer and work, they would be successful in bringing their children to the Saviour. Let fathers and mothers devote themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to God before the birth of their children. Let them heed the directions that God revealed to the wife of Manoah. The angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, ... thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing." The burden of this message was a burden of instruction to the wife of Manoah. She was greatly troubled, and Manoah sought the Lord in earnest prayer, and said: "O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her

beware. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.”

In this instruction it is manifest, that before the birth of her child the mother is to be careful in her habits. She must not indulge a perverted appetite, or partake of wine or strong drink, or eat of any unclean thing. The habits of a mother have an influence upon the appetites and passions of her child. The Lord regarded instruction to the mother of such importance that he sent an angel, who veiled his glory, in order to give a direct message to the wife of Manoah, and prescribe the course of action which she should pursue. The instruction given to the wife of Manoah is the instruction that all mothers should follow in order that the prenatal influence may be of a right character.

She who expects to become a mother should keep her soul in the love of God. Her mind should be at peace; she should rest in the love of Jesus, practicing the words of Christ. She should remember that the mother is a laborer together with God. He is the great worker as well as the lawgiver. While we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God is to work in us to will and to do of his good-pleasure. “Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.” Mothers, let your hearts be open to receive the instruction of God, ever bearing in mind the fact that you must act your part in conforming to the will of God. You must place yourself in the light, and seek from God wisdom, that you may know how to act, that you may acknowledge God as the chief worker, and realize that you are a laborer together with him. Let your heart be drawn out in contemplation of heavenly things. Exercise your God-given talents in doing the duties which God has enjoined upon you as a mother, and work in partnership with divine agencies. Labor intelligently, and, “whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

April 16, 1896

Parents' Work in Their Children

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren; and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.... And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.”

An angel from heaven came to instruct Zacharias and Elizabeth as to how they should train and educate their child, so as to work in harmony with God in preparing a messenger to announce the coming of Christ. As parents they were to faithfully cooperate with God in forming such a character in John as would fit him to perform the part God had assigned him as a competent worker. John was the son of their old age, he was a child of miracle, and the parents might have reasoned that he had a special work to do for the Lord, and the Lord would take care of him. But the parents did not thus reason; they moved to a retired place in the country, where their son would not be exposed to the temptations of city life, or induced to depart from the counsel and instruction which they as parents would give him. They acted their part in developing a character in the child that would in every way meet the purpose for which God had designed his life. By no careless neglect on their part shall their son fail to become good and wise, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." They sacredly fulfilled their obligation.

At the time of the birth of John the people generally were addicted to the use of unfermented wine. At the wedding feast in Cana, Christ turned the water into wine. By a miracle he transformed the water into the pure juice of the grape. Wine is good only when it is not fermented. It is then harmless; yet, notwithstanding this, the Lord God of heaven laid down the prohibition that John was to drink neither wine nor strong drink. Unfermented wine soon became sour in Palestine, and neither sweet wine nor sour wine was to pass the lips of John. Christ knew all things; he looked down the ages to our own time, and saw what would be the condition of society in the close of the world's history. He saw thousands upon thousands perishing in the use of wine and strong drink. The world would gradually come into the same state as it was in the days before the flood. But heaven has lifted a danger signal, that men may take warning, and cooperate with God for their own self-preservation. He has given us examples of absolute abstinence, and provided instruction that, if followed, will result in the creation and preservation of the vigor, skill, and excellency of our children.

Fathers and mothers should have clear, unclouded minds, unaffected by the indulgence of perverted appetite,—such minds as God can connect with himself for the salvation of souls who are ready to perish. Those who use wine and fermented liquors weaken their physical and mental powers. Their minds become so clouded that it is impossible for them to discern sacred things. But if the human agent shall cooperate with divine agency, his physical and mental development will become higher and better. His mind will enlarge, and he will grow in power to do good. The grandest, most effectual work can be done by parents who follow the instruction of the Lord, and who train their children physically, mentally, and morally according to the Lord's directions. If parents neglect to properly instruct their children, and the youth are left to have their own will and way from the days of their childhood, their characters will be greatly perverted; for the enemy will step in and rejoicingly take into his hands the work of training the children and youth.

Why is it that parents do not understand the greatness of the work that has been committed to them? The most patient, unremitting culture is required in order that children and youth may be preserved from the formation of habits that will deteriorate their character. Parents, with much prayer, should carefully guide the inexperienced feet of their children into safe paths. To let the child do as it pleases is to insure proficiency in evil. Satan will manage to make children wise in disobedience, in selfishness, and in all manner of waywardness. Look upon a field that is left unworked, and what an unsightly place it is! Weeds and tares overshadow the precious plants, until

finally nothing of worth appears. Early childhood is generally a period when marked depravity is made manifest. The child manifests a strong inclination to evil, and it requires a firm, wise hand to control the little one, or it will grow up in sin, a disagreeable, evil element of society. Parents who do not control their children will be controlled by them, and will indulge their children in vain desires, will gratify perverse appetite and inclination. Unless some one, in the providence of God, shall step in, and undertake the missionary work of training the child, will take it away from its parents, where they will have no opportunity to interfere in its discipline, or to indulge it in perverseness, there will be no hope that the terrible work done by its parents will be counteracted, or the peril of the child's soul be removed.

A child who is thus neglected, who is allowed to be willful and disobedient, will carry a malarious influence that will taint and pollute those who come into association with him. At a very early age children become susceptible to demoralizing influences; but parents who profess to be Christians do not seem to discern the evil of their own course of management. O, that they might realize that the bias which is given to a child in its earliest years gives a tendency to character, and shapes the destiny either for eternal life or eternal death! Children are susceptible to moral and spiritual impressions, and those who are wisely trained in childhood may be erring at times, but they will not go far astray. But a child left to form its own character is more likely to choose evil influences than good.

Association with evil-minded children is dangerous to the character of children who have been tenderly and carefully reared. Guard your children from every objectionable influence possible; for in childhood they are more ready to receive impressions, either of moral dignity, purity, and loveliness of character, or of selfishness, impurity, and disobedience. Once let them become influenced by the spirit of murmuring, pride, vanity, and impurity, and the taint may be as indelible as life itself. Parents are to look upon their children as intrusted to them of God to be educated for the family above. Train them in the fear and love of God; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

April 23, 1896

The Glory of God Revealed in Mercy

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in nowise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." The compassionate heart of Christ was touched at the sight of this suffering woman, and we should suppose that every human being who looked upon her would have rejoiced that she was loosed from her bondage, and healed of an affliction that had bowed her down for eighteen years. But Jesus perceived by the lowering, angry countenances of the priests and rabbis that they felt no joy at her deliverance. They were not ready to utter thankful words because one who had been suffering and deformed by disease was restored to health and symmetry. They felt no gratitude that her deformed body was made comely, and that the Holy Spirit made glad her heart till it overflowed with thankfulness, and she glorified God. The psalmist says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." But in the midst of the words of gratitude is heard a discordant note. "And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day." He

was indignant that Christ had caused an unhappy woman to sound a note of joy upon the Sabbath. In a loud voice, harsh with passion, he said to the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

If this man had really had conscientious scruples in regard to the true observance of the Sabbath, he would have discerned the nature and character of the work that Christ had performed. If he had cultivated truth and righteousness in his heart, he would have given an entirely different interpretation of the work which was performed on the Sabbath day, and which he said belonged to the six working days. The work that Christ had done was in harmony with the sanctification of the Sabbath day. The people on this side and that side wondered and were glad at the work that had been wrought for the suffering woman; and there were those whose hearts were touched, whose minds were enlightened, who would have acknowledged themselves the disciples of Christ, had it not been for the lowering, angry countenances of the rabbis. The people knew that if they expressed their admiration of Christ, it would cost them something. Many believed on him, but dared not confess their faith, fearing that they would be turned out of the synagogue. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

In the work of mercy which Christ had performed, his divine power shone forth, and testified that his resources were found in the only true and living God. Many were obtaining a correct knowledge of God, and by faith in Christ were getting a better acquaintance with the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To the angry rebuke of the ruler of the synagogue Jesus replied with dignity and authority. In distinct utterances the voice of Christ was heard saying: "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" They had condemned Christ for relieving a suffering woman, who had been under affliction for eighteen years, when they themselves would not scruple in relieving the thirst of a beast on the Sabbath day. They would not leave their ox or their ass tied up in the stall when it was in need of water, but would lead it out where water might be obtained. He pointed out their inconsistency, saying, You feed your cattle on the Sabbath, and yet you are angry with the people who are solely distressed and suffering, who are under the oppressive power of Satan, because they come on the Sabbath day to be healed. You do a work of mercy for your beast, but pass judgment because I have broken Satan's power and set free a daughter of Abraham on the Sabbath. "And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."

The rabbis had taught the people that all who were of Jewish extraction were holy and peculiarly favored of heaven. Why did they not lift up their voice in gratitude to God because this suffering daughter of Abraham was freed from her long bondage? The woman had not been possessed in spirit, but the Lord had suffered Satan to exercise his will in bringing disease upon her; for God was demonstrating the character of his kingdom before the whole universe of heaven. This opportunity must be given him to reveal the character of apostasy. The inhabitants of worlds unfallen could view in this case the attributes of Satan and the character of God. The law of God is a transcript of his character. The rebel leader was in opposition to the law of God, and revealed the fact that his principles were those that actuated one who is lawless, disobedient, unholy, an accuser, a liar, and a murderer. The true character of the ruler of the synagogue was laid bare, and it was made manifest that he was on the side of the great rebel, tho sanctimoniously professing to be very punctilious

concerning the law of God. He knew not the principle of love that underlies the commandments, and preferred that the woman should suffer rather than that Jesus should work a miracle to heal her, and thus counteract his work of misrepresentation. Tho the rebuke of Jesus brought reproach upon his adversary, and tho the people rejoiced because of all the glorious things that were done, yet the ruler never forgave Christ for departing from the maxims, customs, and commandments of men, with which the rabbis had burdened the law of God and obscured its spiritual significance.

April 30, 1896

Loyalty to the law is Loyalty to God

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he can not sin, because he is born of God.” The standard which is to test every doctrine, every theory, every profession, is the law of God. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,”—break the law of Jehovah. If a man is born of God, he will respect the principles of the divine government, and will not wilfully transgress the law of God in thought, or word, or action. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” Jesus prayed that his disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and added, “Thy word is truth.”

The new birth is accomplished by the reception of the word of God; but those who belittle the word of God, those who cast contempt upon the law of Jehovah, place themselves under the banner of the prince of darkness. Satan began the work of rebellion in heaven by opposition to the constitution and government of God; and this is the manner of work he has carried on ever since the fall of man. Through the agency of evil men he seeks to make void the law of the Most High. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” Christ vindicated and honored the law of God, declaring that upon the principles of the Ten Commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Those who manifest disrespect for the law of Jehovah, make it evident that they have not been born again, and the truth does not abide in them.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” This statement must be so read as to harmonize with the statement that if we are born of God, we shall not commit sin; for “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” “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.” John says, “I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.”

“Whoso abideth in him sinneth not,” that is, does not wilfully transgress the law of God; for “sin is the transgression of the law.” But what conclusion are we to draw from the profession of those who claim to be sanctified, to be living without sin, and yet who openly cast contempt upon the law of God? They claim to possess advanced piety, and at the same time, by thought, and word, and deed, they transgress the law, and teach others by precept and example that they may sin with impunity. John tests their pretentious claims, and says, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not;

whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Those who claim to be sanctified, and who at the same time openly defame the law of God, are in terrible deception, and are blasphemers of the God of heaven. John says, "Let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness [keeps the commandments of God] is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin [transgresses the law] is of the devil." God has placed the transgressor of the law in the ranks of the powers of darkness, in the company of the first great apostate.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Even those who are striving in sincerity to keep the law of God, are not always free from sin. Through some deceptive temptation, they are deceived, and fall into error. But when their sin comes home to their conscience, they see themselves condemned in the light of the holy precepts of God's law; but they do not war against the law which condemns them; they repent of their sin, and seek pardon through the merit of Christ, who died for their sins in order that they might be justified by faith in his blood. They do not avoid confession and repentance when the neglected law of God is brought to their attention, by exclaiming, as do the self-righteous pretenders to holiness, "I am sanctified, I am holy, and I can not sin." This is the class whom the apostle rebukes; for he says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is evident that where a claim to sinlessness is made, there the law of God has not been written in the heart; for the commandments of God are exceeding broad, and are discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The apostle speaks words of encouragement to those who realize that they are sinners, and says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If we say we have no sin," when our thoughts, words, and actions, reflected from the law of God, the great moral mirror, reveal us as transgressors, we make God a liar, and prove that his word is not in us.

The apostle draws a sharp distinction between the condition of the avowed transgressor, who dares to live in defiance of God's law, and yet make claim to holiness, and the condition of him who, tho yielding his heart to the claims of the law of God, still sees defects in his character, and bows in humility before God to make confession of sin. Paul says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." How dangerous is the position of men who, while claiming sanctification, still will not receive the light of the law by which sin is detected! Sanctification is conformity to the will of God, and the will of God is expressed in his holy law. Those only are truly sanctified who live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. How terrible is it to be a false light, and, while claiming salvation through the merit of the blood of Christ, to be sowing the seed of rebellion against the law of God in the hearts of men!

Paul continues, "I was alive without the law once [supposing himself to be righteous]; but when the commandment came [home to his conscience], sin revived, and [the law(?) died]." This is what many would be glad to have us believe; but it is a fatal falsehood, and we can not believe it in the light of God's word; for Paul declares: "Sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." The testimony of Paul was in harmony with the words of the Lord in the Old Testament; for he says: "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein; I am the Lord

your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them." "And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my Sabbaths they greatly polluted; then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them." "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."

Paul waged no war against the commandments of God because of the sharp work they had done in detecting his sin; but, altho he was condemned to death by the sentence of the law, he exclaims, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Those who wage war against the commandments of God make it manifest that their minds are carnal; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God." But even when we stand in defense of the law of God, and in opposition to the world, who are making void that law, and who are coming under the temptation of the enemy of God, yet we are not to say that we have no sin, but in meekness repent of sin, and make confession of our shortcoming before the Lord. The law points out our defects of character, but when we see that we have come short, we shall not feel like berating the law which has condemned our sin, we shall not be disposed to call the commandments of God a yoke of bondage, but, like Paul, we shall acknowledge our sin, and self will die. For "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

May 7, 1896

Faith Unlocks the Storehouse

It is no sign that Jesus has ceased to love us because we experience doubts and discouragements. Affliction comes to us in the providence of God in order that we may see that Christ is our helper, that in him is love and consolation. We may receive grace whereby we may be overcomers, and inherit the life that measures with the life of God. We must have an experience so that when affliction comes upon us, we shall not depart from our faith, and choose fables.

There were men among the disciples of Christ who did not always manifest faith in the word of God. When Christ told them that he would go away and prepare mansions for them, and come again and receive them unto himself, and said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas said unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Thomas did not believe in the word of God, and did not discern the divine character of Christ. But he was not alone in his unbelief. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto

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

We should be in a position where we may believe that God is willing to do for us more than we can ask or think. With the key of faith we may unlock the storehouse of God. Then why should we not be believing Christians instead of doubters? Faith will enable us to show the compassion of Jesus in a much larger measure than we do when we remain in doubt. How foolish it would be to go into a cellar, and mourn because we were in the dark! If we want light, we must come up into a higher room. It is our privilege to come into the light, to come into the presence of God. We are to come to him confessing our sins, and believing in the promise that we shall be cleansed from all unrighteousness. The apostle says: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 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."

We should grow daily in faith in order that we may grow up to the full measure of the spiritual stature in Christ Jesus. We should believe that God will answer our prayers, and not trust to feeling. We should say, My gloomy feelings are no evidence that God has not heard me. I do not want to give up on account of these sad emotions; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The rainbow of promise encircles the throne of God. I come to the throne, pointing to the sign of God's faithfulness, and cherish the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We are not to believe because we feel or see that God hears us. We are to trust to the promise of God. We are to go about our business believing that God will do just what he has said he would do, and that the blessings we have prayed for will come to us when we most need them. Every petition enters into the heart of God when we come believing. We have not faith enough. We should look upon our heavenly Father as more willing to help us than an earthly parent is to help his child. Why not trust him? "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?" I wish that the beams of light which shine from God's word could find ready entrance into our hearts; for then we should receive comfort. Jesus 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." Christ is inviting us to open the door of our heart, to clear the rubbish away, and let the Saviour in. Shall we not remove the burden that is piled at the door, and make Christ first, last, and best in everything?

We desire to be Christians, then let us sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him. He will give us strength to overcome every defect in our character, and to oppose to these hereditary or cultivated defects the virtues of Jesus Christ. We must push our way through the deceptive darkness to the divine light. Jesus says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it

shall be done unto you." Discouragement and gloom come upon us not because the truth is not sufficient for us, but because we do not bring it into our hearts, and let it have a controlling influence over our lives and actions. Jesus has loved us with a love surpassing that of a mother for her child. The question has been asked, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" And the answer is given: "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." By the hand of faith let us grasp the promises of God, and be upon vantage ground. Then we shall be where Satan can not come near and say, "God can not help you. You have sinned, and you can not claim the promises." The adversary would have us think that the way to life is so difficult that it will be impossible to reach the bliss of heaven. But God has placed us in circumstances where the very best of our natures may be developed, and where the highest faculties may be exercised. If we cultivate that which is good, the objectionable tendencies will not gain the supremacy, and at last we shall be accounted worthy to join the family above. But if we desire to be saints above, we must first be saints upon the earth.

May 14, 1896

When Thou Makest A Feast, Call the Poor

When the Lord was invited to the house of the chief Pharisee, he not only reproved those who chose out the highest places, but gave them instruction as to what kind of guests they should invite to their feasts. "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee."

This is a lesson of great importance to those to whom the Lord has intrusted riches, and many do not consider the interests of those who are in less favorable circumstances than they are themselves.

"When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they can not recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

How few who claim to be Christians practice the lesson that Christ has given on this point! In principle this was not new teaching; for the Old Testament gave rules that should control the action of those who loved God. From the pillar of cloud, Christ had given instructions to his people, saying: "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.... For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." These words had been given to Moses to speak to the children of Israel. They were among the last words that he spoke to the Hebrew nation. Their invisible Leader, who was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave these words of instruction to the people who had been chosen of God to be the light of the world.

How closely does the instruction given at the lips of Moses harmonize with the instruction that fell from the lips of Christ at the Pharisee's house! He presented to the Pharisees the principles that were ever to be maintained by his representatives in the world. Christ saw abundant reason for

repeating the principles that he had given in the Old Testament; for his professed people failed to carry them out in practical life. The poor were not to cease out of the land; they were always to remain in it, in order that there should be need for the continual exercise of beneficence. Through this means a counteracting influence was set into operation against the temptation to become selfish, to appropriate the Lord's intrusted gifts, to use the opportunities and privileges which he had given them in gratifying themselves. Should they neglect the poor, and fail to diffuse light, then they would represent Satan, while flattering themselves that they were representing the principles of the character of God. The Lord reminds those assembled that God desires them to impart of his bounty to those who are less fortunate.

In his conversation at the table the Lord was not speaking new truth, advancing new doctrines, or expounding new principles. He was repeating an old commandment which he had previously given to Moses to be given to them. He wished them to understand that his teachings in nowise lessened the force of the commandments previously given. The feasts and the suppers that were given by the priests, the Pharisees, and rulers, were given merely for selfish enjoyment. They called in their favorites, their wealthy relatives and friends, who would in their turn invite them to feasts at their houses, and, if possible, spread before them more abundant supplies. Jesus sought to extend their vision, to show them that they had a duty, which was obligatory upon them for all time, and that was to minister to the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind. He also would have them consider the fact that no duty done to the needy, the afflicted, and the sorrowing, would lose its reward.

No man should be content to settle down in the comfortable home that was provided for him through the benevolence of God, and close his eyes and hands, so that he shall not see the wants of the poor, nor administer to their necessities. Every man is called upon to cultivate the attributes that God will approve. We should cast aside selfish, earthly ambitions. Instead of exhausting our powers in strife for the first and highest place, seeking to be esteemed as honorable by men, we should seek to help others to enjoy the precious things that are given to us of God. We should not drop eternity out of our reckoning, but remember that in blessing others we shall bring a sure return to ourselves. Those who follow the example of Christ will receive nothing less than heaven, and the life that measures with the life of God.

The Lord Jesus entreats human agents not to cheat themselves out of heavenly treasures, and deprive themselves of an immortal inheritance by hoarding their earthly treasures, and by seeking to provide for themselves a portion in this life. He would have them understand that they are a part of the great web of humanity, and that they are to interweave their interests with the interests of others, and recognize that they are a part of the web of humanity, by supplying the needs of God's suffering poor. Christ gives cautions and warnings that are of the highest importance, urging men to establish their principal interest in heaven. "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they can not recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." In his sermon on the mount he brought forth the same truth when he said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

May 21, 1896

And Shall Not God Avenge His Own Elect?

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Tho I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, tho he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

This judge was a man appointed by the law to give decisions upon cases that were brought before him. He had no love or reverence for God, and therefore no unselfish love for his neighbor. He had no regard for the rights of men. Judges were required to show a special attention to widows; but this man cared nothing for the rights of any. The Lord gave instruction through the prophet Jeremiah as to what judges should do for those who called upon them. “Thus saith the Lord: Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, and do no wrong; do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.” The widow and the fatherless were objects of the Lord's special care, but those who feared not God, who had no regard for their fellow-men, took advantage of the cases of those who were helpless and destitute. A judge unfaithful to his trust suffered might to triumph over right.

The widow who came to plead with the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary was determined that the judge should attend to her case. For a while he refrained from answering her request, but afterwards, because he was getting weary of the continual coming of the widow, he said that he would avenge her. In the position which he occupied, the judge could have immediately delivered this woman from her oppressors, but he had no disposition to do so. Instead of delivering her, he united with her adversaries to do that which would bring oppression upon her. For a long time justice was delayed, but at length because of sheer weariness on account of her persistent importunity, he decided to do the act that he should have done long before.

What revelations will be made in the day of final reckoning that will show how much suffering unjust judges have brought upon their fellow-men! It will be made manifest that their injustice has not come upon men because of ignorance of what were their rights, but because they were unmindful of the privileges that God had given to their fellow-men. Tho they stood as judges, they themselves brought upon men terrible oppression, and assisted the robber, the thief, in robbing their fellow-men. The day is coming when these judges will be arrayed before the throne of eternal justice, and will have to give an account before Him who is the judge of both the quick and the dead. When the books are opened and men are judged according to the works written in the books, sentence will be pronounced against the evil judges who have brought so great oppression upon the innocent and the helpless. They will be called upon to behold every deed of injustice, and to see the sufferings that they have thereby caused their fellow-men. Those actions that had the appearance of external propriety, and even of goodness, will be unmasked, and the hypocrisy of men will be seen in its true character. Those who do a deed of justice simply to rid themselves of the trouble of listening to the pitiful tales of suffering that the afflicted pour into their ears, are placed in sharp contrast with the all-merciful, all-pitiful Father, who considers the appeals of his suffering children with infinite

compassion and love. The Lord calls upon men and angels to hear what the unjust judge said. Heaven is cognizant of the actions of men. The Lord places in contrast the spirit and action of the unjust judge with his own Spirit and action, saying: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, tho he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

These words are to administer comfort to all those who are oppressed. God hears the cries of his children. Jesus gives them the assurance that God has not forsaken, that he will come forth to vindicate their cause. There is One who has suffered in their behalf, who has borne with them their sorrows and afflictions, and who will appear as their deliverer. The people of God who suffer persecutions for their faith, who are falsified, scorned, and derided, are often tempted to think themselves forsaken of God. To the eyes of men they are in the minority, and to all appearances their enemies triumph over them, yet let them not violate their conscience; for the Lord will give them a signal victory. God will hear the humble prayers of his contrite ones. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

The question is asked, "And shall not God avenge his own elect?" The elect of God are the objects of his special care. Of his people Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world." The elect are those whom God has made the depository of sacred responsibilities. They are those whom God has called out of darkness into his marvelous light, to show forth his praises, and to shine as lights amid the moral darkness of the world. The unjust judge had no special interest in the widow who importuned him for deliverance, yet to get rid of her pitiful appeal, he heard her plea, and delivered her from her adversary. But how different is the attitude of God toward his children! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He loves his people with infinite love. God has from the beginning chosen us for salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

We are called to be laborers together with God. The Lord has a particular regard for those who are chosen and faithful, who cry day and night unto him. It may seem that the trials and sufferings continue, and that God does not regard them. Delay may seem long; but their prayers are not in vain; for he will avenge them speedily, that is, at last, and in a way not expected by them, when the most trying point is reached. There is no danger that the Lord will neglect to hear the prayers of his people. He will be true to his word. The danger is that his tried, tempted people will become discouraged and will not persevere in prayer, so that God will avenge them of all that wicked men have brought upon them. The Lord asks: "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

(Concluded next week.)

May 28, 1896

And Shall Not God Avenge His Own Elect?

(Concluded.)

The Saviour manifested divine compassion toward the Syro-Phenician woman. His heart was touched with pitying tenderness, as he saw her woe and grief. He longed to give her an immediate assurance that her prayer was heard, and her request fulfilled; but he desired to teach his disciples a lesson; and for a short period of time he seemed to act out the feelings that prompted them, and neglected the cry of her heart. He acted towards her in the same manner as the Pharisees taught the people to act toward all such so-called heathen. Christ even repulsed her. He knew the heart of the woman. He knew what sorrow pressed upon her soul, and understood her persistent determination not to be driven away until her request was granted. When she made known her request to Christ, he said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs." But she had an answer ready, and said, "The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table." This is all I ask. Give me the privilege of eating the crumbs that fall from the table. Did she go away empty and discouraged?—No, she received her request. The Lord commended her for her great faith, and sent her away with the precious boon she had asked. He then turned to his disciples and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Did the disciples ever forget this lesson?—No. This case is placed on record to show what is the result of persevering in presenting our needs to the Hearer of prayer. Of Christ it was written. "The bruised reed shall he not break, the smoking flax shall he not quench." No soul will be left to perish who asks in faith for the help of Christ. The weakest, the most struggling soul, may live, and find hope and sufficiency in God. When Jesus comes into the storm and the darkness, midnight is as bright as noonday. The faith that recognizes Christ leads the soul to rest implicitly upon the promises, because God is behind them. There is hope for the most desponding. Those who take Christ at his word, who surrender their souls to his keeping, their lives to his ordering, will find peace, quietude, and rest. He will impart grace to the needy soul.

The Lord calls attention to the words of the judge, saying: "Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? He so presents the unjust judge and himself as to show that it is an impossibility that God shall fail his people in a time of necessity. Just before the Lord is near to come, the proving of God will be upon his people. The church will be tried until the time when the Lord shall appear in the clouds of heaven. Those who receive answers to their prayers are those who walk in the light of God's commandments. But let not that man who walks contrary to the expressed will of God, expect that he will receive anything of the Lord. The Lord says: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. 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 can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.... 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." Again the Lord assures us: "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."

In order to receive the precious gifts of God, we must meet him upon the platform of his own devising, complying with the conditions that he has laid down in his word. There is much turning aside from the word of God. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. When a trial of faith comes upon those that profess to be the children of God, they do not perseveringly present their petitions before the throne of mercy, depending upon the Holy Spirit, waiting and watching,

and continuing to present their requests, searching the Scriptures at the same time to know what is the mind of God. Place your feet in the path of God's commandments, and be assured that your prayers will be answered. There is a great lack of earnestness, a great lack of vital interest in prayer. Yet we are exhorted to be "instant in prayer," "to pray without ceasing." We are to keep a spirit of intercession, and present all our wants to God. We are to tell him about the smallest things of life,—our cares, our business, our desires and needs. You can never weary the Lord by your importuning. It is by beholding Jesus that you become changed into the divine similitude. We may behold him by continuing in prayer, until we are not aware that we are praying; for our souls turn to the Sun of Righteousness as a flower turns to the light.

We should study the prayer of Christ that has been given to us in the seventeenth chapter of John. In living out that prayer, we may be lifted day after day into a pure, holy atmosphere, and thus have faith to believe that we receive that thing we ask of God. The Saviour said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." What a statement is this! How can the finite man grasp it? Man may become elevated, ennobled through obedience to the commandments of God, and become loyal and true subjects of his kingdom. We may become one with Christ in spirit and character, and testify to the world that God loves us as he loves his Son. What possibilities are there before the fallen human agent! Let perfect obedience be rendered to God through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and we shall reveal to the world the fact that God loves us as he loves Jesus. It will be made evident that "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?"

Why is it that we are so disposed to distrust God? Why do we as a church doubt his love? Let faith increase by exercise. Let it be sustained by works of righteousness. It is sin that darkens the reason of man, and clouds the understanding. Let the affections be given to God in order that his law may be written in the heart, and the whole man will become a new creature, born again of the Spirit. Then it will be made manifest that the law of God "is perfect, converting the soul." The Lord Jesus has revealed to us the value of the human soul. He says: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Again the promise is made, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Shall we co-operate with God, and possess the faith that works by love and purifies the soul?

June 11, 1896

Salvation is Come to Thine House

"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he

looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”

The reception of Christ by Zacchaeus was one of the bright spots in the Saviour's experience as he journeyed through Jericho. The members of his own family did not believe on him as the world's Redeemer, and their unbelief brought anguish to the Saviour's heart. He knew that they were losing precious opportunities to become acquainted with him, and to receive the precious lessons of truth which he was giving to his people. He had been rejected by the scribes and Pharisees, and by the chief priests and religious leaders of his own nation, because his teachings did not harmonize with the teaching of the professed people of God. They could not be reconciled to the fact that Jesus, who was unrecognized as a religious teacher by the rabbis and scribes, should teach as one having authority. Neither could they bear the manifestation of love and mercy that he gave to those who were considered outcasts and sinners.

Zacchaeus was a Jew, and yet a publican. He was even chief among the publicans, having oversight of those who gathered in the taxes in behalf of the Roman Government. A publican was one who was despised by the Jewish people, and the fact that Zacchaeus was a Jew, and still occupied this position, made him doubly offensive. They looked upon him with contempt, altho he was a man of considerable wealth and of some influence in the position which he held. Some looked upon Christ with hatred, and thought themselves much better than Zacchaeus; but they did not respond to his heavenly teaching or yield to the drawing influence of the Holy Spirit. They were surprised to see Zacchaeus accept Christ so readily. They were astonished to see him come down joyfully from the tree to give the hospitality of his house to one who was apparently poor in earthly possessions. They did not understand that Christ had become poor for humanity's sake, in order that through his poverty they might be made possessors of eternal riches.

Zacchaeus had heard of Christ's merciful works, had listened to the repetition of his wonderful teaching, and had longed to see Christ for himself. The words of the Saviour that had been reported to him by those who had heard him, had taken deep hold of his heart, and had made him realize that he needed to reform his life. He felt deeply the need of repentance, of making restitution to those whom he had unjustly taxed, and of whom he had demanded exorbitant rates. He desired to know more of the principles and doctrines of this wonderful Teacher. The seed of truth had been sown in his heart, and he had nurtured it, and it was about to bring forth a harvest unto the glory of God.

The scribes and Pharisees murmured among themselves as they heard the words of gracious favor to Zacchaeus. They were eager to find something with which to accuse Christ, and to lead the people to reject him. Christ was the Prince of God, yet he was not honored even as are earthly princes. He did not come in splendid state, and pass through the cities of men in gorgeous equipage. He made one of the multitude among which he traveled. He spoke words of encouragement to the despondent, relieved those who were suffering, healed the sick and afflicted, and blessed those who came within the sphere of his influence. He came as the missionary of heaven to represent the Father, and he rejoiced whenever he met a soul who received him without prejudice, and responded to the gracious drawing of the Spirit of God. Tho the scribes and Pharisees murmured that favor had been shown to Zacchaeus, his heart rejoiced as Jesus said, “I must abide at thy house.”

Zacchaeus could hardly think that he had heard aright. He was overwhelmed with the condescension of the great Teacher in choosing his home as the place of his abode. It had been in his power to

oppress those from whom he was appointed to gather the taxes. He was convicted that his practice was out of harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures. He knew the Scriptures, and under the influence of the words that had been reported to him, that had come from the lips of the great Teacher, he had become aware that he was a sinner in the sight of God. He began at once to follow the conviction that had taken hold upon him, and to make restitution to those whom he had robbed. This was an evidence of genuine conversion. The scribes and Pharisees expressed their indignation, saying that Christ had gone to be the guest of a man that was a sinner; but the fact of the matter was the Holy Spirit was working upon this man's mind, and the multitude had a clear evidence of the fact. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

In thus doing Zacchaeus was following out the very instructions which the Lord had given in the Old Testament Scriptures, and showed himself to be a doer of the words of Christ. When the publicans had come to be baptized of John in the Jordan, they asked, "What shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you." In restoring fourfold for what he had taken in extortion, he was following the word of the prophet when he said, "He shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Jesus recognized his sincere repentance, and accepted his work toward reformation. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Not only was Zacchaeus blessed, but all his household with him.

What a lesson is there for us in the history of Zacchaeus' conversion! If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even tho it be within the pale of the law, yet if we are Christians, we shall confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as in us lies. We should give evidence that there is a genuine work of grace within our hearts. If earthly courts award to us property that is not justly ours, we are not to accept the decision of unjust judges. Tho we may be clear on the records of men, yet in the books of heaven we will be written as oppressors, and the case will go against us when judgment shall take place in the courts of God.

Before Zacchaeus had looked upon the face of Christ, he had begun the work that makes him manifest as a true penitent. Before being accused by man, he had confessed his wrong. He had yielded to the convictions of the Holy Spirit. He had begun to carry out the spirit of the words written for ancient Israel, as well as for ourselves. He said to the Saviour, "The half of my goods I give to the poor." The Lord had said long before: "If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him; yea, tho he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase; but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God." "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God." These words had been spoken by Christ when he was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud. The same Teacher had spoken these words as had spoken the sermon on the mount. It was Christ who had said, "Ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments." Christ had presented the same principles on the mount of beatitudes as he had on Mount Sinai. He had said that on the principles of love to God and to our neighbor, hung all the law and the prophets.

When the human agent is awakened by the Holy Spirit, the least that he can do is to acknowledge his wrong, and to work earnestly to restore both principal and interest to those whom he has defrauded. Among the publicans existed a confederacy, so that these men could oppress the people, and sustain one another in the fraudulent practices. Zacchaeus by his repentance and reformation protested against this confederacy. He restored fourfold to those whom he had oppressed. If we have wronged any one by taking away that which was justly his due, we should consider that it is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if it had been put to a wise and right use during the time it has been in our possession.

To Zacchaeus the Saviour said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Christ went to his home to abide with him, to give him lessons of truth, to instruct his household in the things of his kingdom. Salvation comes to the soul when Christ is received as a personal Saviour. The case of Zacchaeus was a most grateful token to Christ as he journeyed on his way. Tho the scribes and the Pharisees accused Zacchaeus of being a sinner, and murmured against Christ because he had condescended to be his guest, yet the Lord looked upon the matter in an altogether different light. Instead of denominating Zacchaeus a sinner, he recognized him as a "son of Abraham." He had made it manifest that he was worthy to be called a son of Abraham; for he resembled Abraham in character, and was full of faith, accepting Christ as his Saviour, as did also the "father of the faithful." Of himself Christ said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Those who had condemned others, who thought themselves beyond the need of repentance, were shown to be greater sinners than those they condemned. Those whom they accused would go into the kingdom of heaven, and those who thought themselves righteous, and who vindicated their own course, would be cast out. Jesus had come, as he said, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and those who receive him joyfully, will recognize the fact that salvation has come to their souls.

June 18, 1896

Christ the Medium of Blessing

When Christ came to the world, John says that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not." The Jewish nation had set up a standard of character that they deemed righteous, and they did not realize their need of the righteousness of Christ. They were self-deceived, as was the man who presented himself at the wedding feast not having on the wedding garment. The Jews did not appreciate the incomprehensible love of God in giving Christ to be our Mediator, and to be the representative of God to man. They did not appreciate the fact that Christ was our intercessor, invested with the fulness of divine love. They did not realize the necessity of an Advocate at the right hand of the Deity. Satisfied with their own self-righteousness, they would none of Jesus.

Shall any of us be as unappreciative as were the Jews, or shall we look upon Christ as a perfect specimen of our perfected humanity uniting in himself the attributes of Deity with our human nature? The only-begotten Son of God made manifest what humanity may become. In his sanctified human nature he revealed what man must be. Through him mercy was enabled to deal justly in punishing the transgressor of the law, and justice was enabled to forgive without losing its dignity or purity. At the cross mercy and truth embraced each other, righteousness and peace kissed each other. O, what a wonderful provision was made for man! How is it that we do not appreciate the heavenly gift? By the course that we individually pursue, we testify as to what value we place upon the golden privileges that are granted to us.

We should consider the fact that to Christ our nature was a robe of humiliation and suffering. He humbled himself to become a man, so that a body should be found, a Lamb without blemish should be provided as a sinless offering, that God might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Humanity was in union with divinity. What was the exceeding sorrow he bore, when, tho sinless, he took upon himself the mass of the guilt of the world? As we stand and view his cross and contemplate the amazing sacrifice of the only begotten of the Father, as we look upon the holy Sufferer, we realize something of the offensive character of sin, and at the same time have a feeble comprehension of the love of God for a fallen, apostate race.

God does not love us because he provided this great propitiation, but he so loved the world that he made the propitiation from the foundation of the world. He has made every provision whereby his grace and favor may come to man. But was the great sacrifice made in order that Adam's sin might be perpetuated, and the flood-gates of woe be ever left open upon our world?—No, it was to bring us back to our loyalty to God, to keep his commandments and live, and his law as the apple of our eye. Christ says, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Perfect obedience to the law of God is the test by which it is known that our love is perfect toward Christ. The Father reveals his love to Christ by receiving and welcoming the friends of Christ as his friends. The Father is fully satisfied with the atonement that Christ has made. He suffered the penalty of the law in order that man might have an opportunity to exercise repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In behalf of sinners Christ has borne hardships, insults, calumny, abuse, and misrepresentation. He was refused by those he came to save, rejected by his own nation. The Lord of glory was put to a most shameful death, and God himself was in Christ, suffering with his only-begotten Son, in order to reconcile the world unto himself. All this was done in order that fallen man might have another chance by which to redeem himself. Christ imputes his righteousness to the repentant, believing soul, and he who receives Christ becomes the friend of God. Humanity is glorified by the incarnation of Christ. Through the plan of salvation the divine government stands unimpeached, while salvation of penitent souls is secured.

In his prayer for his disciples Christ said: “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” In his prayer Christ includes all those who shall hear the words of life and salvation through the messengers whom he sends. We are to look with respect upon God's workmen, remembering that they are laborers together with God. The people of God through their union with Christ become one with each other. This is the object of their sanctification, “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

Can the human mind comprehend this statement? Can we by faith comprehend the fact that we are beloved by the Father even as the Son is beloved? Could we indeed lay hold of this and act up to it, we would indeed have the grace of Christ, the golden oil of heaven, poured into our poor, thirsty, parched souls. Our light would no longer be fitful and flickering, but would shine brightly amid the moral darkness that like a funeral pall is enveloping the world. We should by faith hear the prevailing intercession that Christ continually presents in our behalf, as he says: “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. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

We have an advocate at the throne of God, which is encircled by the bow of promise, and we are invited to present our petitions in the name of Christ before the Father. Jesus says: Ask what ye will in my name, and it shall be done unto you. In presenting my name, you bear witness that you belong to me, that you are my sons and daughters, and the Father will treat you as his own, and love you as he loveth me. Your faith in me will lead you to exercise close, filial affection toward me and the Father. I am the golden chain by which your heart and soul are bound in love and obedience to my Father. Express to my Father the fact that my name is dear to you, that you respect and love me, and you may ask what you will. He will pardon your transgressions, and adopt you into his royal family,—make you a child of God, a joint heir with his only begotten Son. Through faith in my name he will impart to you the sanctification and holiness which will fit you for his work in a world of sin, and qualify you for an immortal inheritance in his kingdom. The Father has thrown open, not only all heaven, but all his heart, to those who manifest faith in the sacrifice of Christ, and who through faith in the love of God, return unto their loyalty. Those who believe in Christ as the sin-bearer, the propitiation for their sins, the intercessor in their behalf, may through the riches of the grace of God, lay claim to the treasures 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? Jesus says, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

The summing up of the benefit of prayer is that devotion that leads to faith in God's promises. This faith is the key that opens the divine treasury, is the hand by which we appropriate to our use the richest gifts of God. The prayer of the contrite heart unlocks the treasure house of supplies, and lays hold of omnipotent power. This kind of prayer enables the suppliant to understand what it means to lay hold of the strength of God, and to make peace with him. This kind of prayer causes us to have an influence over those with whom we associate. The prayer of faith is not listless, dry, and uninteresting. It wells up from perfect trust and assurance, and by its fervor makes manifest to the world, to angels, and to men, that you do believe in God, and have made Christ your personal Saviour. The Lord Jehovah accepts the argument that is presented in the name of his Son, and places the resources of his merit at your command. It is our privilege and duty to bring the efficacy of the name of Christ into our petitions, and use the very arguments that Christ has used in our behalf. Our prayers will then be in complete harmony with the will of God. Then it is that Christ clothes the contrite suppliant with his own priestly vestments, and the human petitioner approaches the altar holding the holy censer, from which ascends the incense of the fragrance of the merit of Christ's righteousness.

Our Redeemer encourages us to present continual supplications. He makes to us most decided promises that we shall not plead in vain. He says: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” He then presents the picture of a child asking bread of its father, and shows how much more willing God is to grant our requests than a parent is to grant his child's petition. He says: “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an

egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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?"

Our precious Saviour is ours today. In him our hopes of eternal life are centered. He is the One who presents our petitions to the Father, and communicates to us the blessing for which we asked. He is the medium of prayer through which man speaks to God, and the medium through which God imparts blessing to humanity. He is the Intercessor and the Bestower. Herein is the love of God made manifest, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." God has given assurance upon assurance, heaped gift upon gift, multiplied grace upon grace, and imparted his divine treasures to humanity, in order that we may believe the love that God hath for us. Beholding this love, John exclaims, "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."

June 25, 1896

To Save Men's Lives

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." The disciples were to precede Christ, and prepare the way before him, as John had preceded and prepared his way. They were to preach the kingdom of God. They were to go two and two, and in this way pass over a large territory. The Lord was taking his last journey from Galilee toward Jerusalem. The disciples were not only to preach the kingdom of God, but were to heal the sick, and prepare the field for the coming of the great Physician. They were to proclaim his divine character, and awaken an interest in the minds of the people, announcing him to be the Messiah, and giving publicity to his work and mission.

These disciples were enjoined to salute no man by the way. They were not to enter into formal salutations that would open a way for controversy. The life of Christ was drawing to a close. They were to prepare the way for the last work that he was to do in person for the inhabitants of the world. He sent them forth empty-handed, to depend upon the hospitality of those whom they should meet. They were in no way to disguise their humble origin. As they mingled with the people, they were to sit with them at their tables, to go with those who should invite them, to pay no attention to caste or position. Their one object was to proclaim the Gospel to every man, no matter what might be the nation or character of his hearers. "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off." This circumstance happened just on the outskirts of the village. The ten men were a most distressing spectacle. The law prohibited a leper from entering towns or villages, and lest any one should come unexpectedly upon them, they were to utter the mournful cry, "Unclean! unclean!" These lepers were made up of Jews and Samaritans, and the prejudice that existed between them was broken down by this terrible malady, and, doomed to death, they associated together. The lepers were not ignorant of Jesus. They had heard of his wonderful works of mercy, and how he had healed those who were in the same condition as they were themselves. Recognizing the great Teacher and Healer, they raised their voices in a pitiful wail of distress, and cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." They were cut off from society, and presented themselves to Jesus as subjects of pity. His heart was stirred with divine compassion, and he said to them, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." When they heard this

word, they believed that it meant their restoration, and they hastened to obey. They knew that Jesus understood the law and how their disease had excluded them from society. It was necessary for a cleansed leper to have the testimony of a priest that he was clear of his plague, and to have his permission, in order again to associate freely with his fellow-men. They hastened to obey the word of Jesus; "and it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

Jesus was a helper to the helpless, a friend to the needy. He had daily manifested compassion and love for the human race. While he received the lowly, the sick, the poor, and the afflicted, he presented principles to the Pharisees, scribes, and rabbis that condemned their pride, their selfishness, and self-glorying. These bigoted teachers were filled with envy because the masses turned away from their instruction to listen to Jesus. They spoke evil of Christ and of his doctrine. They had it in their hearts to destroy him, but they knew not what they could do, because the people were very attentive to hear him. The greater good he wrought for the people, and the more they were led to glorify God on account of his mighty works, the more desperate and determined his enemies became. They said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him."

Those who thought themselves righteous and in need of nothing, rejected the word of Christ, yet the poor and afflicted received his assurances. The ten lepers went on their way in obedience to his command, and they knew that a great change had taken place in themselves, and that they were healed. Their faith had been tested by Christ's direction; but they did not defer a moment to act upon his word. If there was any prospect that they might be healed, they would make the venture. The tones of his voice had thrilled their hearts, and inspired them with hope, with faith and confidence. They were not only cleansed, but made entirely whole. Divine power had wrought a new creation.

When they presented themselves to the priest, he declared that they were free from every taint of leprosy. One of the number was filled with joy and thankfulness, and determined to return and to find the wonderful Healer, in order to give him thanks for the restoration. He came rejoicing at every step, and with a loud voice he glorified God. When he came into the presence of Christ, he fell upon his face, and with an overflowing heart expressed the love and gratitude which he felt. This man who returned to give praise to Christ was a stranger, a Samaritan. His nation was despised and hated by the Jews. Christ had healed of the leprosy men who were Jews, but none of the nine returned to glorify God on behalf of his work for them. This Samaritan believed in Christ as the Redeemer of both soul and body. He made manifest the fact that he was more susceptible to the grace of God, and more appreciative of divine love, than were the other nine. Jesus called the attention of his disciples to the fact that he was a Samaritan, and said: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

The disciples of Christ, as Jews, had been educated to hate the Samaritans, and this was a lesson that would be of great benefit to them in their future experience. Jesus would have them understand that there were many precious souls among the Samaritans who would not refuse to come to the Gospel feast. This Samaritan that had returned to give praise to God was no mean citizen, and he would prove an effective witness for Christ. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, he would bear decided witness that Christ was the Son of God. He would repeat the story of

his restoration, and with a heart full of intense love and interest, he would say to those with whom he came in contact, "Will you believe in Jesus?" It was testimonies of this kind that turned men from the established teachings and endless repetitions and worthless traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. Unlearned men testified to the power of Christ, and spoke boldly of the grace of God, and their glowing testimonies were placed in sharp contrast to the heartless, exacting ritual of the Pharisees. And the people were constrained to say that these men had been with Jesus, and had learned of him.

(Concluded next week.)

July 2, 1896

To Save Men's Lives

(Concluded.)

The leper that returned to give glory to God was rewarded for his faith and gratitude. But how sad it is that only one of the ten appreciated the blessing that was bestowed upon them! In every age God has poured out his blessings upon men, and has healed and restored them as he healed the ten lepers. But how often the proportion of those who recognize and appreciate God's mercies is even less than one to ten! The nine did not report themselves, but went on their way, satisfied that they were restored. They did not give honor to God, and to Jesus Christ, whom he had sent to be their healer. The Lord works continually to benefit mankind. He is continually imparting his bounties. He raises up the sick from beds of languishing, he delivers men from peril which they do not see; he commissions heavenly angels to save men from calamity, to guard them from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and from the destruction that wasteth at noonday, but their hearts are unimpressed. They do not consider God's blessings, they do not rejoice in his love. They center all their thoughts upon themselves. They do not appreciate Christ's pitying tenderness and matchless love. Only a few discern that their blessings are the result of the never-failing mercies of God through Jesus Christ; but those who do discern this fact, make melody in their hearts to God, and, as did the cleansed leper, they offer to him a tribute of praise and thanksgiving.

There are many who claim that Jesus has cleansed them from the leprosy of sin. But how few continue to offer a tribute of praise, ascribing glory to God! The great gift that God has bestowed upon the world in his only-begotten Son, calls for as hearty a response of love and gratitude as that which fell from the lips of the Samaritan, who returned to give God glory. When our human friends bestow upon us gifts and favors, we feel an inclination to manifest gratitude, and to return gifts and favors to them. But how indifferent and careless, how unappreciative, are the hearts of men of the love of God! How little men seem to think of the blessings that are showered upon them by our kind heavenly Father! The Lord asked, "Where is my glory and my praise for the boundless love I have shown to men?" It is impossible for God to give a greater manifestation of his tender compassion and benevolent love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All heaven was comprised in that one gift. It is through the merits of the gift of Christ that we receive all our mercies. We may rejoice with heart and soul and voice as we partake of our daily food; for it is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

In the councils of heaven the Lord planned to reshape the broken, perverted characters of man, and to restore to them the moral image of God. This work is termed the mystery of godliness. Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, assumed human nature, came in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. He came to testify to the unchangeable character of the law of God that had been impeached by Satan. Not one jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. Christ lived the law in humanity, in order that every mouth might be stopped, and that Satan might be proved an accuser and a liar. Christ revealed to the world the character of God as full of mercy, compassion and inexpressible love. He came to lift up man. It was provided that whosoever should believe in Christ as his personal Saviour should be saved. In all his works he taught men that it was his mission not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Through the plan of salvation, power was to operate in the re-creation of man. The remedy for the sinner was of a supernatural character. It was not essential that fallen man should understand the philosophy of the scheme of redemption, or comprehend how divinity and humanity were united in Christ. It was not essential that doctors of divinity, that men of learning, should be able through worldly wisdom to unfold all that pertained to the grand scheme of redemption. It was made plain that it was essential that fallen man should believe in the word of God, and obey to the letter his commandments. The word of God may be compared to a treasure-house, and the more we search it, the more we find its hidden riches. Here we may behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It is in the word of God that we find encouragement to turn our eyes to Christ, to lift up our voice in hope and expectation, saying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." It is in the word of God that we find what is the effectual remedy for the leprosy of sin. Here it is that we see the ransom that has been provided, hear the gracious invitation, and look upon the mercy of God, that has no parallel, toward those who are rebels and enemies.

As messengers that are chosen of God, we are to herald the glad news of salvation, and earnestly co-operate with him in saving perishing souls. We should seek to lead those who are bound in the slavery of sin, to accept the costly sacrifice that heaven has made for man. The conditions upon which salvation is assured are plain and simple, so that the wayfaring man need not err therein. To neglect or reject these conditions is to lose all hope of salvation. God alone is able to say on what terms fallen, rebellious man may be saved. How foolish it is for men to spend their energies in seeking to climb up some other way than that way which is so simple and so easy to be understood that the most illiterate may take advantage of its provisions. Professed theologians seem to take pleasure in making that which is plain, mysterious. They clothe the simple teachings of God's word with their own dark reasonings, and thus confuse the minds of those who listen to their doctrines. Let the Lord explain what he would have the sinner do to inherit eternal life. He has furnished ample provision for his salvation, for he gave himself in Christ. He provided a salvation as full and complete as was the offering full and complete. A lawyer came to Christ asking what he should do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus said unto him, "What is written in 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."

The lawyer spoke just as he was convicted, and Christ confirmed him in his interpretation of the law. "And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." How beautiful was this truth in its simplicity! This is what God requires of us. Through faith in Jesus Christ as our substitute, surety, and righteousness, we may lay hold upon divine power, so that the righteousness

of the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The keeping of God's commandments is an evidence of our faith in Christ as our divine Saviour. John says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." Again he writes, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

July 9, 1896

Greatness in Humility

"Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again."

He spoke these words to his disciples as he was taking his last journey toward Jerusalem. Luke speaks of this conversation, and gives it in more detail. He says: "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

The disciples of Christ could not believe that Christ should be treated with such contempt, that men should scourge him, and put him to death. They expected that he would set up a temporal kingdom, that he would sit upon David's throne, and reign as a temporal prince in Jerusalem, bringing all nations into subjection to his will. Altho Christ plainly told them what would be his fate, they were not prepared to change their ideas. They were unwilling to believe the disagreeable truths that he opened to them, were unwilling to give up the thought that Christ would be a conqueror. They would not harbor the idea that he would be rejected and treated as a slave by his enemies. Not believing the words of Christ, they did not comprehend the words of the prophets, and thought them out of harmony with the words of Christ. We marvel that they could not comprehend these things; for as we stand this side of the cross, we see clearly how the predictions of prophets were fulfilled to the letter. Because they did not believe the words that Christ spoke to them (and he always spoke truth and never deceived them), they were unprepared for the trying scenes through which they were called to pass.

Jesus plainly revealed to them the fact that he was to be rejected and crucified, and yet, clinging to their idea of a temporal kingdom, the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, came to him, "worshiping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." Had they comprehended the statement which Christ had made to them concerning his death, their hearts would have been too deeply moved to make such a request. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. Then he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized

with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

They were to be partakers with Christ in his sufferings. All who follow Christ will deny self, will share in his humiliation, will suffer affliction and persecution, and be hated of all men for his name's sake. James was killed with a sword by Herod, and John's life would have been extinguished if God had not kept his light burning to be a faithful witness of his personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. But if the words of Christ had been rightly comprehended, they would have understood what he meant when he said that to sit on his right hand and on his left was not his to give, but would be given to those for whom it is prepared by his Father. Those who would be thus distinguished in the kingdom of God, would be prepared for these places by manifesting the love of Christ, by giving to the world in their own character a representation of his character. “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath.” He that employs his God-given abilities in improving the opportunities sent to him, will have light proportionate to his faithfulness, and because he hath, he shall have more abundantly. But if the capabilities that God has intrusted to men are not used, their abilities will diminish, and because they are slothful servants, and do not make an application of their talents to the service of God, they will become less and less qualified to do his work. Their light will diminish, and they will cultivate the powers by which they scatter away from Christ. They will lose all that is good, and be unfitted to take a place in the courts of heaven. Because they have failed to improve their privileges, they will lose soul, body, and spirit. Their loss will be the natural result of their course of action; for he who works against God can have no place in his kingdom.

The request that was made for the exaltation of John and James in the kingdom of Christ, will be granted, if they so improved their talents in the service of God as to fit them for that place. But John and James were on test and trial, and if they proved true, if they held fast the faith once delivered to the saints, they would have the position that the Father had prepared for them, and the position would be according to their unselfish fidelity in using the talents God had intrusted to them in the service of Christ. Each one of us will be dealt with according to the same rule. Shall we not all take the lesson to heart? The way in which we use the Lord's intrusted talents will make a decided difference as to what shall be our future, eternal reward. Those who feel under obligation to God to improve every talent he has lent them to his glory, will be rewarded in proportion to their faithful zeal in his service. Those who misapply the precious talents God has given, who, instead of using them for God's glory, make them serve selfish purposes, will be rewarded as was the man in the parable who went and hid his Lord's money in the earth. Those who are careless, indolent, selfish, who think more of their own exaltation than they do of the honor of God, will not be found keeping the first four and the last six commandments, and can not be rewarded as those will be rewarded who have manifested pure devotion in the service of God. The record of our lives is accurately kept by the recording angel, and we shall each be rewarded according as our works have been. There will be many who will be greatly surprised in the last day. Jesus says, “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

July 16, 1896

Before Honor is Humility

God had signally blessed the Jews, and they had been unfaithful to their trust; tho professing to be the people of God, they would have no place in the kingdom of heaven. They had been made the depository of sacred truth; they had had light far in advance of any other nation on the face of the earth, and yet by misappropriating the great gifts lent to them in trust, by dishonoring and misrepresenting God, by becoming self-righteous and self-important, they had lost the precious graces of the Spirit of God, and were wholly unfit for the heavenly courts. They had not honored God, therefore God could not honor them. They had counted other people as unworthy to associate with them. They had despised them, and fully believed that they themselves would go into heaven before others. But those whom they despised, who made a more faithful use of their privileges, would be accepted to God, and would enter heaven, to sit down with distinguished men who did not reject the world's Redeemer, or cast contempt upon the law of Jehovah.

The words that Christ spoke to John and James, recorded in Matthew 20:21, 22, contain a deep, unchangeable truth. Tho they did not understand its full significance when it was spoken to them, they afterward appreciated its meaning; for the Holy Spirit enlightened their minds. These words are written for our instruction as well as theirs. We are in the same danger as were those who supposed that they were the very favorites of heaven, who supposed that Christ had come to exalt the Jews as a nation, and to break the yoke of bondage under which they groaned with such a sense of humiliation. They excluded the gentiles from any participation in the kingdom of God; but Jesus distinctly told them that many who were called heathen would be saved, while those who had neglected to improve their rich opportunities, and who did not appreciate the treasures of truth, would be cast into outer darkness.

If we would be children of God in deed and in truth, we must seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and decide that we will be doers of the words of Christ, that we will obey God rather than men. We are to honor human agencies in whom we see the loveliness of Christ's character, but we are not to dishonor God, and him who was the Sent of God, by giving to men flattering titles. The greatest Teacher the world ever knew left no example of this character for us to follow. He did not call any fallible, sinful man by a title that belongs alone to God. No human being heard the title of reverend or right reverend from his lips as applied to man. Our highest honor is our humility. Christ, who was the most exalted among men and angels, bids us to learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. Those who took high titles to themselves, were rebuked by Christ as hypocrites. He said that they would not enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves nor permit others to do so. They made great pretensions, and presented themselves before the people as those who had superior knowledge of the Scriptures, but Christ said of them that they were ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. He said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Pharisees sought in every way to destroy the force of the truth, and to eclipse the light of God from the view of the people. Professing to be representatives of God, under the garb of religion, they committed the grossest transgressions. Christ came to represent the Father, and therefore they were stirred with enmity against him, and were determined to put him out of the way. Christ placed the principles of the Gospel before the minds of his disciples and the people in order that they might

see how great was the contrast between the spirit of true religion and that of the religion professed by the Pharisees.

John and James, who made the request that they might sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Christ in his kingdom, did not make this request in the spirit that many have thought they did. They both loved Christ, and desired to be as close as possible to his person. It was customary for John to take his position next to the Saviour at every possible opportunity. James also longed to be honored with as close a connection with Christ as John desired. But when the ten heard of the request that had been made, "they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." Jesus called his disciples to him, and said: "Ye know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." This means that those who would be great in the church of God must act as true shepherds in his church. They are to follow the example that Christ has given. "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Mind of Christ

Jesus did not come to earth with outward pomp and display. His works of divine love and mercy were to testify to his divine origin and character. Those who would not receive him because of his outward humility, would be of no value to the Saviour, no blessing to humanity. He clothed his divinity with humanity, and yet he did not require that any one should minister unto him. He came to labor for others. He ever strove to do men good; he provided for their necessities. Among his disciples he was in every sense a care-taker, a burden-bearer. He shared their poverty. He practiced self-denial on their account. He went before them to smooth the more difficult places, and now he was nearing the time when he would consummate his work for men on earth by laying down his life. He paid his life as the price for our redemption.

The lessons given to the disciples of Christ, are full of significance, and present most profitable instruction for us who believe. We are not to act after the manner, precept, or example of men who are in authority in earthly positions, but to minister to others, to be servants to all, "even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The kingdom of God is established on different principles than are the kingdoms of this world. There is to be no rank among the servants of Christ. Christ says, "All ye are brethren." The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the bond, and the free are equally God's heritage, and he who is most exalted in the sight of God is he who has most genuine humility, the deepest sense of his unworthiness, the greatest realization of his dependence upon God. Those who truly love God, truly love their fellow-men. They constantly seek to do good to all those who are connected with them. They are laborers together with God.

Christ did not reprove John and James and their mother for offering this request to sit upon his right hand and upon his left hand in the kingdom. In presenting the principles of love that should actuate them in their dealings one with another, he presents to the indignant disciples the instruction that he would have them practice in their daily lives. They were to take his life as an example, and follow in his steps. The apostle presents this matter before us also in its true light, and says: "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; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

Christ lived the law. He copied no human model, he drew no lessons from the maxims that guided the world. He was the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person. He thought it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God, and yet there was not one act of oppression in his whole life. He bore patiently with Judas. Judas condemned himself in betraying his Lord, gave himself up to the enemy, passed sentence upon himself, and put himself to death. How tenderly Jesus dealt with Peter; tho he denied him three times, yet he looked upon Peter with sorrowful regret, with pardoning love! It was that look that broke the heart of the disciple. Let us look upon the spotless life of Christ, appreciate his unstained purity of character, and pray earnestly, "Be thou my pattern."

Christ was ever touched with human woe. He healed the sick. He worked miracles. He condescended to go to those who could not come to him. He raised the dead. And yet he bore with meekness and patience the charge that he cast out devils through the prince of devils. He denounced every abomination in the land. His own spotless, untainted purity put to shame every evil practice. It was this character that showed up in contrast the character of those who were deceiving the people and lording it over God's heritage. His lips were free from all guile; zeal for God's honor was unceasingly apparent in his life, and yet the most inveterate hatred was aroused against the only-begotten Son of God, who hated sin alone, yet loved the sinner. Satan could find nothing in Christ by which to lead him from the path of rectitude. Judas declared, "I have betrayed innocent blood." Pilate, who condemned him, said, "I find no fault in him." But, tho spotless, tho blameless, he was delivered to be crucified. Shall we who have been purchased by the blood of Christ complain of hardships? shall we for whom Christ has died oppress one another? Shall we who are mortal, erring men, heap reproach upon those who are mortal, erring men like ourselves? Shall we think it too great a disgrace to suffer reproach for the name of Christ?—God forbid. Let us go without the camp, and, if required, bear reproach cheerfully, gladly, for Christ's sake. If we have found Christ precious to our souls, then we owe it to Jesus to tell others of his preciousness, to lead them to understand what they shall do to inherit eternal life. We have received much of heaven; we are to impart much of heaven. We are to make known the ways of Christ upon earth.

July 23, 1896

"Come Unto Me, and Drink"

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The solemn and joyous ceremonies were carrying the people to the highest state of enthusiasm, when the clear, melodious voice of Jesus was heard among that immense throng of all classes and grades of society. Some, the priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, were full of prejudice and bitterness. Some were scoffing, and some planning how they could compass the death of Christ; yet this great and wonderful ceremonial had been instituted by himself, and was a representation of his mission.

As Jesus looked upon that vast congregation, he read the heart sorrow beneath the outward display of joyous exultation. He saw many whose souls were parched as the desert, many overwearyed by participation in the great ceremonial pointing to himself. How he longed to pour into their heart the current of his love! Many were almost fainting from weariness, but that voice, unlike any other, fell upon the ear in soothing accents, "If any man thirst," for assurance of truth, for restful hope, for deliverance from sinful propensities, "let him come unto me, and drink." He need not go to the priests or rabbis, but let him come unto me. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" When he should ascend to the Father, then the Comforter which the Saviour promised to send would come. Jesus promised to manifest himself through the Holy Spirit to every individual who shall seek him and believe on him.

The attention of the people was arrested. That clear, penetrating voice conveyed his words to the farthest bounds of the congregation. What effect did they have?—"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Unbelief arose in many minds, because they were reasoning upon false pretenses. In their ignorance they had received hearsay, and supposed that Jesus had been born in Galilee. But he was born in Bethlehem. Some of the priests and rulers would have taken him, but they dared not lay hands on him in so public a manner. The people were not of the same mind as the priests and rulers. The latter sent officers to take Jesus, and stop that voice which was awakening so great an interest in that immense gathering. The officers came into the Saviour's presence; they heard his words, they looked upon his face, and it was as if glorified. His words spoke directly to their hearts, and they forgot their errand, and returned without Jesus. The priests and rulers asked, "Why have ye not brought him?" The answer came promptly, "Never man spake like this man."

It seemed to them that a halo of light was round about him, as tho he was surrounded by the glory of God. They stood in his presence filled with awe and reverence. Take him?—No; impressions were made on the minds of these hardened officers that were never effaced.

The Pharisees on first coming into the presence of Christ had felt all this reverence, all these convictions; their minds and hearts were deeply moved. With almost irresistible power the conviction was forced upon them that "never man spake like this man." Had they yielded to the Spirit's influence, they would have received Jesus, and would have advanced from light to a greater light; but they wrapped their robes of self-righteousness about them, and trampled down the convictions of conscience. The Pharisees answered the officers with scorn and contempt: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Here was one who was the very foundation of the Jewish ceremonies, one who made the law, one who on Mount Sinai proclaimed the law, one who knew every phase and principle of the law. But he was unrecognized and unacknowledged by the leaders in Israel.

Nicodemus, who went to Christ by night, had received light. The lessons of Christ were as seed dropped into the heart, to spring up and bear fruit. A light had been kindled that would increase and shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day. The words of Nicodemus carried weight with the

rulers and Pharisees; for he was chief ruler among the people, and stood high in the Sanhedrin. He said, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" They answered him with bitter derision, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Had he not been searching the prophecies? had he not heard Christ himself? He could have testified, with the officers sent to arrest Jesus, "Never man spake like this man." The lesson given that night to Nicodemus was for him as a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in the heart. Who were the deceived ones?—The men who stifled conviction, who turned away their ears from hearing the truth, and were turned unto fables.

History is being repeated. In our day we meet the same false reasoning among the rulers and the ministers as the people met when Christ was upon the earth. We need to consider the words of Christ. "Take heed that no man deceive you." The Jews were deceiving themselves. It was not because of a lack of light and evidence that Christ was not received, and believed, and honored as the Messiah; it was the malignity and jealousy and prejudice that bound so large a number with its cruel power. Minds clouded with prejudice, warped with envy and unholy passion, will not come to the word of God for their decision. Those who sat in Moses' seat instilled into the minds of the people their false interpretations of Scripture. The truth was buried beneath their own doctrines and maxims and traditions. They taught the people that Christ was to appear as a great conqueror to break the Roman yoke from off the nation. They could not bring their proud hearts to believe the prophecies.

It was too humbling to their proud hearts to accept one who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They received that part of the prophecy which foretold one who was to shine before his ancients gloriously, who was to reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. As there was no outward show of a conqueror in Jesus, they turned their faces from him, they resisted his words, and worked by every conceivable means to counteract his influence. Thus they fulfilled the very prophecy that pointed to him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Jesus did the works of God, healing the sick, feeding thousands by a miracle, treading the white-capped billows to reach his disciples in the tempest-tossed boat. When Peter, looking away from Jesus to the waves, was sinking, the cry of distress was heard "Lord save, or I perish." That imploring cry reached the ears of him who is infinite in compassion. Jesus would save to the uttermost the poor, trembling, imperiled soul. In the night storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was awakened by the cry of his disciples, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" O, if at the beginning of the storm they had only awakened to the fact that Jesus was on board, they need not have worked so long with terror-stricken hearts! But when they cried to him for help, how quickly his word of power, "Peace, be still," quieted the storm. Prophecy was fulfilling in all the events of the life of Christ, from the manger to the cross. The conviction is forced upon the unprejudiced student of the Bible that Jesus in human flesh is the only-begotten Son of the Father. He is that rock which was smitten in the desert by the rod of Moses, and from which streams of pure water gushed forth.

And on the last great day of the feast he addressed the weary, the homesick, sin-sick souls, many longing to understand the Lord and his ways, many disappointed and perplexed—to them comes the musical voice of invitation, clear, decided, positive, and with convincing power of love, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so has the Son of man been lifted up, that whosoever looks unto him in faith, may not perish, but have everlasting life. Look to Jesus, uplifted on the cross. When the serpent was lifted upon the pole in the camp of Israel, the proclamation went forth that all who were bitten by the fiery serpents were to look to that brazen symbol; and whoever looked was immediately healed. The people were not to reason how this was possible, not to question wherein was the virtue to make them whole. They were to do exactly as they were bidden. Those who stopped to reason, died. Just so we are to look to Jesus; sinful, erring, weak, unworthy, we are to take the word of God, the invitation of Christ: "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."

July 30, 1896

Child Life of Jesus

Jesus was the Commander of heaven, one equal with God, and yet he condescended to lay aside his kingly crown, his royal robe, and clothed his divinity with humanity. The incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery. He could have come to earth as one with a remarkable appearance, unlike the sons of men. His countenance could have shone with glory, and his form could have been of remarkable grace. He could have presented such an appearance as to charm the beholder; but this was not according to the plan devised in the courts of God. He was to bear the characteristics of the human family, and the Jewish race. In all respects the Son of God was to wear the same features as did other human beings. He was not to have such beauty of person as would make him singular among men. He was to manifest no wonderful charms by which to attract attention to himself. He came as a representative of the human family before heaven and earth. He was to stand as man's substitute and surety. He was to live the life of humanity in such a way as to contradict the assertion that Satan had made that humanity was his everlasting possession, and that God himself could not take man out of his adversary's hands.

Christ appeared upon the scene as a babe, as a child, having no extra advantages in the world. He came of poor parentage, he had no privileges that the poor have not known. He experienced the difficulties that the poor and lowly experience from babyhood to childhood, from youth to manhood. There is a mystery surrounding the birth of Christ that can not and need not be explained. Nearly two thousand years ago a voice strange and mysterious was heard in heaven, proceeding from the throne of God, and saying: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." God manifest in the flesh came to our world, being justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind can not comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, he in whom was the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity

and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in him the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person.

Christ lived the life of a toiler from his earliest years. In his youth he worked with his father at the carpenter's trade, and thus honored all labor. Tho he was the King of glory, yet by his practice of following a humble employment, he rebuked idleness in every member of the human family, and dignified all labor as noble and Christlike. Those who indulge in idleness depart from the lesson that Christ has given in his example for all humanity. From childhood he was a pattern of obedience and industry. He was as a pleasant sunbeam in the home circle. Faithfully and cheerfully he acted his part in doing the humble duties that his lowly calling required. As the world's Redeemer, he had chosen a most humble position. He had clothed his divinity with humanity in order that he might be able to reach humanity. He could sympathize with the poor; for he understood the inconveniences of poverty. He himself had shared the burdens of the lowly. The world's Redeemer did not live a life of selfish ease and pleasure. He did not choose a position that would bring to him the praise and flattery of men. He knew by experience the hardships of those who toil for their living, and could comfort and encourage all humble workers. The record of the history of the humble labor of his life of burden bearing, is written for our admonition and comfort. Those who have a true conception of the life of Christ, can never feel that they must make a distinction between classes, and set up the wealthy as superior to the lowly poor. The King of glory lived a life of toil.

It is written of Jesus in childhood that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." When only twelve years of age, he made manifest the fact that his mind was developing along spiritual lines. His parents went to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the Passover, and in his twelfth year Jesus accompanied them to the city. "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance; and when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." For three days they sought him anxiously; for they were awakened to a sense of the responsibility of the charge that God had placed upon them. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

His parents listened in amazement as they heard his searching inquiries. Jesus was taking advantage of the providential occasion that had opened to him to diffuse light. He had led the rabbis and teachers to speak of the prophecies concerning the appearing of Messiah. They had presented their view of the matter, speaking of the wonderful elevation that this blessing would bring to the Jewish nation; but Jesus presented the prophecy of Isaiah, asking them the meaning of those scriptures that brought to view the humiliation, suffering, and death of the Son of God. Tho taking the attitude of a learner, Christ imparted light in every word he uttered. He interpreted the Scripture to the darkened mind of the rabbis, and gave them clear light in regard to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. The sharp, clear questions of the child learner brought a flood of light to their darkened understanding. The truth shone out as the clear shining of a light in a darkened place, as he received and imparted the knowledge of the plan of salvation.

It is plainly stated that Christ grew in knowledge. What a lesson is found in this incident in the life of Christ for all youth! If they shall diligently search the word of God, and through the Holy Spirit receive divine guidance, they will be able to impart light to others. By communicating the grace given them, new grace will be imparted from Heaven. The more the human agent communicates to others the riches of the grace of Christ, the more clear and vigorous will become his understanding, and the more richly will the grace of God abide in his own heart. If the youth will remain as humble as did the child Jesus, they will become channels of light.

The doctors and the wise men were amazed at the question of the child Jesus, and, desiring to encourage such a student of the prophecies, they sought to draw out the knowledge he had obtained. Joseph and Mary were as much astonished, as they heard the wise answers of their Son, as were the learned men themselves. When there was a pause in the conversation, Mary, the mother of Jesus, approached her Son, and asked, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Divine light shone through humanity as Jesus lifted his right hand, and asked, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." They did not comprehend the true meaning of his words. But, tho he was the Son of God, he went down with his parents and came unto Nazareth, and was subject unto them. And, tho his mother did not understand at that time the meaning of his words, yet "she kept all these sayings in her heart."

At the age of twelve the Holy Spirit was abiding upon Jesus, and he felt something of the burden of the mission for which he had come to our world. His soul was stirred into action. As one who would learn, he asked questions of no ordinary character, by which he flashed light into the minds of his hearers, and brought them to an understanding of the prophecies and the true mission and work of the Messiah they were expecting. The Jewish people were cherishing erroneous ideas. They were anticipating grand and wonderful things, hoping for their own personal exaltation above the nations of the earth at the Messiah's appearing. They were looking for the glory that will attend the second coming of Christ, and overlooking the humiliation that would attend his first advent. But Jesus, in his questions about the prophecies of Isaiah that pointed to his first appearing, flashed light into the minds of those who were willing to receive the truth. He himself had given these prophecies before his incarnation in humanity, and as the Holy Spirit brought these things to his mind, and impressed him with regard to the great work that he was to accomplish, he imparted light and knowledge to those around him.

Tho he increased in knowledge, and the grace of God was upon him, yet he did not become lifted up in pride, or feel that he was above doing the most humble toil. He took his share of the burden, together with his father, mother, and brethren. He toiled to sustain the family, and shared in the work that would meet the expenses of the household. Tho his wisdom had astonished the doctors, yet he meekly subjected himself to his human guardians, bore his part in the family burdens, and worked with his own hands as any toiler would work. It is stated of Jesus that (as he advanced in years) he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The knowledge he was daily obtaining of his wonderful mission did not disqualify him for performing the most humble duties. He cheerfully took up the work that devolves upon youth who dwell in humble households pressed by poverty. He understood the temptations of children; for he bore their sorrows and trials. Firm and steadfast was his purpose to do the right. Tho enticed to evil, he

refused to depart in a single instance from the strictest truth and rectitude. He maintained perfect filial obedience; but his spotless life aroused the envy and jealousy of his brethren. His childhood and youth were anything but smooth and joyous. His brethren did not believe on him, and were annoyed because he did not in all things act as they did, and become one of them in the practice of evil. In his home life he was cheerful, but never boisterous. He ever maintained the attitude of a learner. He took great delight in nature, and God was his teacher.

August 6, 1896

Child Life of Jesus—No. 2

In the child life of Jesus the condition of society began to open to his mind, as he saw the great contrast between the practices of men and the teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures. When reproved for his simple habits and practices, he presented the word of God as a justification of his actions; but his brethren charged him with supposing himself superior to them, and reproved him for setting himself up above their teachers, and the priests and rulers of the people. He knew that if he obeyed the word of God, it would be impossible to find rest and peace in the home circle among his brethren. He had a deep and growing knowledge concerning the erroneous ideas, customs, and traditions which were increasing among men, and bringing about a decrease of piety, simplicity, and truth. Men were departing from the Scriptures and giving heed to the doctrines of men. He saw the people following superstitious rites which possessed no virtue. He looked upon men engaging in a service that was a mere round of ceremony, in which, by human tradition, the sacred truth was hidden from the worshiper. He knew that in their faithless services they could find neither peace, rest, nor satisfaction. They could not know the freedom of spirit that would come to them by serving God in truth.

Jesus was a nonconformist, and did not always remain a silent spectator to men's erroneous practices. His clear penetration in distinguishing between the false and the true, greatly annoyed his brethren, who held to the traditions of men. They insisted that the traditions of the rabbis must be heeded, as tho they were the requirements of God. He taught by precept and example that religious service should be divested of all human inventions; but his non-performance of the things which the rabbis prescribed, and which were not according to divine directions, was a source of annoyance to his brethren, to the Pharisees, and the priests.

When they sought to bring Jesus to accept the minute human inventions, maxims, and traditions, that they claimed came from the ancient rabbis, he asked them for their authority in Holy Writ. He told them that he would heed every word that proceeded from the mouth of God; but that he would not proceed to obey the inventions of men. He pointed out to them the fact that it was evident that through their traditions and inventions, they were exalting the word of men above the word of God. The rabbis knew that they had no authority in Holy Scripture for demanding his obedience to their traditions; they realized that in spiritual understanding and practice he was far in advance of them; and yet they were angry because he would not implicitly obey their dictates. Failing to convince him that human tradition was to be considered sacred, they sought Joseph and Mary, and set before them his course of non-compliance to their traditions and customs.

Jesus knew what it was to have his family divided against him on account of his religious faith. He loved peace, he craved the love and confidence of the members of the family, but he knew what it

was to have their affections alienated from him. Because he pursued a straightforward course, and would not conform to the practices of men, but was true to the requirements of Jehovah, he suffered rebuke and censure. His brethren reproved him for standing aloof from the ceremonies that were taught by the rabbis; for they regarded the traditions of men more highly than the word of God. Jesus made the Scriptures, which were read in the synagogues, his constant study, and when the scribes and Pharisees sought to enforce upon him their rigid exactions, they found him thoroughly furnished with the word of God. They could prevail nothing against him. He seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and presented them in their true import. They were ashamed to be worsted by a child, who they claimed ought to obey every injunction, and not show disrespect to their traditions and maxims. They claimed that it was their business to explain the Scriptures, and that it was his place to accept their interpretation. They were indignant that this child should stand in opposition to their word when it was their calling to study and explain the Scriptures.

The scribes, rabbis, and Pharisees could not force Jesus to neglect the word of God, and follow the traditions of men; but they influenced his brethren to make his life a bitter one. His brethren threatened him, and sought to intimidate him, and to compel him to take a wrong course; but he passed on, making the Scriptures his guide. From the time his parents found him in the temple asking and answering the questions among the doctors, his course of action was a mystery to them. He would not enter into controversy, yet his example was a constant lesson. He seemed as one who was set apart. Whenever it was possible he went out alone to contemplate the scenes of nature, and to commune with the God of nature. Whenever it was his privilege, he turned aside from the scene of his labor and responsibility to go into the field, to wander by the lakeside, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountain side or amid the trees of the forest. He would return to his home to take up again the humble duties, and to give an example of patient labor.

Jesus loved the society of children, and he exerted a great influence over them. The poor and the needy were objects of his special attention. In every gentle, tender, and submissive way, he sought to please those with whom he came in contact. But tho so gentle and submissive, nothing could induce him to practice ceremonies, to follow maxims and customs, that led away from the word of God. Some admired his perfection of character and often sought his company. But those who accepted the sayings of men as the word of God, when they saw his non-conformity to the traditions of men, turned away from him, and avoided his presence.

Throughout his childhood and youth, he manifested the perfection of character that marked his after life. He grew in wisdom and knowledge. As he witnessed the sacrificial offerings, the Holy Spirit taught him that his life was to be sacrificed for the life of the world. He grew up as a tender plant, not in the large and noisy city, that is full of confusion and strife, but in the retired valleys among the hills. He was guarded from his earliest years by heavenly angels, yet his life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness. Satanic agencies combined with human instrumentalities to make his life one of temptation and trial. Through supernatural agencies, his words, which were life and salvation to all who received and practiced them, were perverted and misinterpreted.

Because his life was free from all taint of sin, and condemned all impurity, he was opposed both at home and abroad. His hours of happiness were found when communing with nature and with

nature's God. Because he conformed to a "Thus saith the Lord" with such fidelity, he presented a marked contrast to those who were around him, and many felt rebuked by his stainless life, and avoided his presence. But there were some who sought his society, feeling at peace in his presence, because he never contended for his rights. Tho he loved his brethren, yet they hated him, and manifested the most decided unbelief and contempt. In his home life, where all should have been at peace, he was constantly confronted by envy and jealousy. His labors were made unnecessarily severe because he was willing and uncomplaining. He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when he was roughly used, but bore insult patiently, and in his human nature became an example for all children and youth. He endured the heat and the cold, the sun and the rain, of his native hills and valleys.

The life of Christ was marked with respect, devotion, and love for his mother. She often remonstrated with him, and sought to have him concede to the wishes of his brethren. His brethren could not persuade him to change his habits of life in contemplating the works of God, in manifesting sympathy and tenderness toward the poor, the suffering, and the unfortunate, and in seeking to alleviate the sufferings of both men and dumb animals. When the priests and rulers came to Mary to persuade her to force Jesus to give allegiance to their ceremonies and traditions, she felt much troubled. But peace and confidence came to her troubled heart as her Son presented the clear statements of the Scriptures in upholding his practices. At times she wavered between Jesus and his brethren, who did not believe that he was the Sent of God. But evidence was powerful and abundant that his was a divine character. She saw him sacrificing himself for the good of others. She saw him meeting the people where they were. She saw him constantly growing in grace and knowledge, and in favor with God and man. His life was as leaven working amid the elements of society. Harmless and undefiled, he walked amid the careless, the thoughtless, the rude, the uncourteous; amid the unjust publicans, the reckless prodigals, the unrighteous Samaritans, the heathen soldiers, the rough peasants, and the mixed multitudes. All were objects of his compassion. He addressed himself to them, not to upbraid and discourage, not to utter words unwisely, but to present lessons from his childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, that would be a savor of life unto life to those who should believe.

He treated every human being as possessed of value. He taught men to look upon themselves as endowed with precious talents, that, if rightly employed, would elevate and ennoble them, and secure for them eternal riches. By his example and character, he taught that every moment of life was fraught with eternal results. From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, his life was the outworking of the standard of righteousness. He weeded life from all vanities, and taught that it was to be cherished as a treasure, and to be employed for holy purposes. He taught that the character was precious, and that every moment of life was to be passed in the service of God, was to be as saving salt, to preserve society from moral corruption. Christ passed by no human being as worthless and hopeless, but sought to apply the saving remedy to every soul who needed help. In whatever company he found himself, he presented lessons by precept and example that were appropriate to the time and circumstances. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and unpromising, setting before them the idea that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God among a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they would shine as lights in the world. This was the reason that, after his public ministry began, so many heard him gladly.

From his very childhood he had worked for the people in an unobtrusive manner, letting his light shine amid the moral darkness of a crooked and perverse nation. He made manifest the character of God to our world in bearing the burdens of private life, and in the larger field of activity. He encouraged everything that pertained to the real interests of life, but labored to break up romantic and dreamy contemplations. He taught by precept and example the fact that future position would be decided by human beings themselves, that destiny is marked by our own course of action. Those who cherish right principles, who work out God's plan in a narrow sphere of action, doing right because it is right, will find wider fields of usefulness. Those who are true to God's holy commandments in a humble place, are qualifying themselves to do God's service in ministering to their fellow-men in a higher position. The Lord will give such clear insight and discernment, and bless them with such views of eternity as will elevate and purify their characters. It is possible for us to be conscious of the favor of God, as was Christ.

The Jews had built up walls of separation between themselves and other nations, and the brethren of Christ were angry because he did not heed the prescribed boundaries, but mingled with all classes of people. Through childhood, youth, and manhood Christ walked alone. In his purity, in his faithfulness, he trod the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with him. But now it is our privilege to act a part in the work and mission of Christ. We may wear the yoke with him, and be laborers together with God. To whatever work we are called, Christ will work with us and in our behalf. He is doing all that is possible to set us free, and to make our cramped and narrow lives broad and efficient. He would have us recognize our responsibility, and realize that in shunning our work we are incurring great loss. In his day he saw many that were falling far below their privilege of usefulness. To the indolent he said, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

We are enjoined to work while it is today, for the night cometh, in which no man can work. Jesus recognized and carried the awful weight of responsibility for the salvation of the human family. He knew that unless there was a decided change in the principles and purposes of the human race, all would be irretrievably lost. This was the burden of his soul, and he was alone in carrying this load. No one could appreciate the weight that rested upon his heart. Filled with intense purpose, he designed that his life should be a lamp in the world, that he himself should be "the Light of the world."

August 13, 1896

How Parents Should Discipline Their Children

It is the duty of parents to educate and discipline their children from their earliest years. They should seek to kindly and tenderly lead them to Jesus, and impress upon the children the fact that they are anxious to secure the blessing of God upon their little ones. Parents should feel the necessity of this as much as did the mothers who brought their children to Jesus to receive his blessing. The disciples of Christ could not see why these mothers should be so anxious to bring their children into the presence of Christ. They sought to convince the mothers that this was a very improper thing to do; but Jesus reproved his overzealous disciples, and encouraged the mothers to bring their children into his presence. He said to his disciples, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These precious words are to be cherished, not only by every mother, but by every father as well. These words are an encouragement to parents to press their children into his notice, to ask in the name of Christ that the Father may let his blessing rest

upon their entire family. Not only are the best beloved to receive particular attention, but also the restless, wayward children, who need careful training and tender guidance.

Parents need not feel that it is necessary to repress the activity of their children, but they are to understand that it is essential to guide and train them in right and proper directions. These active impulses are like the vines, that, if untrained, will run over every stump and brush, and fasten their tendrils upon low supports. If the vines are not trained about some proper support, they waste their energies to no purpose. So it is with children. Their activities must be trained in the right direction. Give their hands and minds something to do that will advance them in physical and mental attainments.

The Lord has promised blessing to the children. He loves to purify and impress their minds, and to lead them in the way of righteousness. Children and youth may be trained in such a way as to become workers in the Master's vineyard. The Lord desires them in his service, and looks to parents to train them in such a way as to make them missionaries at home and abroad. They should be so educated that it will be their pleasure to relieve the cares of their toil-worn fathers and mothers. If parents had not neglected the fulfilling of their responsibilities in doing their parental duties to their children, there would not be so few children and youth enlisted as young soldiers in Christ's army. With proper instruction children will be gained to Christ, and may become channels of blessing to other children and youth. Their influence may be widespread, and methods should be devised so that their active temperaments may find plenty to do in blessing others. When parents thoroughly act their part, giving them line upon line, and precept upon precept, making their lessons short and interesting, and teaching them not only by precept but by example, the Lord will work with their efforts, and make them efficient teachers.

O, that the youth and children would give their hearts to Christ! What an army might then be raised up, to win others to righteousness! But parents should not leave this work for the church to do alone. If parents would search the Scriptures so that they might learn what their duty is from the word of God, they would be awakened to their duty. They would find that the world is converting the church, and that they themselves are offering the same trivial excuses for non-performance of duty as the world offers for not heeding the word of God. Let parents comply with the conditions stated in the word of God, repent of their sins, and be converted. Children have heard the Scriptures misinterpreted, and have thought the misinterpretation must be the truth. When the light of truth is presented, many of these very children are convinced that God has spoken to them. How responsible is the position of parents when their children discern truth, and they use the arguments they have heard in the pulpits to prevent their children from following in the path of righteousness, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men! Parents must educate their children tenderly and kindly, and be representatives themselves of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. There is greater need of this kind of education now than ever before; for the world is in the church, moulding and fashioning it after a worldly standard.

Education means more than the mere studying of books. It is necessary that both the physical and mental powers be exercised in order to have a proper education. When in counsel with the Father before the world was, it was designed that the Lord God should plant a garden for Adam and Eve in Eden, and give them the task of caring for the fruit trees, and cultivating and training the vegetation. Useful labor was to be their safeguard, and it was to be perpetuated through all generations to the

close of earth's history. To have a whole-sided education, it is necessary to combine science with practical labor. From infancy children should be trained to do those things that are appropriate for their age and ability. Parents should now encourage their children to become more independent. Serious troubles are soon to be seen upon the earth, and children should be trained in such a way as to be able to meet them. Many parents give a great deal of time and attention to amusing their children, encouraging them to bring all their troubles to them; but children should be trained to amuse themselves, to exercise their minds in devising plans for their own satisfaction, doing the simple things that are natural for them to do.

Children of two to four years of age should not be encouraged to think that they must have everything that they ask for. Parents should teach them lessons of self-denial, and never treat them in such a way as to make them think they are the center, and that everything revolves about them. Many children have inherited selfishness from their parents, but parents should seek to uproot every fiber of this evil tendency from their natures. Christ gave many reproofs to those who were covetous and selfish. Parents should seek, on the first exhibition of selfish traits of character, whether in their presence, or when in association with other children, to restrain and uproot these traits from the character of their children. Do not let the child receive the impression that, because he is your child, he must therefore be deferred to, and permitted to choose and direct his own way. He should not be permitted to choose articles of food that are not good for him, simply because he likes them. The experience of parents should have a controlling power in the life of the child.

How carefully should parents manage their children in order to counteract every inclination to selfishness! They should continually suggest ways by which their children may become thoughtful for others, and learn to do things for their fathers and mothers, who are doing everything for them. But if parents are not careful, they will treat their children in such a way as will lead the children to demand attention and privileges that will call for the parents to deprive themselves in order to indulge their little ones. The children will call upon the parents to do things for them, to gratify their wishes, and the parents will concede to their wishes, regardless of the fact that it is inculcating selfishness in their children. But in doing this work parents are wronging their children, and will find out afterwards how difficult a thing it is to counteract the influence of the education of the first few years in a child's life. Children need to learn early that they can not be gratified when selfishness prompts their wishes.

Fathers should train their sons to engage with them in their trades and employments. Farmers should not think that agriculture is a business that is not elevated enough for their sons. Agriculture should be advanced by scientific knowledge. Farming has been pronounced unprofitable. People say that the soil does not pay for the labor expended upon it, and they bemoan the hard fate of those who till the soil. In this country (Australia) many have given up the idea that the land will pay for working it, and thousands of acres lie unimproved. But should persons of proper ability take hold of this line of employment, and make a study of the soil, and learn how to plant, to cultivate, and to gather in the harvest, more encouraging results might be seen. Many say, "We have tried agriculture, and know what its results are," and yet these very ones need to know how to cultivate the soil, and to bring science into their work. Their plowshares should cut deeper, broader furrows, and they need to learn that in tilling the soil they need not become common and coarse in their natures. Let them learn to bring religion into their work. Let them learn to put in the seed in its season, to give attention to vegetation, and to follow the plan that God has devised.

The farmer and his sons have the open book of nature before them, and they should learn that farming is a noble occupation, when the work is done in a proper manner. The opinion that prevails that farming degrades the man, is erroneous. The earth is God's own creation, and he calls it very good. The hands may become hard and rough, but this hardness need not extend to the soul. The heart need not become careless, nor the soul defiled. The effeminate paleness may be tanned from the countenance, but the testimony of health is seen in the red and brown of the complexion. Christlikeness may be preserved in the farmer's life. Men may learn, in cultivating the soil, precious lessons about the cultivation of the Spirit.

August 20, 1896

Trial Brings Us to God

The Lord permits trials to come to his loved ones in order that through trial they may have increased knowledge concerning the God of their salvation. The Lord says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as tho some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Again he says to those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, that for a season they are "in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

James writes: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

We may say with Job: "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." "For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Our heavenly Father gave his only-begotten Son to cope with the powers of darkness, and to restrain Satanic agencies, so that they might not prevail against his tried and chosen ones, and overcome and destroy them. Jesus, our great High Priest, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and he works to bind up those who are wounded and bruised by the enemy. He does not leave the tempted soul to the mercy of the destroyer. The children of God are to work in Christ's lines. They are to seek the wandering, straying sheep of his pasture. Those who claim to love God are to form a guard around perishing souls to save them from ruin. Instead of saying, "Let the erring go, we will not try to help them," we are to strengthen the hands which hang down, and confirm the feeble knees. We shall

never form characters after the divine similitude if we cherish the meager, stunted piety that looks out only for our individual selves, and does not lead us to do earnest, positive work for the salvation of others. We are to let our light shine in such a way as to guide souls into the haven of safety, that they may find refuge in Christ. Those who have not a positive religion, have no influence to entice others into the fold of safety. Their religion brings dishonor on the truth, and gives those who are not of our faith an excuse for their own defective lives. Those who are indolent, who center everything upon self, bring contempt upon the cause they profess to love.

The Lord permits trials to come upon us in order that we may make earnest, heart-felt intercession. Trial brings us to God, and leads us to form a closer connection with Christ our Saviour. Trial forces us to do as the word of God directs. We put into practice the command, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Do we believe these words, that are full of divine efficiency? The Lord 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?"

Our sufficiency in every time of need is found in the promise of God. We are to rejoice, to educate our hearts and lips to praise God. We are to speak cheerful words, to travel the path heavenward in such a manner as to make manifest to others that we consider it the greatest privilege that we could possibly have. Rejoice, press closer to Jesus, talk of his love, and tell of his power. Let the youth have excellent examples before them, that they may see what is Christian fortitude, courage, and stability. Let every word and action be of such a character as will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Let the youth see in older Christians the way in which they may use their talents for the purpose of honoring their Creator and Redeemer. Experienced Christians should seek the society of the youth in order that they may help them to understand the way of salvation. Let them present the beauty of holiness, and as they teach others, they themselves will learn how to win the feet of the youth to walk in safe paths.

Satan is continually presenting his alluring charms, in order that he may draw the feet of the youth to take their stand under his black banner. He presents evil in false colors. Under the semblance of an angel of light, he hides the deformity of his character, and thus deceives thousands. Let not those who are striving for a glorious inheritance with the saints in light, present a forbidding, cold, unsympathetic aspect. Let them not act in such a way as will lead the youth to avoid their society. When this is the case, they are not shining as lights in the world. They are interposing their defective selves between the light of the world and the soul of the sinner. At every step shed light upon the pathway of those with whom you come in contact. Satan has cast his hellish shadow athwart the pathway of every soul, in order that he may eclipse every ray of light that shines from Christ to the human agent. Both young and old will have to encounter trials, but let faith be encouraged. Let it penetrate through the darkness, so that the soul may enter into that which is within the veil, and walk in the light of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. He that believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, defeats the powers of darkness, and causes the hosts of heaven to sing a song of triumph.

August 27, 1896

Christ's Example in Contrast with Formalism

Of the Lord Jesus Christ in his youth the divine testimony is given, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." After the visit to Jerusalem in his boyhood, he returned with his parents, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

In the days of Christ the educators of the youth were formalists. During his ministry, Jesus declared to the rabbis, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." And he charged them with "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Tradition was dwelt upon, amplified, and revered far above the Scriptures. The sayings of men, and an endless round of ceremonies, occupied so large a share of the student's life, that the education which imparts a knowledge of God was neglected. The great teachers were continually enlarging upon little things, specifying every detail to be observed in the ceremonies of religion, and making its observance a matter of highest obligation. They paid "tithe of mint and anise and cummin," while they "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Thus there was brought in a mass of rubbish that hid from the view of the youth, the great essentials of the service of God.

In the educational system there was no place for that personal experience in which the soul learns for itself the power of a "Thus saith the Lord," and gains that reliance upon the divine word which alone can bring peace and power with God. Busied with the round of forms, the students in these schools found no quiet hours in which to commune with God and hear his voice speaking to their hearts. That which the rabbis regarded as superior education was in reality the greatest hindrance to true education. It was opposed to all real development. Under their training, the powers of the youth were repressed, and their minds were cramped and narrowed.

The brothers and sisters of Jesus were taught the multitudinous traditions and ceremonies of the rabbis, but Christ could not be induced to interest himself in these matters. While hearing on every hand the reiterated "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," he moved independently of these restrictions. The requirements of society and the requirements of God were ever in collision, and while in his youth he made no direct attack upon the customs or precepts of the learned teachers, he did not become a student in their schools.

Jesus would not follow any custom that would require him to depart from the will of God, nor would he place himself under the instruction of those who exalted the words of men above the word of God. He shut out of his mind all the sentiments and formalities that had not God for their foundation. He would give no place for these things to influence him. Thus he taught that it is better to prevent evil than to attempt to correct it after it has gained a foothold in the mind. And Jesus would not by his example lead others to place themselves where they would be corrupted. Nor would he needlessly place himself in a position where he would be brought into conflict with the rabbis that might in after years result in weakening his influence with the people. For the same reasons he could not be induced to observe the meaningless forms or rehearse the maxims that afterward in his ministry he so decidedly condemned.

Tho Jesus was subject to his parents, he began at a very early age to act for himself in the formation of his character. While his mother was his first human teacher, he was constantly receiving an education from his Father in heaven. Instead of poring over the learned lore handed down by the rabbis from century to century, Jesus, under the divine Teacher, studied the words of God, pure and uncorrupted, and studied also the great lesson book of nature. The words, "Thus saith the Lord,"

were ever upon his lips, and, "It is written," was his reason for every act that varied from the family customs. He brought a purer atmosphere into the home life. Tho he did not place himself under the instruction of the rabbis by becoming a student in their schools, yet he was often brought in contact with them, and the questions he asked, as if he were a learner, puzzled the wise men; for their practices did not harmonize with the Scriptures, and they had not the wisdom that comes from God. Even to those who were displeased at his non-compliance with popular customs, his education seemed of a higher type than their own.

The life of Jesus gave evidence that he expected much, and therefore he attempted much. From his very childhood he was the true light, shining amid the moral darkness of the world. He revealed himself as the truth, and the guide of men. His conceptions of truth and his power to resist temptation were proportionate to his conformity to that word which he himself had inspired holy men to write. Communion with God, a complete surrender of the soul to him in fulfilling his word irrespective of false education or the customs or traditions of his time, marked the life of Jesus.

To be ever in a bustle of activity, seeking by some outward performance to show their superior piety, was, in the estimation of the rabbis, the sum of religion, while at the same time, by their constant disobedience to God's word, they were perverting the way of the Lord. But the education that has God back of it, will lead men to seek after God, "if haply they might feel after him and find him." The Infinite is not, and never will be, restricted by human organizations or human plans. Every soul must have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will and ways of God. In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, its practice, or its experiences. Through study of the Scriptures, through earnest prayer, they may hear his message to them, "Be still, and know that I am God." When every other voice is hushed, when every earthly interest is turned aside, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. Here rest is found in him. The peace, the joy, the life of the soul is God.

When the child seeks to get nearest to his father, above every other person, he shows his love, his faith, his perfect trust. And in the father's wisdom and strength the child rests in safety. So with the children of God. The Lord bids us, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, ... and I will give you rest." "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."

"Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places of the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

September 3, 1896

That Christ May Abide in Your Hearts by Faith

"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 hearts 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 fulness of God."

This scripture sets forth the comforting fact that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. For Christ to abide in our hearts means that we shall contemplate Christ, behold Christ, and ever cherish the dear Saviour as our best and most honored friend, one that we would not on any account grieve or offend. Thus cherishing Jesus, we shall have grace divine; "for by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

The time will never come when the hellish shadow of Satan will not be cast athwart our pathway, to obstruct our faith, and eclipse the light emanating from the presence of Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. But our faith must not stagger; it must cleave through the shadow. Our faith is not in feeling, but in truth. The inspired apostle speaks of our being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The church of Christ is represented as being builded for "an habitation of God through the Spirit." If we are rooted and grounded in love, we shall 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." O precious possibilities and encouragement! In the human heart cleansed from all moral impurity, dwells the precious Saviour, ennobling, sanctifying the whole nature, and making the man a temple for the Holy Spirit.

Christ therefore is a personal Saviour. We bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, which is life and salvation and righteousness to us. Wherever we go, we bear the abiding presence of One so dear to us; for we abide in Christ by a living faith. He is abiding in our hearts by our individual, appropriating faith. We have the companionship of the divine Jesus, and as we realize his presence, our thoughts are brought into captivity to him. Our experience in divine things will be in proportion to the vividness of our sense of his companionship. Enoch walked with God in this way; and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith when we appreciate what he is to us, and what a work he has wrought out for us in the plan of redemption. Then we shall be most happy in cultivating a sense of this great Gift of God to our world, and to us personally.

Thoughts of this order have a controlling power on our character. O, that every Christian might realize that he has a divine Companion with him always! "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." As the mind dwells upon Christ, the character is moulded after the divine similitude. The thoughts are pervaded with a sense of his goodness, his love. We contemplate his character, and thus he is in all our thoughts. His love incloses us. If we gaze even for a moment upon the sun in its meridian glory, when we turn away our eyes, the image of the sun will appear in everything upon which we look. Thus it is when we behold Jesus; everything we look upon reflects his image, the Sun of Righteousness. We can not see anything else, or talk of anything else. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul, and affects every portion of our daily life, softening and subduing our whole nature. By beholding, we are conformed to the divine similitude, even to the likeness of Christ. To all with whom we associate, we reflect the bright and cheerful beams of his righteousness. We have become transformed in character; for heart, soul,

mind, are irradiated by the light of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. Here again there is a realization of a personal, living influence dwelling in our hearts by faith.

When his words of instruction have been received, and have taken possession of us, Jesus is to us an abiding presence, controlling our thoughts and actions. We are imbued with the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. A sense of human accountability and the value of human influence gives character to our views of life and of daily duties. Jesus Christ is everything to us,—the first, the last, the best in everything. Jesus Christ, his Spirit and character, colors everything; it is the warp and the woof, the very texture of our entire being. The words of Christ are spirit and life. We can not then center our thoughts upon self; it is no more we that live, but Christ that liveth in us, and he is the hope of glory. Self is dead, but Christ is a living Saviour. Continuing to look unto Jesus, we reflect his image to all around us. We can not stop to consider our disappointments, or even to talk of them; for a more pleasant picture attracts our sight,—the precious love of Jesus. He dwells in us by the word of truth.

What said Christ to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well? "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The water to which Christ referred was the revelation of his grace in his word. His Spirit, his teaching, his love is as a satisfying fountain to every soul. Every other source to which men resort proves unsatisfying; but the word of truth is as cool streams, represented as the waters of Lebanon, which are always satisfying. In Christ is fulness of joy forevermore. The pleasures and amusements of the world are never satisfying, or healing to the soul. But Jesus says, "Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."

Christ's gracious presence in his word ever speaks to the soul, representing him as the well of living water to refresh the thirsting. It is our privilege to have a living, abiding Saviour. He is the source of spiritual power in us, and his influence will flow forth in words and actions that will refresh all within the sphere of our influence, begetting in them desires and aspirations for strength and purity, for holiness and peace, for that joy which brings no sorrow with it. Such an experience will be the result of having Christ as an indwelling Saviour.

Jesus says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He walked once a man on earth, his divinity clothed with humanity, a suffering, tempted man, beset with Satan's devices. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and he knows how to succor those that are tempted. Now he is at the right hand of God, he is in heaven as our Advocate, making intercession for us. We must always take comfort and hope as we think of this. He is thinking of those who are subject to temptations in this world. He thinks of us individually, and knows our every necessity. When tempted, just say, He cares for me, he makes intercession for me, he loves me, he has died for me. I will give myself unreservedly to him. We grieve the heart of Christ when we go mourning over ourselves as tho we were our own saviour. No; we must commit the keeping of our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator. He ever lives to make intercession for the tried, tempted ones. Open your heart to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and let not one breath of doubt, one word of unbelief, escape your lips, lest you sow the seeds of doubt. There are rich blessings for us; let us grasp them by faith. I entreat you to have courage in the Lord. Divine strength is ours, and let us talk

courage and strength and faith. Read the third chapter of Ephesians. Practice the instruction given. Bear a living testimony for God under all circumstances.

September 10, 1896

The Test at Rephidim

“All the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?”

By the command of God, the children of Israel were brought to Rephidim, a place destitute of water. He who was enshrouded in the pillar of cloud was leading them, and it was by His express command that they were encamped at this place. God knew of the lack of water at Rephidim, and he brought his people hither to test their faith; but how poorly they proved themselves to be a people whom he could trust! Again and again he had manifested himself to them. He had slain the first-born of all the families in Egypt to accomplish their deliverance, and had brought them out of the land of their captivity with a high hand; he had fed them with angels' food, and had covenanted to bring them into the promised land. But now, when difficulty rose before them, they broke into rebellion, distrusted God, and complained that Moses had brought them and their children out of Egypt only that they might die of thirst in the wilderness. By their lack of faith they dishonored God, and placed themselves where they could not appreciate his mercies.

Many today think that when they begin their Christian life they will find freedom from all want and difficulty. But every one who takes up his cross to follow Christ comes to a Rephidim in his experience. Life is not all made up of green pastures and cooling streams. Disappointment overtakes us; privations come; circumstances occur which bring us into difficult places. As we follow in the narrow way, doing our best, as we think, we find that grievous trials come to us. We think that we must have walked by our own wisdom far away from God. Conscience-stricken, we reason, if we had walked with God, we would never have suffered so.

Perhaps doubt and despondency crowd into our souls, and we say, The Lord has failed us, and we are ill-used. He knows about the strait places through which we are passing. Why does he permit us to suffer thus? He can not love us; if he did he would remove the difficulties from our path. “Is the Lord with us, or not?”

But of old the Lord led his people to Rephidim, and he may choose to bring us there also, in order to test our faithfulness and loyalty to him. In mercy to us, he does not always place us in the easiest places; for if he did, in our self-sufficiency we would forget that the Lord is our helper in time of necessity. But he longs to manifest himself to us in our emergencies, and reveal the abundant supplies that are at our disposal, independent of our surroundings; and disappointment and trial are permitted to come upon us that we may realize our own helplessness, and learn to call upon the Lord for aid, as a child, when hungry and thirsty, calls upon its earthly father.

Our heavenly Father has the power of turning the flinty rock into life-giving and refreshing streams. We shall never know, until we are face to face with God, when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known, how many burdens he has borne for us, and how many burdens he would have been glad to bear if, with childlike faith, we had brought them to him.

In the hour of need we can gain no power by looking to ourselves. Our eyes need to be anointed with the heavenly eye-salve, that we may discern our spiritual poverty and lack of faith. God is declared in all his dealings with his people; and with clear, unclouded eye, in adversity, in sickness, in disappointment and trial, as well as in prosperity, we are to behold the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, and trust to his guiding hand. Remember the power and love God has shown us in time past. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then will he not find a way for us out of our difficulties?

By their doubt and unbelief God's people do much to grieve the heart of God, and tempt a withdrawal of his mercy. But through all, his love is unchangeable. The waves of mercy may be beaten back, but again and again they flow to the hearts of undeserving human beings. God loves his purchased possession, and he longs to see them overcome the discouragement with which Satan would overpower them. Let no thought of unbelief afflict your souls; for unbelief acts as a paralysis upon the spiritual energies. Do not magnify your difficulties, but keep the Lord in your remembrance, watching unto prayer.

And to us the Scripture comes: "Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

September 17, 1896

The Lord Our Strength

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

Let every one who names the name of Christ read this scripture again and again, and then inquire, Am I clothed with the whole armor of God, that I may be a successful co-laborer with Christ? The more we know of ourselves, the more we probe our motives and desires, the more heartfelt will be our consciousness of our utter inability to fight the battle of the Lord in our own strength, and the more deeply we shall feel the need of having our loins “girt about with truth,” in order that we may have purity of purpose, and know that we are not serving ourselves, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Above all,” declares the inspired word, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Stablish your hearts in the belief that God knows of all the trials and difficulties you will encounter in the warfare against evil; for God is dishonored when any soul belittles his power by talking unbelief.

This world is God's great field of labor; he has purchased those that dwell on it with the blood of his only-begotten Son, and he means that his message of mercy shall go to every one. Those who are commissioned to do this work will be tested and tried, but they are always to remember that God is near to strengthen and uphold them. He does not ask us to depend upon any broken reed. We are not to look for human aid. God forbid that we should place man where God should be. He has promised to help us, and in the Lord Jehovah is “everlasting strength.”

A lesson of faith is given us in the experience of Christ with the disciples of John the Baptist. Imprisoned in the lonely dungeon, John had fallen into discouragement, and he sent his disciples to Jesus, asking, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” Christ knew on what errand these messengers had come, and by a mighty demonstration of his power he gave them unmistakable evidence of his divinity. Turning to the multitude, he spoke, and the deaf heard his voice. He spoke again, and the eyes of the blind were opened to behold the beauties of nature, and to look upon the face of their compassionate Restorer. He put forth his hand, and at his touch the fever left the afflicted ones. At his command demoniacs were healed, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. Then turning to the disciples of John, he said, “Go and show John again the things which ye do see and hear.”

That same Jesus who wrought those mighty works, is our Saviour today, and is as willing to manifest his power on our behalf as he was in the behalf of John the Baptist. When we are hedged about by adverse circumstances, surrounded by difficulties which it seems impossible for us to surmount, we are not to murmur, but to remember the past loving-kindness of the Lord. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we may endure as seeing him who is invisible, and this will keep our minds from being clouded by the shadow of unbelief.

Shortly before Christ's ascension, Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Grieved at his unbelief, Christ turned to him, saying, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Is it possible that I have walked with you, and talked with you, and fed you by miracles, and yet you have not comprehended that I was the Sent of God, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," that I came from heaven to represent the Father? "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" for I am the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. "How sayest thou then, show me the Father." "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake."

Too often we grieve the heart of Jesus by our unbelief. Our faith is short-sighted, and we allow trials to bring out our inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong. When brought into strait circumstances, we dishonor God by murmuring and complaining. Instead of this we should show that we have learned in the school of Christ, by helping those that are worse off than ourselves, those who are seeking for light, but are unable to find it. Such have a special claim upon our sympathy, but instead of trying to uplift them, we pass by on the other side, intent on our own interests or trials. If we do not show decided unbelief, we manifest a murmuring, complaining spirit.

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Christ has already proved himself to be our ever-present Saviour. He knows all about our circumstances, and in the hour of trial can we not pray that God will give us his Holy Spirit to bring to our minds his many manifestations of power in our behalf? Can we not believe that he is as willing to help us as on former occasions? His past dealings with his servants are not to fade from our minds, but the remembrance of them is ever to strengthen and uphold us.

No amount of tribulation can separate us from Christ. If he leads us to Rephidim, it is because he sees that it is for our good and for his name's glory. If we will look to him in trusting faith, he will, in his own time, turn the bitterness of Marah into sweetness. He can open the flinty rock, and cause cooling streams to flow forth. Then shall we not lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving for past mercies, and go forward with full assurance that he is an ever-present help in time of trouble? He has been with us in our past experiences, and his word to us is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

September 24, 1896

Hearing and Doing

"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. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house

upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.”

In this parable two classes are brought to view,—those who hear the words of Christ, and do them; and those who hear, and do not. Christ tells us that those who hear and do, build upon the rock, and that those who hear, and fail to perform, choose the shifting sand for their foundation.

God has a standard of righteousness by which he measures character. This standard is his holy law, which is given to us as a rule of life. We are called upon to comply with its requirements, and when we do this, we honor both God and Jesus Christ; for God gave the law, and Christ died to magnify it, and make it honorable. He declares: “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.” “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.” And the Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle John, declares: “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.” “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

There are many hearers, but few doers, of the words of Christ. His words may be theoretically accepted, but if they are not stamped upon the soul, and woven into the life, they will have no sanctifying effect upon the character. It is one thing to accept the truth, and another thing to practice it in the daily life. From those who hear only, God's word calls forth no grateful response. The commandment, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,” is acknowledged to be just, but its claims are not recognized; its principles are not carried out.

We are all sinful, and of ourselves are unable to do the words of Christ. But God has made provision whereby the condemned sinner may be freed from spot and stain. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” But while Christ saves the sinner, he does not do away with the law which condemns the sinner. It is the work of redemption to exalt that law, and Christ's great sacrifice was made in order that man might be a doer of that law. The law shows us our sins, as a mirror shows us that our face is not clean. The mirror has no power to cleanse the face; that is not its office. So it is with the law. It points out our defects, and condemns us, but it has no power to save us. We must come to Christ for pardon. He will take our guilt upon his own soul, and will justify us before God. And not only will he free us from sin, but he will give us power to render obedience to God's will.

Those who are represented in the parable as building upon the sand, are not conscious of their danger. When Christ comes to reward every one according to his works, they say to him, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” But Christ turns from them, saying, “I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Only those who are doers of the word of God are fitted to have a place in my kingdom; but you have walked contrary to his commandments, and your course has led others astray.

Today many erect a standard of their own, thinking to gain heaven, even tho they neglect to do God's will. But all such are building upon the sand. They are hearers only. They may make high professions, but they are destitute of all true godliness. Pretention is no evidence of true Christian character. If their profession does not harmonize with God's word, their holiness is not genuine; for true holiness is bestowed only upon those who "are doers of the word," and "not hearers only." When they stand before the judgment seat of God, those who now disregard his word may expect to be awarded a place among the redeemed; but in sadness Christ will say to them, "Depart from me; I never knew you."

On what foundation are you building? This question comes home to us all. We are living amid the perils of the last days. The law of God is almost universally disregarded. Satan is not idle; he walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may turn from the right way. And he does not always appear as a lion; he has the power to come as a lamb, and then his voice is soft and low. But shall we allow him to control our hearts? Under his direction, shall we build upon a foundation that will not stand the storm? We can not afford to do this. Shall we not rather strive to be among that number of whom John writes, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"?

Our salvation cost the life of the Son of God, and God demands of us that we build our characters upon a foundation that will stand the test of the judgment. Do you know that your foundation is deep and sure, so that the floods of trouble which are to come upon the earth shall not overthrow you? Do you know that you are not leading others astray by your example? If you waste the hours of your probation by building upon the sand, your life will be a failure. If you choose to ignore God's word, you must be lost when the tempest sweeps down upon you; for only the doers of God's word can build upon the rock.

Just before his crucifixion Christ prayed for his followers, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The word of God has a sanctifying power upon all who truly believe and do it. Shall we not take this word into our lives, and thus build upon the true foundation a character that will gain for us an eternal weight of glory? John saw a company standing round the throne of God. "And one of the elders answered," he writes, "saying, ... What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." To be among that number is the happy privilege of all who will render willing obedience to the words of Christ.

"Blessed are they," Christ said, "that hear the word of God, and keep it." Look well to the foundation of your hope. Let your life testify that you are doers of the word of God. Then when Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven, you can exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." The crown of life will be placed upon your brow, and you will hear the voice of the Saviour, saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

October 1, 1896

The Mother and Brethren of Christ

“While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then 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.”

The life of Christ was one of earnest activity. Tho opposed at every step, he was continually engaged in teaching the people and in healing the sick. To all appearance, the work he took upon himself was a great tax upon him, and this was a source of anxiety to his relatives. They heard that he devoted entire nights to prayer, that through the day he was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give himself time so much as to eat. The sons of Joseph, his brethren, enlisted Mary to go with them; for they knew that his love for her would add to their influence in seeking to prevail upon him to be more prudent. They felt that their own honor was compromised in the criticisms that came upon Jesus. They were not at all pleased with his startling denunciations against the religious leaders of the Jews, and felt the reproach that came upon them in consequence of their relation to him. They knew what a great tumult his words and works created, and were not only alarmed at his bold statements, but indignant at his denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. His words previous to their coming to seek to compel him to cease this manner of doing had thoroughly aroused them. The record says that he began “to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.” He had said: “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.” And with the sternness of a judge he said: “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

To the charge of the Pharisees that he and his disciples had broken the Sabbath, he had plainly shown them that their charge was false, and that he had done nothing contrary to the law. In the very face of their rebukes he had healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, and had declared himself Lord even of the Sabbath. The Pharisees were filled with madness against him, and they had made their threats to the brethren of Christ as to what they would do. They held a council against him, and planned how they might destroy him. “But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence; and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make him known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the gentiles trust. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were

amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

The people were convicted that Christ was the son of David. They were amazed at his mighty works and words. But the more Christ healed the infirmities of the people, the more vehement were the accusations of the Pharisees. They acknowledged that there was a manifestation of supernatural power; but they would not agree that it was the power of God. They charged him with casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Every charge they brought against Christ was proved false. To this charge he stood forth, presenting arguments against their position, and showing that all their theories were as ropes of sand. He said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

Those who made this charge against Christ were on perilous ground. They were quenching the last ray of light emanating from the throne of God to their prejudiced, benighted souls. Jesus warned them of their danger, saying: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Tho Christ had given them evidence upon evidence of his divine power in healing the sick, in casting out devils, in opening the eyes of the blind, and in doing many mighty works, yet certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees came to him, and said: "Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Then he goes on to illustrate the manner of their unbelief, and the consequences that would come upon them. He said: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

Jesus spoke with supreme, personal authority, and yet he always made the impression upon the people that he spoke by the authority of his Father. He placed himself on a level with the eternal throne. The glory of God fell directly upon him, and was shed upon those who would receive the light, and who would become light-bearers to others.

While many of the people believed on him, his own brethren, connected with him by ties of relationship, were unbelieving, and thought he was beside himself in thus claiming divine authority, and in placing himself before the Pharisees as a reprover of their sins. His brethren knew that they were seeking to find occasion against him, and they felt that in the words he had spoken, he had given occasion enough. They must make some determined effort to prevent him from uttering words that would not only involve him in difficulty, but bring down upon his family the denunciations of the Pharisees. While he was speaking these decided words against those who were

unbelieving, his disciples brought in the message that his mother and his brethren were without, and desired to speak with him. He knew what was in their hearts. He knew that they did not understand his character or mission, or realize that he came forth from the bosom of the Father. They did not realize that he was born to bear witness unto the truth, and did not understand his words of calm authority, that came forth from his lips with an earnestness proportionate to their reality and importance.

After hearing the message that his mother and his brethren were without, and desired to see him, he asked: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands 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."

He had come to earth as man's substitute and surety, and those who would receive him by faith, believing that he was the Sent of God, were more closely related to him than were those who were united to him by the ties of human relationship. Such would not perish, but have everlasting life. They would become one with him, as he was one with the Father. His mother, as a believer and doer of his words, was more nearly and savingly related to him because of this fact than because of her natural relationship in the flesh. Those who were his brethren in a natural way, would not be the least benefited by their relationship to him, unless they accepted him as their personal Saviour. But how precious are the words of Christ to those who believe! What cause of rejoicing should they be to every soul who is linked to Christ by saving faith! What a support Christ would have found in his earthly relatives if they had believed in him as in one from heaven, and had co-operated with him in doing the work of God. But the inspired word declares, "Neither did his brethren believe on him." Christ had stated a sad fact in his experience when in Nazareth he said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country."

Christ uttered no sentiments, notions, or opinions that were simply such. That which he spoke was the truth. He had come forth from the bosom of the Father, and was the revealer of the infinite mind. He spoke with the authority of the divine oracle. He uttered the words of eternal life, unfolded truths of the highest order. Then what comfort should come to the believer as he reads these words: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

October 8, 1896

Witnessing for God

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

All who advocate truth in distinction from error, have a special work to do in vindicating the law of God. Men inspired by a power from beneath, have regarded it their duty to uphold, as the sabbath of the Lord, the first day of the week. By disregarding the claims of God, ministers, who claim to preach the Gospel, are echoing the words told to Adam and Eve in Eden, that if they transgressed the law, they would not die, but would be as gods, knowing good and evil. The influence and example of these men have caused a lie to be received as truth. With persevering energy they have labored to establish a spurious sabbath, and this man-made institution has received the homage of

the greater part of the world. But this does not make a day holy which God has given us as a common working day. Though this error is hoary with age, though the world is bowing in reverence to it, it still remains an error and a delusion; for God says, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Well-nigh universal contempt is shown to the law of God, and all who are loyal to him have a sacred and solemn work to do in magnifying the law, and making it honorable. God placed his sanctity upon the seventh day, and gave it to man to keep holy; and he says, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." By rendering obedience to his commandments, we uphold the honor of God in the earth.

Satan works against the law with untiring energy, and God calls upon his people to be witnesses for him by pressing the battle to the gates. This work must advance, or it will go backward. In this war there is no release. Those who take part in it must put on the whole armor of God, that they may fight manfully in the warfare against evil.

Often God's soldiers will find themselves brought into difficult places, they know not why. But are they to relax their hold because difficulties arise? Is their faith to diminish because they can not see their way through the darkness? God forbid. They are to cherish an abiding sense of God's power to uphold them in their work. They can not perish, neither can they lose their way, if they will follow his guidance, and strive to uphold his law.

The experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness should guide us in our work. The word of the Lord declares, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." In their journeyings the Lord brought the children of Israel into hard places, to test their faith and their fidelity to him. He had pledged himself to bring them into the promised land, and if they had waited patiently for the Lord, reviving their faith in him by recounting his great goodness and his wonderful works in their behalf, he would have shortened their test. But they forgot their heavenly Leader. Murmuring and complaining, they vented their wrath and bitterness upon Moses, forgetting that their emergency was God's opportunity.

Today God says to his people, Do not imitate the children of Israel by showing unbelief when brought into difficulties. For "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

"Dearly beloved," says the apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." God has led us out to stand in defense of his law, and he calls upon us to let our light so shine that others, seeing our good works, may be led to glorify our heavenly Father. We have no time to waste in thinking of our individual difficulties. When we bemoan the hardness of the way, we turn from the path of faith. God can make us fully able to go up and possess the promised land. He says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

If our path is not always made plain and easy, if we are not always so well favored as we think we should be, let us look to God, and say in faith, By the mighty cleaver of truth God has separated us from the world, from its customs and maxims, and has chosen us as his peculiar people, and he is able to work for us. Let us go forward in the strength of the Lord God Almighty, striving to uplift his law in the earth. So shall we testify to his truth. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me." "I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me."

October 15, 1896

A Lesson From God's Chosen People

God chose Israel as his people, and gave them gracious promises on condition of obedience. He faithfully performed his promises. He demonstrated his power in their deliverance from Egypt; he opened them a path in the Red Sea, and caused them to pass safely over, while their enemies, in pursuit, perished beneath its waters. He subdued the nations before them; he guided them with his counsel; he enriched them with his bounties.

The mixed multitude who came up from Egypt with Israel were continually departing from God, and making themselves a snare to his people. God saw that Israel would, in their future intercourse with other nations, be in danger of following their example; and he provided for this. His law was to be read and explained to them as a nation; his dealings toward them were to be repeated; the warnings, the reproofs and counsels which the Lord gave them, were to be presented before them. His law was proclaimed from Mount Sinai, that all might hear. Point by point, it was explained to meet the minds of both the learned and the ignorant. It was necessary that all should become intelligent in regard to its binding claims, especially in reference to the Sabbath and intermarriage with other nations.

The Sabbath and marriage were instituted in Eden, when man was upright and innocent before God. They were established when the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But men broke the rules which God gave respecting these institutions, and brought upon themselves condemnation and woe.

When the law was spoken, the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, stood by the side of his Son, enshrouded in the fire and the smoke on the mount. It was not here that the law was first given; but it was proclaimed, that the children of Israel, whose ideas had become confused in their association with idolaters in Egypt, might be reminded of its terms, and understand what constitutes the true worship of Jehovah.

What condescension was this, that the infinite God should stand side by side with his Son, while the law, which is the foundation of his government, was given. He would give his people an intelligent knowledge of his will. He does not command men to obey him when they do not understand what he requires. Here was displayed his wisdom, power, and love. Man was so dear to the Creator of the

world that he spoke to him through Jesus Christ, with an audible voice, giving unmistakable evidence of his presence and majesty.

But we have on this occasion an illustration of the power of temptation upon men. Satan with his host stood in the midst of the armies of Israel to exercise his influence over the people of God's choice. He tempted them, and many yielded to his suggestions; for while the holy law of God was still sounding in their ears; while the glory of God was displayed before their eyes, and God himself was guiding, guarding and sustaining them by his miraculous power, the children of Israel rebelled against him, and imitated the practices they had witnessed in Egypt. They turned their faces again toward Egypt; they turned from God to idols.

The Lord in his dealings with Israel always magnified his law before them, and promised them rich blessings if they would keep his precepts. And when he permitted their enemies to triumph over them, it was because he wanted them to draw nigh unto him, and find in him their friend and refuge. Their ingratitude and rebellion; their contempt of God's restrictions and reproofs; their persecution of those whom God sent to save them from utter degradation and ruin; their relapse into idolatry; their hardness and impenitence of heart in following a course Satan chose for them, rather than the way of obedience in the path of truth and true holiness, brought misery upon themselves. When in the grief and bitterness of bondage, suffering under the cruel tyranny of the heathen, they called upon God, he heard and pitied them. He did not cast them off. He did not permit them to become extinct. He wrought for them again and again, as only God could, that he might bring them into a closer relationship with himself.

This has been the history of God's people since the fall of Adam. The church has turned from his law, and followed fables of human devising. Frequently his requirements have been made a matter of convenience, and men have obeyed or disobeyed, as business or inclination dictated. But the Lord means what he says, and men can not set aside his law with impunity. He will not pass over any transgression more lightly now than he did in the day when he pronounced judgment against Adam.

Our Saviour, too, raised his voice in protest against those who regard the divine commandment with carelessness or indifference. He declared: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

And yet God, instead of destroying a sinful race, has given his Son to die for them. His own people have been changeable and rebellious, and he has been obliged to withhold great blessings which he longed to bestow, because they chose their own way instead of his. But he is ever ready to hear their prayers, pardon their transgressions, and do them good, when, with contrition of soul, they return to him. The Saviour also is full of compassion and love. He never spurns the truly penitent, however great their guilt. But he requires strict obedience. "Sin is the transgression of the law;" and Jesus died, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, that the honor of God's law might be preserved, and yet man be restored to the favor of heaven. By repentance, faith, and obedience, he may perfect a righteous character, and, through the merits of Christ, become a son of God.

October 22, 1896

The Source of Strength

Mrs. E. G. White

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the 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. And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

There is work for every one to do if he will co-operate with God. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Holy intelligences are waiting to work through us. If we will consecrate heart and mind to the service of God, doing the work he has for us to do, and walking in the footsteps of Jesus, our hearts will become sacred harps, every chord of which will send forth praise and thanksgiving to the Lamb sent by God to take away the sins of the world.

The life of Christ and his labors of love shame and condemn the unbelief shown by many. He has promised: “Ask, and it shall be given you,” “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things unto them that ask him?” Those who do not know Jesus as their personal Saviour, do not avail themselves of the promised blessings; but to all who believe, he is as the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which he has purchased for us may be brought within our reach. Why, then, do we spend our precious time bemoaning our weakness, when Christ has made every provision for us to be strong? He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the Tree of Life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat. Why should we mourn our inefficiency, when the heavenly angels are waiting to co-operate with us, to make us living agencies, blessing the world with the messages God will give us to bear.

If you have neglected to place your hand in the hand of Christ, you are in constant danger of being deceived. Many are spiritually weak because instead of cultivating faith, they look at the discouraging features of their work. In the time of trial they turn to humanity for aid, but in doing this, they lean upon a broken reed; for in humanity they will often be sorely disappointed. The distrust and suspicion thus awakened bear their own fruit.

Christ would have our thoughts center upon him. After he has given us many tokens of his willingness to help in any emergency, he is grieved if we withdraw our eyes from his sufficiency to look at our own weakness or the weaknesses of others. Look away from self to Jesus Christ, the Life of every blessing, every grace, the Life of all that is precious and valuable to the children of God. We have no cause to bemoan our own inefficiency, because Christ has shown himself to be an ever present help in time of need.

The Lord Jesus is our strength and happiness, the great storehouse from which, on every occasion, men may draw strength. As we study him, talk of him, become more and more able to behold him,—as we avail ourselves of his grace, and receive the blessings he proffers us, we have something with which to help others. Filled with gratitude, we communicate to others the blessings that have been freely given us. Thus receiving and imparting, we grow in grace; and a rich current of praise and gratitude constantly flows from our lips; the sweet spirit of Jesus kindles thanksgiving in our hearts,

and our souls are uplifted with a sense of security. The unfailing, inexhaustible righteousness of Christ becomes our righteousness by faith.

When temptations assail you, as they surely will, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light, rest in Christ's love and under his protecting shade; for in his shadow we may find rest and peace. When sin struggles for the mastery in the human heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and expel the darkness. Jesus, the sin-pardoning Saviour, is our Advocate in the courts of heaven, and he calls upon us to "arise and shine," because his glory has risen upon us.

One reason of the spiritual feebleness of today is the low estimate that believers in Christ are constantly inclined to form of themselves. Christ paid an infinite price for us, and he desires his chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price he placed upon them. Do not disappoint Jesus by placing a low estimate upon yourselves. Embrace the opportunities and privileges which will increase your value with God; for by accepting the treasures of his grace you will become precious and lovely in his sight. Practical godliness will run through your lives like threads of gold, and as God beholds your consecration to him, he will say, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." All heaven rejoices over the weak, faulty human soul that gives itself to Jesus, and in his strength lives a life of purity.

Our path to the Paradise of God will be often intercepted by the tempter, who is intent on weakening our faith by hiding the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Our Saviour has warned us that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." For every service we render, every self-denial, every sacrifice we make, the Lord has guaranteed to requite us, not because it is a debt he owes, but because his heart is full of infinite love, full of mercy and tenderness. In this life he will repay us a hundredfold, and in the world to come he will give us everlasting life.

Every moment is exceedingly precious. Those who overcome much, love Jesus the most, and in that day, when every one is rewarded according to his works, they will be put next to Christ, within the inner circle; honored, yes, greatly honored. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Know that he loves you, and will be your constant efficiency. "Arise and shine; for thy light is come." "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."

October 29, 1896

The Law Exalted by Obedience

In speaking of the true doctrines of his kingdom, Jesus said: "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."

The priests, rabbis, Sadducees, scribes, and Pharisees, who had hitherto held undisputed authority in matters of religion, and who were unwilling to give place to Christ, and to receive the truths of his kingdom, were represented as old bottles. They were found unfit to contain the new wine of his doctrines, and it was necessary to find depositories for the truth outside of those who were satisfied with their own spiritual attainments. In the teaching of Christ provision was made for a change of heart, for a new development of character. His system was designed for the whole human family. It was founded on faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The truth received into the heart would make decided changes in the character. Brought into the soul temple, it would cleanse from all moral defilement. Those who profess to receive the truth, and yet who are unchanged in character, make it manifest that they have received but a theory of the truth, and do not know what is the vital influence of its operations. Practical godliness leads its possessor to keep the commandments of God. It lifts the soul out of its moral depravity, and the believing, repenting one realizes not only that his sins are forgiven, but that he is cleansed from all unrighteousness. By faith he beholds the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

These developments were not seen in the life and character of those who followed the religion of the scribes and Pharisees. Their dry forms and set ceremonies were destitute of vital power, and they were represented as salt that had lost its savor. They did not bless the ones with whom they came in contact. There was no preserving quality in their religion to keep the world from going into complete corruption. Their religion was of no more value than savorless salt, that was only fit to be cast out and trodden under foot of man. It is only those who preserve the saving power of Christianity who cooperate with God in saving the world. Such are represented as the salt of the earth. But if men lose their spirituality, if their piety becomes sickly, if, because iniquity abounds, their love grows cold, then their religion has lost its savor. Their energy and efficiency has gone.

But Christ represents his people who have not lost their vital connection with God, as the light of the world. He says: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill can not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Jews had erected a partition wall between themselves and every other people, but this was not after the direction of the Lord. When the Lord gives light and knowledge, it is not that men may exclude themselves from others, that they may hide the light in selfishness, so the divine rays shall not come to the people through the human channel that God has appointed; but he gives light, that it may be diffused, that men may see the good works of his followers, and be led to glorify God.

What is Necessary

The scribes and the Pharisees listened to the words of Christ, and decided that he was making light of the law. Instead of this he was showing them distinctly that the law must be enshrined in the heart, and revealed in the character. Outward conformity to the letter of the law was not sufficient.

The very principles of the law must be planted in the heart, and love to God and love to man must be revealed in the character, words, and actions. Those who believe in Christ as their personal Saviour would have the faith that works by love, would manifest his Spirit and grace, and cooperate with him in educating and disciplining souls for his heavenly kingdom. In his own life he gave the world an example of what he meant by his sermon on the mount, for he kept his Father's commandments. He stripped from the holy precepts the human inventions and exactions with which men had covered up the true principles of the standard of righteousness. He showed the law of God to be holy, just, and good. He showed that it had power to convert the soul, and that it required from the human race a whole-hearted service to God and to man. Instead of depreciating the law, he showed that the commandments of God are the foundation of his kingdom, a reflection of the divine character. Those who were to be subjects of his kingdom were to reach a higher standard than that of the scribes and Pharisees. He presented the spirituality of the law, and said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." His own life was a constant expression of the law of God, and he gave to his followers an example that they should walk in his steps.

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish system, and he swept aside the maxims, injunctions, traditions, and precepts with which men had encumbered the plan of salvation. When he swept away the rubbish with which men had buried up the truth, they thought he was sweeping away the truth itself. But he met their unspoken thoughts, saying: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The maxims, traditions, and doctrines of men had served the purpose for which Satan had instigated them, and had eclipsed the dignity and honor of the holy law. Forms and ceremonies had taken the place of vital godliness; but Christ came to exalt the law, to rid it of the rubbish that men had placed upon it, and thus to let it shine forth in its exalted character, and reveal to the world the divine glory of its Author.

The religious teachers of the Jewish age were very jealous of their authority and doctrines, and to condemn the sternness of their exactions, to seek to lighten the intolerable burden which they urged upon the people and failed to lift themselves, was regarded as treasonable and blasphemous. The words of Christ stirred up their hatred. They termed him a meddler, an intruder, one who was seeking to overturn the established customs of the nation. Satan had almost undisputed sway upon the earth, and this was the secret of the enmity manifested against Christ, who, as the Light of the world, was shining amid the moral darkness. Darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, and the god of this world stirred up the hearts of his subjects to war against him who had come to condemn evil and to exalt righteousness. The time had come when a work must be done upon the earth. When the earth was in such a condition as this, the Lord had promised: "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The prophet said Christ was to come when "judgment was turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity can not enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him;

and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob."

As in the days of the Jews, so it is in our day. We see the same enmity manifested against the word of God in our own day as was manifested in the time when Christ was upon the earth. Men still cling to their traditions, and revere their customs, and feel hatred against those who show them that they are in error. In this day, when we are bidden to call attention to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and point out the fact that it is vain to think we are worshiping God in teaching for commandments the traditions of men, we see the same enmity manifested. Of the remnant people of God it is written: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

November 5, 1896

Be Ye Therefore Perfect

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him."

There is opened before all Christians a path of continual advancement. They have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good, and pure, and noble, and elevating; and they should make constant progress toward perfection of character. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. The religion of Jesus Christ never degrades the receiver, never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hard-hearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and softens the heart. It purifies and elevates the thoughts, bringing them into captivity to Christ.

The living God has given us in his law a transcript of his character, and this law he calls upon us to obey, saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As God is perfect in his high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere.

The case of Daniel may be studied with profit by all who desire perfection of character. He and his companions were sincere, faithful Christians. To them the will of God was the supreme law of life. They knew that in order to glorify God all their faculties must be developed, and they sought to gain knowledge, that they might perfect a Christian character, and stand in that heathen nation as fitting representatives of the true religion. In order to preserve health, they resolved to avoid the luxuries of the king's table, they refused to partake of any stimulating drink, but practiced strict temperance in all things, that they might not enfeeble brain or muscle. They exerted all their powers to work out their own salvation, and God worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. Under his training, their faculties were able to do the highest service for him; and of them it is written: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."

When Nebuchadnezzar's golden image was set up on the plains of Dura, Daniel's three companions were commanded to fall down and worship it; but their principles forbade them to pay homage to the idol, for it was a rival to the God of heaven. They knew that they owed every faculty they possessed to God, and while their hearts were full of generous sympathy toward all men, they had a lofty aspiration to prove themselves entirely loyal to their God.

These faithful witnesses were cast into the fire for refusing to obey the command of the king, but God manifested his power for the deliverance of his servants. One like unto the Son of man walked with them in the midst of the flame, and when they were brought forth, not even the smell of fire had passed upon them. "Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." "Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon."

Thus these three Hebrew youth, imbued with the Holy Spirit, declared to the whole nation their faith that he whom they worshiped was the only true and living God. This demonstration of their faith was the most eloquent presentation of their principles. In order to impress others with the power and greatness of the living God, his servants must reveal their own reverence for him, making it manifest that he is the only object of their honor and worship, and that no consideration, not even the preservation of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to idolatry.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and all who live in communion with their Creator, will have an understanding of his design in their creation, and a sense of their own obligation to employ their faculties to the very best purpose. They will seek neither to glorify nor to depreciate themselves, but they will glorify God; for the man who consents to be molded and fashioned after the divine similitude, is the noblest specimen of the work of God.

The Divine Agent

But without the divine working, man can do nothing toward the perfection of his character. God calls every man to repentance; yet man can not even repent unless the Holy Spirit works upon his heart. A principle of divine origin must pervade his conduct, and bind him to God. But the Lord wants no man to wait until he thinks he has repented, before he turns his steps toward Jesus. The Saviour is continually drawing men to repentance; they need only to submit to be drawn, and their hearts will be melted and subdued, fit temples for the indwelling of Christ.

The Holy Spirit comes to convince of sin, and to soften hearts hardened by estrangement from God. It comes to reveal the love wherewith God loves us, and the possibilities that open before every believing child of God. But are not some afraid of this heavenly guest? At times it comes with an all-pervading influence, but is it received? Do those to whom it comes bow before God with contrite hearts, pleading that they may be prepared to receive the blessings he is presenting to them? I entreat of all to receive this heavenly visitant as an abiding guest; for it will guide you into all truth, and give you joy and peace in the Lord.

God calls upon all men to avail themselves of the blessings he has set before them, that they may co-operate with him in carrying forward the great work of redemption. He has given his Holy Spirit as a power sufficient to overcome all man's hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. By yielding

his capabilities to the control of this Spirit, man will be impressed with God's perfect character, and will become an instrument through which he can reveal his mercy, his goodness, and his love.

The Culture of the Mind

In the attainment of a perfect Christian character, the culture of the intellect is necessary, in order that we may understand the revelation of the will of God to us. This can not be neglected by those who are obedient to God's commandments. In our intellectual faculties, we possess God's endowment. These faculties were not given us for the service of self, but for the service of God; and they are to be treated as a higher power, to rule the things of the body. They are derived from God, not self-created, and should be consecrated to his work.

The knowledge which will give the highest culture, is obtained from God's word. The words of revelation, carefully studied, strengthen the intellect as well as the heart. The experimental knowledge of true godliness, found in daily consecration and service for God, gives true culture of the mind, soul, and body. This consecration of our powers prevents self-exaltation; and the impartation of divine power honors our sincere striving after wisdom in order that we may know how to use our faculties to honor God and to bless our fellow men.

This is the will of God concerning every human being, even your sanctification. In urging our way heavenward, every faculty must be kept in the most perfect condition, in order that it may do the most faithful service. The powers with which God has endowed man are to be put to the test. That which God requires of those whom he has created and redeemed, is summed up in the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, to will, and to do of his good pleasure."

Co-operating with God

Man is allotted a part in the great struggle for everlasting life. He must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, but the Spirit that works in him can and will accomplish this. Man is no passive instrument, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence.

Christ assumed human nature, to demonstrate to the fallen world, to Satan and his synagogue, to the universe of heaven, and to the worlds unfallen, that human nature, united to his divine nature, could become entirely obedient to the law of God, that his followers by their love and unity would give evidence that the power of redemption is sufficient to enable man to overcome. And he rejoices to think that his prayer that his followers might be sanctified through the truth, will be answered; they will be molded by the transforming influence of his grace into a character after the divine similitude. All who would possess a perfect Christian character must wear the yoke of Christ. If they would sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, they must learn of him while on this earth. Christ says to all such: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

November 12, 1896

Christ Our Pattern

The example of Christ is authoritative for every son and daughter of Adam. His life was the law of God lived and exemplified, a perfect pattern for all humanity, showing what man may become by partaking of the divine nature. Representing as he did the character of God, he was a perfect standard of moral excellence in humanity.

How did the world's Redeemer walk? Not to please himself, but to glorify God, and work the works of him that sent him, in uplifting man, who was formed in the divine image, and by precept and example teaching righteousness.

He did not have a smooth path for his feet to travel. Those who ought to have been co-laborers with him in all his works, were so far separated from God by selfishness that they counteracted the work of Christ. His convenience, his comfort and pleasure, were not studied. He was the Commander of all heaven; yet he was here on earth as one that serves. Uncomplainingly he endured privations, lived the life of a poor man. The luxuries indulged in by many who claim to be sons and daughters of God, he did not bring into his life. He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. His whole life was one of self-denial, expressing, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Christ never flattered any man; he never deceived, never defrauded, never changed his course of straightforward righteousness to obtain favor or applause. He ever expressed the truth. The law of kindness was upon his lips; there was no guile in his mouth.

The Son of God so conducted his life that even his unbelieving countrymen were compelled to say, "He hath done all things well." His character was without a flaw. He did not leave the example of a life of idleness and self-indulgence, altho he was heir of all things in heaven and earth, the only-begotten Son of the Father.

Here is where human intelligences have lost sight of the Pattern. Men, because entrusted with talents of means; follow, not the standard of the character of Christ, but the standard of the world. Because they have abundance of money, houses, and lands, they train their children to a life of idleness and selfish indulgence, making them useless so far as doing good in the world is concerned. By their unwise training, the youth are unfitted in character for the future eternal life. Christ, in his life, gave us altogether a different example; he worked at the carpenter's trade with his father.

Youth are now educated in the belief that it is the possession of plenty of money that gives men value. The sure result is pride and vanity, pleasure-loving, and abundance of idleness. Thus the way is open for Satan to corrupt life and character with his temptations to vice. Sinful practices become common. Whether rich or poor, high or low, Satan finds employment for the youth who are not trained to useful industry, and guarded and barricaded with principle.

Time is not considered as a precious treasure, a trust from God, for which every human being must give an account. Money, too, is entrusted of God to be used, not in needless extravagance by parents to the ruin of their children, but as a means of doing good to their fellow men. Even from their earliest years, as reason develops, the principles of the character of God, as given in his law, should become the rule of life and character.

Christ is our pattern, and those who follow Christ will not walk in darkness; they will not seek their own pleasure. The glory of God will be the standard at which they will unceasingly aim. The two grand precepts of the moral law are to regulate the conduct of all human intelligences: "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." The Lord of heaven demands of us supreme love and worship.

The Lord will work through the human agent if he will unite himself with Christ, and the record for him in the books of heaven will be, as in the case of Enoch, that he walks with God. Like Enoch, he will have a sense of God's abiding presence. The reason that so large a number of those who profess to be children of God always feel in uncertainty, is because they feel that they are orphans. They do not cultivate the precious assurance that Jesus is the sin-bearer; that altho they have transgressed the law, and are sinners in his sight, yet the object of the incarnation of Christ was to bring to the repenting, believing sinner everlasting peace and assurance. The great Advocate assumed human nature, and became like unto his brethren, to impress upon the human mind that no one who through faith accepts him as a personal Saviour is an orphan, or is left to bear the curse of his own sins. Christians may daily cultivate faith by contemplating the One who has undertaken their cause, their "merciful and faithful High Priest." Having suffered, being tempted, not merely in a few things, but in all things like as we are tempted, he is able to succor all that are tempted. Even now in heaven he is afflicted in all our afflictions, and as a living Saviour he is asking intercession for us.

The human agent is to compare his life with the character of Jesus Christ, and through the grace which he imparts to all true believers, seek to reach the perfection of his example who lived the law of Jehovah.

Christ's testimony of himself was, "I have kept my Father's commandments." Those who follow Christ will be constantly looking into the perfect law of liberty, and through the grace given them by Christ, will fashion their character to meet the divine requirements. The heart must be opened to receive Christ, and abide in him. As the branch is connected with the living vine, a vital union is formed between the parent stalk and the branch, and the same fruit appears on the branch as is seen on the vine. Every faculty of mind and body is to be enlisted in the service of Christ, following his example, and catching his spirit, thus building the character after the divine similitude. Our faith is daily to be exercised, and to increase by exercise in him who has redeemed us, not only because he loved us, but because, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

November 19, 1896

The Love of God

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "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 hearts 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 fulness of God."

The love of God is a golden chain which binds finite man to the infinite God. It is a love which "passeth knowledge." No science can explain it, no wisdom fathom it. The more we feel the influence of this love, the greater will be our amazement at it. Job exclaims: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" "The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and love of God!" exclaims Paul, "how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

God's creatures are never absent from his mind. Even the birds which fly in the heavens, and the flowers of the field, are objects of his tender care. "Behold the fowls of the air," said Christ, "they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." "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." If the great Master Artist has bestowed such care upon these things, how much greater will be his regard for man, who is the "image and glory of God!" His care and love for his children are unceasing, and he longs to see them reveal a character after his similitude. "I will make a man more precious than fine gold," he declares, "even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir."

And tho sin has existed for ages, seeking to counteract the tide of love flowing from God to the human race, tho man has lost the image of God through yielding to this sin, yet the love and care which God bestows upon the beings he has created, has not ceased to increase in richness and abundance. He "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He who was in the form of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, descended from his throne, clothing his divinity with humanity that he might reach humanity. He was in the beginning with God; yet he came to announce to the human race, fallen and degraded, that he had brought them the gift of everlasting life.

God's gift to this earth was beyond all computation; nothing was withheld. The love demonstrated in the life of Christ, from the manger to the cross, the mystery of his divinity veiled in humanity, the bright beams of righteousness manifested to the world in his words and works,—these are themes which the angels desire to look into. How would men receive this gift? Could they fail to appreciate the sacrifice? Could the world resist this boundless love? At the time of Christ's advent the hearts of men were corrupted by sin. Hatred against God was cherished by the entire race. A wakeful impiety was exercised by the enemies of God; the principles of injustice were wide-spread; and a master-power was at work, seeking to eclipse the love of God, and gain control of the minds of men. And so Christ, the Bread of life, came to his own, "and his own received him not." The light of God shone on the darkness of this world, but the darkness comprehended it not. The inestimable gift of heaven was not appreciated; the healing flood of life and heavenly grace was disregarded.

God has given men intellect in order that he may lead their minds higher and still higher, opening to them the mysteries of divine love. The contemplation of the theme of redemption enlarges the mind and sanctifies the will. By beholding Christ, the Lamb of God, who "taketh away the sin of the

world," our conception of his love is deepened and broadened. Why, then, are our ideas so narrow? Why do we not comprehend that love which is so deep and broad?

As in the days of Christ, the enemy of God works constantly to lead men to place the will in his control, that God may be forgotten. He knows that if this is done, he can control the whole man. He tempts men in many ways to forget their Creator. To some he offers tobacco and alcoholic drinks. Others he tempts by pointing them to their own degradation and helplessness. Those who yield to his temptations can have no conception of the love of God. The will becomes enslaved, bound to pursue a course which the word of God does not justify. Reason is enfeebled; the power to distinguish between right and wrong is lost; sacred and eternal realities are estimated as of less value than gold, silver, houses, lands, and bank stock. The love of God fades from the mind; and the captives in the tempter's power live on, "having no hope, and without God in the world," because they do not behold the Lamb of God.

Sin can triumph only by enslaving the mind. Christ came to our world to break the power of Satan, and emancipate the will of man. He came "to proclaim liberty to the captives," to "undo the heavy burdens," and to "let the oppressed go free;" and he calls upon us to cooperate with him by entering his service, wearing his yoke, and lifting his burdens. And, if we consent, he can and will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity with his will, that when obeying him, we shall but carry out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing his service.

Man is not his own; he has been bought with a price, even "the precious blood of Christ." By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, and the strength of every one. And man is safe only when he places himself under the control of God. When this is done, the will becomes firm and strong to do right; the heart is cleansed from all selfishness, and filled with a Christlike love and tenderness. The mind yields to the authority of the law of love, and "every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." The powers, hitherto "members of unrighteousness," and "servants of sin," are consecrated to the service of a God of love.

"Thus saith the Lord God, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out, ... I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." This precious assurance of God to his Son, the Anointed, embraces all who receive Jesus Christ; for the word of God declares, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Satan is determined to shut out all light and communication from above. As if in defiance to the mercy of Omnipotence, he caused the Son of God to be crucified. But Christ rose from the grave, and today he is our Advocate in the courts of heaven, reconciling us "unto God ... by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." He has a claim to our wills and affections, and in a voice full of love and mercy he calls, "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."

The Lord directs every mind that yields to the power of his love, and reveals to it the mystery of godliness. Yield yourself entirely into his keeping; for his love is everlasting and unchangeable. Consecrate your powers to him. The divine influence of his love will diffuse itself through the chambers of your mind; your soul-temple will be cleansed from all selfishness; your heart, filled with all that is pure and lovely, will reveal the mysteries of redeeming love. Then you shall be indeed God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."

November 26, 1896

A Lesson from Israel's Wisest King

"Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself; that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel."

This was David's dying charge to Solomon. The aged monarch had already invested his son with kingly authority, and now he bids him perform faithfully the duties devolving upon him. He counsels him not to show himself merely a warrior, a statesman, or a sovereign, but to reign as a strong, good man. He entreats him to display a noble, manly nature, to show mercy and loving-kindness to his subjects; and he adds, "Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed."

In his early youth Solomon was a noble character. He was named "Jedidiah," which means "Beloved of the Lord." He was the pride and hope of his father, and "tender and only beloved in the sight of his mother." And during the first years of his reign Solomon fulfilled the promise of his youth. He loved God, and was beloved of God. The Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon answered the Lord in these words, "Give thy servant an understanding heart, ... that I may discern between good and evil." The Lord granted this request, "and Solomon's wisdom excelled all the wisdom of the children of the east; for he was wiser than all men."

Had Solomon relied continually on the Lord, had he kept the precepts and commandments enjoined upon him, what a history would have been his! But the unerring pen of inspiration, while it records his virtues, also bears faithful witness to his sad downfall. After a morning of promise and a manhood of integrity, Solomon took a course displeasing to the Lord. He did not continue to walk before God in truth. Raised to the pinnacle of human greatness, and surrounded with the gifts of fortune, he became dizzy. He was extolled by kingly powers for his unsurpassed wisdom, and he could not stand the flattery. Thus the very gift of heaven,—the wisdom which was entrusted to him by God, and which should have reflected honor upon the Giver,—filled Solomon with pride. He built the temple, and it was a marvel of richness and glory, unequalled by any work of human art. A greater than Solomon was the designer of this building; the wisdom and glory of God stood revealed there; but the honor was diverted from God and given to Solomon.

God singled out the children of Israel as his people. He separated them from other people, making them the repository of his law; and it was his design that they should preserve his honor in the earth. They were forbidden to mingle with idolatrous nations, and in no case were they to intermarry with them. A wise barrier was thus erected between them and the rest of the world, and their safety consisted in observing these landmarks. But he who by his loyalty and integrity, could have done much to preserve God's people from backsliding, he who at the dedication of the temple had urged them—"Let your hearts therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments,"—he set the example of apostasy. In his thirst for political power, he cultivated and encouraged alliances with pagan kingdoms, and violated the express command of Jehovah by taking wives from among them.

Solomon thought himself strong enough and wise enough to maintain the purity of his religion and yet deviate from the commands of God. He thought he could convert his wives to the true religion, and that by thus binding himself with idolatrous nations, he could win them all to the service of the true God. But we can not incorporate light with darkness. Christ has no fellowship with Belial. By a union with idolaters, the king's own faith was perverted. The power and purity of true religion lost their influence over him. His conscience became marred and blunted; his finite judgment, in which he placed so much confidence, led him far astray, and wild license was regarded by him as independence and toleration. He lost his connection with God, and no longer realized that God was his wisdom and his strength.

Solomon thought to gain more power by thus allying himself with the heathen nations around him; and he was enriched with the gold and silver which was transported from Ophir and Tarshish, but it was at the cost of sacrificing noble principles and betraying sacred trusts.

One false step leads to another. Solomon's alliance with heathen nations was followed by evils which led the children of Israel to violate the law of God. The people became contaminated with the principles and practices of the heathen. Polygamy was introduced into Palestine. The pure religious service instituted by God was replaced by idolatry of the darkest hue. Human sacrifices were offered; and the licentious rites practiced by the inhabitants of the Noatic world, were countenanced.

And "it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God." From being one of the greatest kings that ever wielded a scepter, whose exalted wisdom made him renowned throughout the world, Solomon became profligate and intemperate, the tool and slave of others. His character, once noble and manly, became enervated and effeminate. His faith in the living God was shaken and supplanted by atheistic doubts. Unbelief marred his happiness, weakened his principles, and degraded his life; gloomy and soul-harassing thoughts troubled him night and day. The justice and magnanimity of his early reign were changed into despotism and tyranny; and his extravagance was sustained by grinding taxes, which were imposed upon the people. Poor, frail human nature! God can do but little for men, because they so soon lose their sense of dependence upon him.

The Lord would have all learn a lesson from the record of the life of Solomon. He desires his servants to preserve their holy and peculiar character. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is his command; "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what

communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

While we are to be kind and courteous to all, we are not to connect with those who we know are acting in opposition to God. Solomon was estranged from God by the influence of his heathen wives; and God has forbidden his people to unite with unbelievers; for in so doing, they bring untold sorrow upon themselves, and reproach upon the cause of God. They may think, like Solomon, that their influence over those who are in the wrong will be beneficial; but too often they themselves, entrapped and overcome, yield their sacred faith, sacrifice principle, and separate themselves from God. By one false step they place themselves where they can not hope to break the chains that bind them.

I would warn all, both young and old, Be careful what friendships you form and what companions you choose. Take heed lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. Worldly associations tend to throw obstructions in the way of your service to God; and many souls are ruined by unhappy unions, either business or matrimonial, with those who can never elevate or ennoble. Because of this, many men and women are without hope and without God in the world. Their noble aspirations are dead; by a chain of circumstances they are held in Satan's net.

Beware of following any voice but that of God. Those who call themselves sons and daughters of God, and yet walk contrary to his wise arrangements in order that they may follow the promptings of their own unsanctified hearts, which are ruled by passion and impulse, will have a bitter harvest to reap in this life, and their course may result in the loss of their souls.

Keep your religion pure and untainted. Worldly interests may tempt you to yield your principles, but "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Worldly greatness is no equivalent for integrity, honesty, a pure heart, and a noble, unwavering purpose to do right. Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like him who possesses the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, untouched by the tinsel and show of the world.

God would have us learn the solemn lesson that we are working out our own destiny. The characters we form in this life decide whether or not we are fitted to live through the eternal ages. No man can with safety attempt to serve both God and the world. God is fully able to keep us in the world, but not of the world. His love is not uncertain and fluctuating. Ever he watches over his children with a care that is measureless and everlasting. But he requires us to give him our undivided allegiance. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon."

Solomon was endowed with wonderful wisdom, but the world drew him away from God. We need to guard our souls with all diligence, lest the cares and attractions of the world absorb the time that should be given to eternal things. God warned Solomon of his danger, and today he warns us not to imperil our souls by affinity with the world, saying, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

December 3, 1896

The Prayer that God Approves

Jesus taught his disciples that a humble and contrite spirit is an inward principle; that the austere, gloomy countenance is not an index to a humble, submissive spirit. While the heart should have the grace of humility, the countenance should be cheerful, not gloomy and repulsive. His words of instruction to them were: "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Like other observances of a religious character, fasting, when practiced from right motives, will prove a blessing. But this, like almsgiving, had been perverted. The Pharisees put on an outward appearance of great sanctity, of humiliation and contrition, while in their hearts they cherished sins of a revolting character. They made their religion unattractive by their stern, forbidding appearance. But the true Christian will never chill the atmosphere with severe exactions and painful stiffness. He is to have a sweet, subduing, cheerful and saving influence upon those with whom he comes in contact.

The object of the Pharisees in giving publicity to their prayers,—to be exalted in the opinions of men,—was that which Christ condemned. And the same self-righteous prayers he rejects today wherever they are offered among the professed people of God. In our day, as in Christ's, unworthy motives often prompt the prayers and almsgivings. These things are done to obtain the approval of men; but they bear the disapproval of the world's Redeemer. God's name is profaned every day in the meaningless prayers of many who profess to be Christians.

This sin is not found alone with the illiterate, but frequently even with men who have ability and influence. They will professedly pray to God, while in truth they are preaching a sermon to him. As though he lacked information, they give him a definite account of everything. Their prayers are to the people; God scarcely enters their minds. All such prayers are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, with no heart, no purpose, no point. Such prayers will be only a curse to the ones who thus profane this sacred privilege. Nothing is so repulsive to Christ as insincere devotion, voluntary humility, and hypocritical almsgiving. He said, "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;" appear comfortable and cleanly. It is a great mistake to suppose that the unwashed face and tangled locks proclaim your sanctity.

This lesson to the disciples is applicable to every Christian to the end of time. Devotion to God does not consist in groans and sighs and a sad countenance. Many give to the world wrong impressions in regard to the religion of the Bible by complaining of trials and crosses and hardships. The true servants of the heavenly King are the most happy people in the world. While their service is earnest and sincere, they carry with them the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, to lighten the path heavenward for all those who will walk in it. The religious life is one of conflict and trial; yet of spiritual happiness and joy.

Some professed followers of God utter loud prayers, and exercise the body in a violent manner. The prophets of Baal worked themselves up into a frenzy when praying to their idol gods. These heathen cried, and cut themselves with lancets and knives until they presented a frightful appearance. But they were more sincere than are many who today offer prayers in a storm of excitement. Their conduct was in keeping with their ideas of devotion to their gods. But Christians have a living and all-

powerful God, whose ear is quick to detect the real needs of the suppliant, and by their excited and unnatural manner they dishonor their prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

Our hearts have been pained when we have listened to prayers which have been made to men and not to God. Self-righteous, self-confident prayers never rise higher than the lips that utter them. Prayer offered in spasmodic fervor, merely a storm of words, will not be heard and answered by God.

Some think it a mark of humility to pray to God in a common manner, as though talking with human beings. They profane his name by needlessly and irreverently interlarding their prayers with "God Almighty,"—awful and sacred words, that should never pass the human lips except with bated breath and solemn and subdued tones.

The humble, intelligent prayer of faith, that comes from unfeigned lips, is wholly acceptable to God. It is the heart-felt prayer that is heard in heaven and rewarded by an answer on earth. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and a humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Jesus taught his disciples that only that prayer which arises from unfeigned lips, prompted by the actual wants of the soul, is genuine, and will bring heaven's blessing to the petitioner. He gave a brief, comprehensive prayer to his disciples. This prayer, for its beautiful simplicity, is without a parallel. It is a perfect prayer for public and private life; it is dignified and elevated, yet so simple that the child at its mother's knee can understand it. The children of God have repeated this prayer for centuries, and yet its luster has not dimmed. Like a gem of value it continues to be loved and cherished. This prayer is a wonderful production. None will pray in vain if in their prayers are incorporated the principles contained therein. Our prayers in public should be short, and express only the real wants of the soul, asking in simplicity and simple trusting faith for the very things we need. Prayer from the humble, contrite heart is the vital breath of the soul hungering for righteousness.

God understands the needs of humanity. He knows what we desire before we ask him. He sees the soul's conflict with doubt and temptation. He marks the sincerity of the suppliant. If the heart is afflicted, if the spirit is humble before God, he marks it. He will accept the humiliation and affliction of soul, and will reward according to the purity of the motives that prompted the action.

As a faithful physician, the world's Redeemer has his finger upon the pulse of the soul. He marks every beat; he takes note of every throb. Not an emotion thrills it; not a sorrow shades it; not a sin stains it; not a thought or purpose passes through it, with which he is not acquainted. Man was purchased at an infinite cost, and is loved with a devotion exceeding that which a father feels for his child. The prayer that comes from a sincere heart will ever find a response in heaven.

December 10, 1896

Union with Christ

"I am the True Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."
"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

Every true believer must have a living connection with Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Just as the body needs the vitalizing air at all times, so the soul needs divine grace. Apart from Christ, we are helpless, without hope, and without God in the world; but truly united to him, we are a power for good.

In the parable of the vine and the branches, Christ presents the necessity and advantage of a vital union with him. And what symbol so simple, and yet so striking, could he have used to show the need of entire dependence upon him? Separated from the vine, the branch is dead and worthless. United to the vine, it receives the nourishment drawn from the roots, and thus is enabled to bear fruit. Such is the relation of the believer to Christ. On our part, we must have implicit faith in Christ as our personal Saviour. The result of this faith is seen in the fruit we bear. Christ constantly supplies us with grace, and in our turn we impart this grace to others, thereby revealing that we receive our nourishment from the True Vine. God acknowledges this union, and our petitions are accepted through Jesus Christ. One with him, as he is one with the Father, we are accepted in the Beloved. Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren, and heavenly intelligences co-operate with us in our efforts to serve him.

By the nature and abundance of the fruit it produces, the branch proves that it is a part of the vine, and by the fruit which we bear, we show whether or not we are truly united to Christ. The true branch bears rich clusters of genuine fruit, and if we are truly united to Christ, we reveal in our lives the fruits of the Holy Spirit. "Herein is my Father glorified," said Christ, "that ye bear much fruit."

The branch which does not derive its nourishment from the vine, is unable to bear fruit. Having no real, vital connection with the vine, not receiving the sap which flows through the parent stock, it is fruitless. So it is with those who are not truly united to Christ. They may claim to know him, their names may be on the church roll, but unless they are living branches of the True Vine, this is of no value. There is a union with the church that avails nothing with God. Their profession will not save them, for their want of faith, their lack of fruit, proves that they are false branches. They are hearers, and not doers, of the word of God, and their future is shown in this parable. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. "If a man abide not in me," said Christ, "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Those who claim to know Christ, and yet indulge a jealous, fault-finding spirit, sowing seeds of dissension by word and action, reveal only too surely that they are not branches of the True Vine. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

As the husbandman prunes the branches of the fruit-bearing trees, that they may bear more fruit, so the Lord prunes those who are endeavoring to serve him. Often by pruning away the unhealthy growth of temporal and secular interests which endanger heart and character, he causes pain. But

he works with no wanton hands and indifferent heart. It is in love to his children that he cuts away the growth which threatens to destroy the health and life of the soul.

The Lord permits trials to come to us in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from sharp, unchristlike traits of character; that we may be led to look to him as the source of all strength. He suffers the deep waves of affliction to pass over our souls in order that we may have deep heart-longings to be cleansed from all defilement, and come forth from the trial purer and holier, with a deeper knowledge of him.

"As many as I love," God says, "I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent," In order that we may die to self, we are called upon to endure trial, and when the chastening hand of the Lord is laid upon us, we are not to fret and complain, not to rebel, not to worry ourselves out of the hand of Christ. We are to humble ourselves before God, pleading with him to give us rest and peace. We enter the furnace of affliction with our hearts darkened by selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine image, as gold tried in the fire. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Christ left his heavenly home, and came to this world, to show that only by being connected with divinity can man keep the law of God. In itself humanity is tainted and corrupted; but Christ brought moral power to man, and those who live in communion with him overcome as he overcame. We are not left in this world as orphans; Christ has united fallen man to the infinite God. He has opened a way for our prayers to ascend to God, and the fragrance of his righteousness ascends with the prayer of every repentant sinner.

Before men and before angels, by a life of perfect obedience, Christ represented the character of God. Today he is calling upon us to unite with him, that we may partake of his divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. "I, if I be lifted up from this earth," he said, "will draw all men unto me." His gracious invitations of mercy are going forth to all mankind. He is inviting all to come into close connection with him; and those who respond will find life and salvation. As we connect with him, unbelieving fear is swept away before living faith, and humble, grateful confidence becomes an abiding principle in the soul.

The result of a vital union with Christ should make all willing to give up everything if only we may be united with him. As the nourishment of the vine is carried to every true branch, so Christ's righteousness is imparted to every one who unites with him. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." As our substitute and surety, our sins are placed to his account. His grace is given us in large measure, and this vitalizing power makes us channels of blessing to the world. "If ye abide in me," he said, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The Lord is at hand. Heavenly angels wait to co-operate with God's children in sounding the message, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The angels can not take our place, but they stand ready to co-operate with us in drawing souls to Christ; and they are soliciting us to work in fellowship with them. These angels survey the ground occupied by those

who claim to follow Christ. They see the advantage gained by the enemy when men and women refuse to unite with Christ, and neglect their God-appointed work, and they sorrow over the souls lost in consequence of this neglect.

Those who are truly striving to honor God will be laborers together with him. Truly united to Christ, they willingly wear his yoke, and bear his burdens. They realize that they are not their own, but that Christ has purchased them at an infinite price; and their own ambitious prospects are lost sight of in their desire to work for God. To all such God can say, Child, come up higher. I have tested you, and I know that I can trust you to enter heaven's courts and not rebel. But those in whose hearts selfishness is cherished, who have no connection with Christ, can never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Shortly before his crucifixion, Christ prayed for his disciples: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." O that these words might be written with the finger of God upon every soul. When God's children surrender all to him, when they are willing to be pruned of all selfishness and worldliness and to be united to the True Vine, when one interest predominates—to be one with Christ as he is one with the Father—then they can indeed bear witness for the truth. True branches of the living Vine, they will bear "much fruit" for him, "being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the honor and praise of God."

December 17, 1896

In the World, But Not of the World

Christ prayed for his disciples, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world."

While Christians are to be in the world, they are not to be of the world. In order to be a saving power, they must separate from all worldliness. As oil does not mix with water, so they are not to mix with that which God condemns. They must keep themselves "unspotted from the world;" for they can not touch that which is unclean, and remain unpolluted. The truth as it is in Jesus must sanctify their souls. Its deep, living principles must preside over thought and word and action.

On every hand there is that which would tempt the Christian to forsake the narrow way; but those who would perfect a character fit for eternity must take the will of God as their standard, separating entirely from everything that is displeasing to him. Thousands are betrayed into sin because they leave the citadel of the heart unguarded. They become engrossed with the cares of this world, and true godliness is driven from their hearts. They rush eagerly into speculation, seeking to accumulate more of this world's treasure. Thus they place themselves where it is impossible for them to advance in the Christian life. "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." And while you pray, strive earnestly to guard your heart from all pollution; for prayer without effort is a solemn mockery.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Every moment of our time belongs to God, and we have no right so to burden ourselves with cares that there is no room in our hearts for his love. At the same time, we

are to obey the injunction, "Not slothful in business." We are to labor, that we may have to give to him that needs. God does not desire us to allow our powers to rust through inaction. Christians must work; they must engage in business; and they can go a certain length in this line, and commit no sin against God.

But too often Christians allow the cares of life to take the time that belongs to God. They devote their precious moments to business or to amusement. Their whole energies are employed in acquiring earthly treasure. In so doing they place themselves on forbidden ground. Many professing Christians are very careful that all their business transactions shall bear the stamp of strict honesty, but dishonesty marks their relations with God. Absorbed in worldly business, they fail to perform the duties they owe to those around them. Their children are not brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The family altar is neglected; private devotion is forgotten. Eternal interests, instead of being put first, are given only the second place. God is robbed because their best thoughts are given to the world, because their time is spent on things of minor importance. Thus they are ruined, not because of their dishonesty in dealing with their fellow men, but because they have defrauded God of what is rightfully his own.

The maxim, "Religion must give way to business, is Satan's device to lead men astray." He who follows this rule may think that he is the soul of honor, but his life is one long act of complicated robbery against God. And when this life closes, of what use to him will be the treasure he has lost so much to gain?

The folly of giving all to the world is illustrated in the parable of the foolish rich man. He had been greatly prospered by the Lord, but instead of giving God what was his due, "he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Is it any wonder that the Lord said to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided"?

Like the rich man, many today are living wholly for the world. The deception of the enemy is upon them, and their senses are perverted. Under this spell they sacrifice eternal riches for worldly treasures, which will be theirs no longer when their life history closes; and in God's eyes they are fools.

Through the love of the world Satan deadens the senses of men. Are you going to allow him to lead you astray? It is infinitely better for you to struggle with poverty now, to endure privation and neglect, to see your cherished hopes shattered, and to know that you have a title to the heavenly mansions, than to possess much worldly treasure, and in the last great day hear the irrevocable sentence: "I know you not." "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

But while Christians are to be distinct from the world, they are not to seclude themselves, raising a wall between themselves and their fellows, because of the temptations that they fear will assail them. They have a work to do for those around them. Great sacrifices have been made for their redemption, and Christ says to them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Temptations will assail them, their work will be made hard; for their foes will be tireless in their efforts to dishearten them.

But Christ is their Leader, the Captain of their salvation. If they are clothed with the whole armor of God, if they fight as in view of the heavenly universe, they will conquer in his name.

When trials come to those who have separated from the world, is it not enough for them to know that Christ endured the same afflictions? He was the Majesty of heaven, the well-beloved Son of God. But when he came to this earth to deliver men from the bondage of sin, they saw in him no beauty, that they should desire him. They did not understand his union with the Father; they had no conception of his divine character. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The world's Redeemer was "despised and rejected of men." Those whom he came to save esteemed him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

Even so it is with the followers of Christ. They are the sons and daughters of God, joint-heirs with Christ. The kingdoms of the world belong to them. But worldly men are actuated by worldly principles; they can understand no others. They see a people few in number, weak and unpopular, struggling against evil. In their ranks very few of the wealthy or learned are to be seen. They see them bearing the cross of humiliation, acquainted with sorrow and grief. They see them afflicting their souls before God, chastened and humbled because of their sins. All this the world sees, and they think that there is nothing desirable in the lot of a Christian.

But tho God's people are strangers among men, accounted weak, foolish, and unworthy of notice, tho the world fails to discern the relationship that exists between them and God, yet they are more precious in his sight than the gold of Ophir. "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."

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." The followers of Christ must not be surprised if they are not recognized by the world. As the world discerned not Christ, as it refused to acknowledge his divinity and sonship, so it will slight and neglect his followers. "The world knoweth us not," writes John, "because it knew him not." But this should not be a source of discouragement and trial. "Know ye not," asks James, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

We are living in the great day of intercession, the day of atonement, and to each one comes the word of warning, "Keep thyself unspotted from the world." You cannot with safety join hands with the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Better than all the friendship of the world is the friendship of Jesus Christ. Better than a title to the noblest palace on the earth is a title to the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare. And better than all the words of earthly praise, will be the words of Jesus to his faithful servants, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

December 24, 1896

The Test of Christian Life

The Bible is an unerring guide for man in every phase of life. In it the conditions of eternal life are plainly stated. The distinction between right and wrong is clearly defined, and sin is shown in its most revolting character, clothed with the robes of death. If this guide is studied and obeyed, it is to

us as the pillar of cloud, which led the children of Israel through the wilderness; but if it is ignored and disobeyed, it will witness against us in the day of judgment. God will judge all by his word; according as they have fulfilled or disregarded its requirements, they will stand or fall.

The Bible demands that right principles be observed in all business transactions. In the strongest terms it condemns false dealing, and calls for purity in thought and word and action. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his neighbor. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in his heart." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," said Christ, "do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." These words are of the highest importance, and should be our rule of life. But do we carry out this divine principle? Do we, when brought into contact with our fellow men, deal with them just as we would desire them to deal with us in similar circumstances?

God tests men by their daily life. But many who make high professions of service to him, can not bear this test. In their eagerness for gain they use false weights and deceitful balances. The Bible is not made their rule of life, and therefore they do not see the necessity of strict integrity and faithfulness. Anxious to amass wealth, they allow scheming dishonesty to come into their work. The world watches their conduct, and is not slow to measure their Christian worth by their business dealings. God sees their dishonesty, too, and he asks: "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth, wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works." "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight."

God's children should remember that by their conduct in business deal they are deciding whether or not they are entitled to be called his sons and daughters. We determine the character of a tree by its fruits, and Christ said of men: "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." If we allow unfaithfulness to characterize our work, we are bearing briers and thorns. While we continue in this way, we can not truly serve the Lord, and we can never hope to enter his kingdom.

It is not the greatness of the offense that makes it wrong in the sight of God. He has established principles of justice which he can not change without changing his whole nature; and the least departure from truth and rectitude is looked upon as a transgression of the law of God. The man who will overreach his fellow man in small matters, will, under stronger temptation, overreach him in greater matters. By continued indulgence in petty sins, men become accustomed to wrong-doing. In their eyes, sin loses its exceeding sinfulness; but holy angels, whose work it is to watch the development of character, and weigh moral worth, make a record of every transgression in the books of heaven. In the day of judgment many will be shut out of the city of God by sins which they supposed to be unworthy of notice.

When pecuniary gain is involved, one act of dishonesty is not thought to be so sinful. But those who secure property by false representation bring condemnation on themselves. And the Bible always tells the same story. With it sin is always sin, whether committed by the possessor of millions or by the beggar in the streets. Better a life of deepest poverty crowned with God's blessings, than all the world's treasure without it. We may be very rich; but unless we have the consciousness that God honors us, we are poor indeed.

Men may claim to be true servants of God, but if they swerve from the path of uprightness, deformity and impurity still exist in their character. They may try to appear what they are not; they may talk of the mercy and love of Jesus; but their words are as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." They may be blinded to the guile in their hearts, and may think themselves righteous; but in the eyes of a holy God they are in the bonds of iniquity.

Christ defined an honest man as one who would manifest unbending integrity in all his business transactions, whether his course brought loss or gain to him. And the man who is indeed connected with God, who keeps his law in truth, also keeps his life pure. His plans are in harmony with the lessons of Christ; his words and actions are approved by a just God; for all his dealings with his fellow men show uprightness. His principles are based upon the sure foundation, and his conduct in worldly matters is a transcript of the principles that govern him. His unbending integrity shines forth as a light in the moral darkness of the world.

He who would be a faithful servant of Christ, must listen to the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. His ideas and principles must be kept pure by the power of God. Every day he must learn to become more worthy of the trust committed to him. His mind must be quickened by divine power; his character uncontaminated by worldliness. At times he must turn aside from active life to commune with God, to hear his voice saying, "Be still, and know that I am God." The truth as it is in Jesus must be brought into his place of business; its searching maxims must try the purposes of his soul; its principles must be applied to every transaction. The Christian who is thus sanctified to God can take Jesus with him wherever he goes. No guile is found in his mouth; for his affections are placed on things above; not on the things of this earth. He is indeed a light in the world, a living epistle, "known and read of all men."

Ever be true to right principles. Do not disconnect from them for a moment; if they are inwrought with all you do, they will be life to your soul, abiding with you in all your difficulties, witnessing to all your business transactions, guiding you in all the relations of life, controlling in places where no eye but God's sees, no ear but God's hears. If you hold fast your integrity under all circumstances, you may know that God's signature is upon your work.

Then, though you may hear of wars and pestilences, of thefts, robberies, and bankruptcies, you may rest in the assurance that you possess true riches; for your treasure is laid up in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."