

Ellen G. White 1910 Sign Of The Times

January 25, 1910

Our Message

The fourteenth chapter of Revelation outlines the work that is to be done by the people of God just before the second advent of our Saviour. Three messages are there represented, which must go to all the inhabitants of the world.

John writes of an angel which he saw flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

These three angels represent the people who accept the light of God's messages, and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declared to His followers, "Ye are the light of the world." To every soul that accepts Jesus, the cross of Calvary speaks: "Behold the worth of the soul. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.'" Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for this time, and it is to be far-reaching as eternity.

From the beginning of this world's history, there has been opposition between the forces of good and of evil. God declared, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Man vainly attempted to exalt himself by following his own way, in harmony with Satan's temptation and in opposition to the will of God. He thus gained a knowledge of evil, but he gained it at the cost of his loyalty; and his disobedience opened the flood-gates of woe upon our world.

Ever since the fall of Adam, men have been trying to exalt themselves by the same means. When will they learn that the only way to true exaltation is the path of obedience? Men's plans may seem to them to be exceedingly wise, but there is no safety in following them unless they are in accordance with a "Thus saith the Lord."

Separate from the World

The Lord called out His people Israel, and separated them from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He made them the depositaries of His law; and He designed through them to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself. Through them the light of heaven was to shine out

to the dark places of the earth, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from their idolatry to serve the living and true God.

Had the Hebrews been true to their trust, they would have been a power in the world. God would have been their defense, and He would have exalted them above all other nations. His might and truth would have been revealed through them, and they would have stood forth under His wise and holy rule as an example of the superiority of His government over every form of idolatry. But they did not keep their covenant with God. They followed after the idolatrous practises of other nations; and instead of making their Creator's name a praise in the earth, they brought it into contempt.

Yet the purpose of God must be accomplished. The knowledge of His will must be given to the world. God brought the hand of oppression upon His people, and scattered them as captives among the nations. In affliction many of them repented of their transgressions, and sought the Lord. Thus scattered throughout the countries of the heathen, they spread abroad the knowledge of the true God.

In this day, God has called His church, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth,—the messages of the first, second, and third angels,—He has separated a people from the churches and from the world, to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositories of His law, and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world.

Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, and is the message for this time, will be no less widespread. The banner on which is inscribed, “The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” is to be raised aloft. The power of the first and second messages is to be intensified in the third. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice by an angel flying in the midst of heaven, and it will command the attention of the world.

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. But men are not left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against the worship of the beast and his image is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why the judgments are inflicted, and may have opportunity to escape.

A Dividing Message

In the issue of the contest, all Christendom will be divided into two great classes,—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark. Altho church and state will unite their power to compel “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,” to receive “the mark of the beast,” yet the true people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds “them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God,” and singing the “song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”

The third angel's message increases in importance as we near the close of this earth's history. It is the last offer of mercy to the world, the most solemn message ever given to mortals. In heaven there is a record kept of the impieties of nations, of families, of individuals. God may bear long while the account goes on; calls to repentance and offers of pardon may be given; yet a time will come when the account will be full, when the soul's decision will have been made, when by his own choice man's destiny will have been fixed. Then the signal will be given for judgment to be executed.

The forbearance that God has exercised toward the wicked has emboldened men in transgression; but their punishment will be none the less certain and terrible for being long delayed. "The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The very fact of His reluctance to execute justice, testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments, and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor.

All the inhabitants of earth are soon to meet the great Lawgiver over His broken law. There are many, many in the popular churches who know little of the real meaning of the message for this time. I appeal to them not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which say so plainly that the end is near. O how many who have not sought their soul's salvation, will soon make the bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!"

When will men learn that God is God, not man, and that He does not change? Every calamity, every death, is a witness to the power of evil and to the truth of the living God. The Word of God is life, and it will abide forever. Through all eternity it will stand fast. How can man, knowing what God is and what He has done, choose Satan's way instead of God's way? There is only one path to Paradise restored,—the path of obedience.

February 1, 1910

God's Eternal Law

Adam and Eve, at their creation, had a knowledge of the law of God. They were acquainted with its claims upon them; its precepts were written upon their hearts. When man fell by transgression, the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given; and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin-offering, were established.

Adam taught his descendants the law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. But notwithstanding the gracious provision for man's redemption, there were few who accepted it and rendered obedience. By transgression the world became so vile that it was necessary to cleanse it by the Flood from its corruption. The law was preserved by Noah and his family, and Noah taught his descendants the Ten Commandments.

As men again departed from God, the Lord chose Abraham, of whom He declared, "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." To him was given the rite of circumcision, which was a sign that those who received it were devoted to the service of God,—a pledge that they would remain separate from idolatry, and would obey the law of God. The

failure of Abraham's descendants to keep this pledge, as shown in their disposition to form alliances with the heathen and adopt their practices, was the cause of their sojourn and bondage in Egypt.

The Written Law

In their intercourse with idolaters, and their forced submission to the Egyptians, the divine precepts became still further corrupted with the vile and cruel teachings of heathenism. Therefore when the Lord brought them forth from Egypt, He made known to them once more the requirements of His law. The law was not spoken at this time exclusively for the benefit of the Hebrews. God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world.

The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love. They stand forth alone, bearing the distinct, awful significance of their supreme importance. They mean life to the obedient, and death to the disobedient.

The law of God is as sacred as Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. Through the ages that law has been preserved as the highest standard of morality. Not all the inventions of science or the imaginations of fruitful minds have been able to discover one essential duty not covered by this code.

God's law is the security of life and property, of peace and happiness. It was given to secure our present and eternal good. A thoughtful kindness runs through every enactment. Each commandment is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power.

The Sabbath Not New

The Sabbath institution originated in Eden, and is therefore as old as the world itself. In six days the great work of creation had been accomplished; and God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested." The Sabbath was observed by all the patriarchs, from creation down. During the bondage in Egypt, the Israelites were forced by their taskmasters to violate the Sabbath, and to a great extent they lost the knowledge of its sacredness. When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, the very first words of the fourth commandment were, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," showing that the Sabbath was not then instituted; we are pointed back for its origin to creation.

Before the law was given from Sinai, God wrought a miracle each week to impress the people with the sanctity of the Sabbath. He rained manna from heaven for their food, and each day they gathered this manna; but on the sixth day they gathered twice as much, according to the directions of Moses: "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day."

"The children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; ... unto the borders of the land of Canaan." Thus for forty years God worked each week a miracle before His people, to show them that His Sabbath was a sacred day.

A Sign of God's Law

God gave the Sabbath to His people to be a continual sign of His love and mercy, and of their obedience. As He had rested upon this day and been refreshed, so He desired His people to rest and be refreshed. It was a continual reminder to them that they were included in His covenant of grace. Throughout your generations, He said, the Sabbath is to be My sign, My pledge, to you that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you; that I have chosen you, and set you apart as My peculiar people.

When the Sabbath was changed, the seal was taken from the law. Now the disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it, by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator's memorial and the sign of His authority. The prophet Isaiah thus points out the ordinance which has been forsaken: "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."

This prophecy also applies in our own time. A breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed; but the time has come for that institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired, and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. The Lord has His messengers, whom He bids to proclaim His law to be changeless in its character, as enduring as eternity.

Thus the Sabbath is a token between God and His people. It is God's holy day, given to man as a day on which to rest and reflect upon sacred things. God designed it to be observed through every age, as a perpetual covenant. His people are to regard the Sabbath as a peculiar treasure, a trust to be carefully cherished.

As we observe the Sabbath, let us remember that it is the sign Heaven has given to man that he is accepted in the Beloved; that if he is obedient, he may enter the city of God, and partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life. As we refrain from labor on the seventh day, we testify to the world that we are on God's side, and are striving to live in perfect conformity to His commandments. Thus we recognize as our Sovereign the God who made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh.

From beginning to end, God's law is a law of love. John says: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as tho I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments." "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."

February 8, 1910

The Dragon Voice

To the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. Subjects of vast importance were presented to him in figures and symbols, that those who should turn from error to truth might become intelligent concerning the perils and

conflicts before them. The history of the Christian world to the very close of time, was revealed to him. With great clearness he saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing message which is to ripen the harvest of the earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner, or as fagots for the fires of the last day.

John beheld in vision the redeemed people of God. He saw the triumph of those who had gained the victory over the beast and over his image. He marked the trials which they had endured for the truth's sake. He saw their unyielding firmness in adhering to the commandments of God against the oppressive powers that sought to force them to disobedience.

Important Symbols

Under the symbols of the great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamblike horns, the earthly governments which would be especially engaged in trampling upon God's law and persecuting His people, were presented to John. Their war is to be carried on till the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, are represented as greatly in the minority. In the last days, only a remnant still exists. John speaks of them as those that "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

For many centuries, first through paganism and then through the Papacy, Satan exerted his powers to blot from the earth God's faithful witnesses. Both heathen and papists were actuated by the same dragon spirit. They differed only in that the Romish apostate, making a pretense of serving God, was the more dangerous and cruel foe. Through the agency of Romanism., Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the true people of God suffered under the dragon's ire.

A New Persecutor

At the time when the Papacy, robbed of its strength, was forced to desist from persecution, John beheld a new power coming up to echo the dragon's voice, and carry forward the same cruel and blasphemous work. This power, the last that is to wage war against the church and the law of God, is represented by a beast with lamblike horns. The beasts preceding it had risen from the sea; but this came up out of the earth, representing the peaceful rise of the nation which it symbolized—the United States.

The "two horns like a lamb" well represent the character of our own Government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles,—Republicanism and Protestantism. These principles are the secret of our power and prosperity as a nation. Those who first found an asylum on the shores of America, rejoiced that they had reached a country free from the arrogant claims of popery and the tyranny of kingly rule. They determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.

But the stern tracings of the prophetic pencil reveal a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamblike horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Prophecy declares that he will say to them that dwell on the earth, "that they should make an image to the beast," and that it will cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell,

save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Thus Protestantism is to follow in the steps of the Papacy.

God's Warning

It is at this time that the third angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.

In marked contrast with this multitude stands a little company who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." These are they of whom Isaiah speaks: "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach. The restorer of paths to dwell in." The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Romish power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired, and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. And this message is the last to be given before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following its proclamation, the Son of Man is seen by the prophet coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth.

February 22, 1910

The Final Test of God's People

In the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, the apostle-prophet John speaks of "another angel" whom he saw coming down from heaven, having great power, so that the whole earth "was lightened with his glory." With a strong voice the angel cried, mightily, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

It is the church of Rome which, thinking to prove itself not only equal to God, but above God, has changed the rest-day of Jehovah, placing the first day of the week where the seventh should be. And the Protestant world has taken this child of the Papacy to be regarded as sacred. This is called in the Word of God "her fornication." Thus the people of the world, in giving their sanction to a false sabbath and trampling under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, "have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Wherever the papal sabbath is honored in preference to the Sabbath of the Lord, there is the man of sin exalted above the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

The angels and the holy inhabitants of other worlds watch with intense interest the events taking place on this earth. Now as the close of the great controversy between Christ and Satan draws near, the heavenly host behold men trampling upon the law of Jehovah, making void the memorial of God,—the sign between Him and His commandment-keeping people,—setting it aside as a thing of naught, something to be despised, while the rival sabbath is exalted. They see men claiming to be Christians, calling upon the world to observe this spurious sabbath that they have made.

The Special Point of Controversy

When the Sabbath shall become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. Satan will excite indignation against the humble remnant who conscientiously refuse to accept the customs and traditions of error. Blinded by the prince of darkness, popular religionists will see only as he sees, and feel as he feels. They will determine as he determines, and oppress as he has oppressed. Liberty of conscience, which has cost this nation so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. The church and the world will unite, and the world will lend to the church her power to crush out the right of the people to worship God according to His Word.

It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state, ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. This argument will appear conclusive; and against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will finally be issued a decree denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death.

Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. This is the mystery of iniquity, the devising of satanic agencies, carried into effect by the man of sin.

An Ancient Example

The decree which is to go forth against the people of God in the near future, will be in some respects similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews in the time of Esther. The Persian edict sprang from the malice of Haman toward Mordecai. Not that Mordecai had done Haman harm, but he had refused to flatter his vanity by showing him the reverence which belongs only to God.

The king's decision against the Jews was secured under false pretenses,—a misrepresentation of that peculiar people. Satan instigated the scheme in order to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God. But his plots were defeated by a counter-power that reigns among the children of men. Angels that excel in strength were commissioned to protect the people of God, and the plots of their adversaries returned upon their own heads.

History will repeat itself. In this age the test will be on the point of Sabbath observance. The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past, is now at work to gain control of the falling churches, that through them he may condemn and put to death all who will not worship the idol sabbath.

Our battle will not be with men, altho it may appear so; we war "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." But if the people of God will put their trust in Him, and by faith rely upon His power, the devices of Satan will be defeated in our time, as signally as in the days of Mordecai.

The people of God will enter into no controversy with the world over this matter. They will simply take God's Word for their guide, and maintain their allegiance to Him whose commandments they keep. They will obey the words of Jehovah, "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. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore ... for a perpetual covenant."

To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than man? The decisive hour is even at hand. Satan is putting forth his utmost efforts in a last despairing struggle against Christ and His followers. In this closing scene, false teachers are employing every possible device to stimulate the hardened sinner in his rebellious daring, to confirm the questioning, the doubting, the unbelieving, and by misrepresentation and falsehood to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.

Who are prepared to stand firmly under the banner on which is inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"?

March 8, 1910

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion

At infinite cost provision has been made for men to reach perfection of Christian character. Those who have been impressed by the Holy Scriptures as the voice of God, and desire to follow its teachings, are to be daily learning, daily receiving spiritual fervor and power, which have been provided for every true believer in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a free, working, independent agency. The God of heaven uses His Spirit as it pleases Him; and human minds, human judgment, and human methods can no more set boundaries to its working, or prescribe the channel through which it shall operate, than they can say to the wind, "I bid you to blow in a certain direction, and to conduct yourself in such and such a manner." As the wind moves in its force, bending and breaking the lofty trees in its path, so the Holy Spirit influences human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe its work.

Born from Above

When Nicodemus, a great teacher in Israel, sought the Master in that night interview on the Mount of Olives, Jesus laid before him the conditions of conversion, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God."

In astonishment Nicodemus said, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Here the Jewish ruler showed his unbelief; but Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Perplexed and wondering, Nicodemus said, "How can these things be?" Jesus said, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" A teacher, a man among wise men, a man who supposed that he was able to comprehend the science of religion, and yet stumbling at the doctrine of conversion!

Nicodemus was not willing to admit the truth, because he could not understand all that was connected with the operation of the power of God; and yet he accepted the facts of nature, altho he could not explain or even comprehend them. Like other men of all ages, he was looking to forms and precise ceremonies as more essential to religion than the deep movings of the Spirit of God.

Jesus continued, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By nature the heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." No

human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind .. is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old life, but a transformation of the nature. There is a death to sin and self, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.

An Invisible Worker

Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus that, altho he could not see the wind, yet he could discern its action. The operating agency was not revealed to view; men could not tell whence it came or whither it went. They could not define by what law it was governed; but they could see the effects produced by its action. So this teacher in Israel might never be able to explain the process of conversion, but he would be able to discern its effects. No human reasoning, no skill of the most learned men, can define the operations of the Holy Spirit upon human minds and characters; yet they can see the effects upon the life and actions.

The Spirit of God is manifested in different ways upon different individuals. One, under the movings of this power, will tremble before the Word of God. His convictions are so deep that a tumult of feeling seems to rage in his heart, and his whole being is prostrated under the convicting power of the truth.

When the Lord speaks forgiveness to such a repenting soul, he is full of ardor, full of love to God, full of earnestness and energy, and the life-giving Spirit which he has received can not be repressed. Christ is in him, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. His feelings of love are as deep and ardent as were his distress and agony. His soul is like the fountain of the great deep broken up, and he pours forth his thanksgiving and praise, his gratitude and joy, until the heavenly harps are tuned to notes of rejoicing with him. He has a story to tell, but not in any precise, common, methodical way. He is a soul ransomed through the merits of Jesus Christ, and his whole being is thrilled with the realization of the salvation of God.

Others are brought to Christ in a more gentle way. Men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under the operations of the Spirit. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike.

When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its working in the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners.

The Holy Spirit moves upon the inner self until it becomes conscious of the divine power of God, and every spiritual faculty is quickened to decided action. A deep and thorough work is wrought in the soul, which the world can not see. Those who know not what it is to have an experience in the things of God, who know not what it is to be justified by faith, who have not the witness of the Spirit that they are accepted of Jesus Christ, are in need of being born again.

Only by Experience

What can the world know of Christian experience? Verily, nothing! "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." The great Teacher explained this instruction by saying, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Those who not only hear but do the words of Christ, make manifest in their character the internal operations of the Holy Spirit. The result is demonstrated in the outward conduct.

If one who daily communes with God errs from the path, if he turns for a moment from looking steadfastly to Jesus, it is not because he sins wilfully; for when he sees his mistake, he fastens his eyes again upon Jesus; and the fact that he has erred does not make him less dear to the heart of God. When reproved for his mistake, he learns a lesson from the words of his Saviour, turns the mistake into a victory, and takes heed that he be not again deceived.

The Christian can not serve the world, or yield to the claims of any power, relation, or society that will make him deny Christ, dishonor God, or prove disloyal to His holy law. The Christian is to surrender himself unreservedly to God as His purchased possession.

The life of the Christian is hid with Christ in God; and God acknowledges those who are His, declaring, "Ye are My witnesses." They testify that divine power is influencing their hearts and shaping their conduct. Their works give evidence that the Spirit is moving upon the inward man, so that those who are associated with them are convinced that they are making Christ their pattern. Those who truly love God have the internal evidence that they are beloved of God. They have communion with Christ, and their hearts are warmed with fervent love toward Him. God claims them for Himself, and will impart to them special favors, enabling them to be complete in Christ, more than conquerors through Him who has loved them.

March 15, 1910

The Gifts of the Spirit

Before He left His disciples, Christ breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Again He said, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you." But not until after the ascension was this gift received in its fulness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working, was the outpouring of the Spirit bestowed. Then in a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ.

"When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," the Spirit "dividing to every man severally as He will." The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God.

Talents and Gifts

The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same

Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Not all the gifts are imparted to each believer, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised, according to his need for the Lord's work.

In all the Lord's arrangements, there is nothing more beautiful than His plan of giving to men and women a diversity of gifts. The church is His garden, adorned with a variety of trees, plants, and flowers. He does not expect the hyssop to assume the proportions of the cedar, nor the olive to reach the height of the stately palm. Many have received but a limited religious and intellectual training, but God has a work for this class to do, if they will labor in humility, trusting in Him.

God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts. One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special skill in explaining the Word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for good, because God works with the laborer. To one God gives the word of wisdom, to another knowledge; but all are to work under the same Head. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations; but "it is the same God which worketh all in all."

Mutual Interdependence

Different gifts are imparted to different ones, that the workers may feel their need of one another. God bestows these gifts, and they are employed in His service, not to glorify the possessor, not to uplift man, but to uplift the world's Redeemer. They are to be used for the good of all mankind, by representing the truth, not testifying to a falsehood.

It may seem to some that the contrast between their gifts and the gifts of a fellow laborer is too great to allow them to unite in harmonious effort; but when they remember that there are varied minds to be reached, and that some will reject the truth as it is presented by one laborer, only to open their hearts to the same truth as presented in a different manner by another, they will hopefully endeavor to labor together in unity. Their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same Spirit. In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed; and as each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples.

Former and Latter Rain

The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the "former rain;" and glorious was the result. But the "latter rain" will be still more abundant. What is the promise to those living in these last days?—"Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee." "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

Christ declares that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But by some this promise is not appreciated as it should be; its fulfillment is not realized as it might be. Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ. When His

disciples are connected with Christ, when the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, even the poorest and most ignorant of them will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe.

As the divine endowment—the power of the Holy Spirit—was given to the disciples, so it will today be given to all who seek aright. This power alone is able to make us wise unto salvation, and to fit us for the courts above. Christ wants to give us a blessing that will make us holy. “These things have I spoken unto you,” He says, “that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself,—a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.

The promise of the gifts is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. “These signs shall follow them that believe.” The gifts of Him who has all power in heaven and in earth, are in store for His children,—gifts so precious that they come to us through the costly sacrifice of the Redeemer’s blood; gifts that will satisfy the deepest craving of the heart; gifts lasting as eternity.

Will you not come to God as little children, appropriate His promises, plead them before Him as His own words? If you do, you will receive fulness of joy.

March 22, 1910

The Sign of Loyalty

In the issue of the great contest between the forces of good and of evil, two parties are to be developed,—those who “worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark,” and those who receive “the seal of the living God,” and have “the Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

In the fourth commandment is found the seal of God’s law. This only, of all the ten, brings to view the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law was given.

The Sabbath enjoined by the fourth commandment was instituted to commemorate the work of creation. Had the seventh day always been kept, there would never have been an idolater, and atheist, or an infidel. The sacred observance of God’s holy day would have directed the minds of men to their Creator, the true and living God. Everything in nature also would have brought Him to their remembrance; and would have borne witness to His power and love.

The Seal of God

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made. Those who obey this law will bear the seal of God, for He has set apart this day as a sign of loyalty between Himself and His people. To Moses on Mount Sinai He said, “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, 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.”

The mark of the beast is the opposite of this,—the observance of the first day of the week as the sabbath enforced by human law. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God.

Claimed as Her Mark

As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, ... because by keeping Sunday strictly they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.”

The Roman church thus declares that by observing the first day of the week as the sabbath, Protestants are recognizing her power to legislate in divine things. And it is true that those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe a false sabbath in the place of the true, are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded.

The Roman church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome,—that “the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.” The papist can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the movement for Sunday enforcement gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

With rapid steps we are approaching this period. When the Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution: when the state shall use its power to enforce the decrees and sustain the institutions of the church,—then will Protestant America have formed an image to the Papacy, and there will be a national apostasy which will end only in national ruin.

God Rather than Man

The laws of nations should be respected as long as they do not conflict with the laws of God; but when there is collision between them, every true disciple of Christ will say, as did Peter when commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Paul wrote to the Romans, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” But there is a point beyond which it is impossible to maintain union and harmony without the sacrifice of principle. Separation then becomes an absolute duty.

Christ never purchased peace and friendship by compromise with evil. The life of Jesus, the suffering which He endured from a perverse nation, demonstrate to His followers that there must be no sacrifice of principle. Peace is too dearly obtained if purchased by the smallest concession to Satan’s agencies. The least surrender of principle entangles us in the snares of Satan.

The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict, in which all the world will act a part. Men have honored Satan’s principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority. But God has set

His seal upon His royal requirement. Each Sabbath institution, both true and false, bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each.

The great decision now to be made by every one is, whether he will receive the mark of the beast and his image, or the seal of the living and true God And now, when we are on the very borders of the eternal world, what can be of so much value to us as to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there that we should prize above His truth and His law? What is so necessary as a knowledge of “what saith the Scripture?”

March 29, 1910

Christ and the Law

At a very early age Jesus began to act for Himself in the formation of His character, and not even respect and love for His parents could turn Him from obedience to God’s Word. “It is written” was His reason for every act that varied from the family customs.

But the influence of the rabbis made His life a bitter one. Even in His youth He had to learn the hard lesson of silence and patient endurance. His brothers, as the sons of Joseph were called, sided with the rabbis. They insisted that the traditions of the Jewish priests must be heeded, as if they were the requirements of God; and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. His strict obedience to the law of God they condemned as stubbornness.

They were surprised at the knowledge and wisdom He showed in answering the rabbis. They knew that He had not received instruction from the wise men, yet they could not but see that He was an instructor to them. They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that He had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant.

All through His ministry to this earth, Christ was a living representative of the law. No violation of its holy precepts was found in His life. Looking upon a nation of witnesses who were seeking occasion to condemn Him, He could say unchallenged, “Which of you convicteth Me of sin?”

In His sermon on the mount, Jesus did not dwell on the specifications of the law, but He did not leave His hearers to conclude that He had come to set aside its requirements. He knew that spies stood ready to seize upon every word that might be wrested to serve their purpose. He knew the prejudice that existed in the minds of many of His hearers, and He said nothing to unsettle their faith in the religion and institutions that had been committed to them through Moses. Christ Himself had given both the moral and the ceremonial law. He did not come to destroy confidence in His own instruction. It was because of His great reverence for the law and the prophets, that He sought to break through the wall of traditional requirements which hemmed in the Jews. While He set aside their false interpretations of the law, He carefully guarded His disciples against yielding up the vital truths committed to the Hebrews.

The Pharisees prided themselves on their obedience to the law; yet they knew so little of its principles through every-day practise, that to them the Saviour’s words sounded like heresy. As He swept away the rubbish under which the truth had been buried, they thought He was sweeping

away the truth itself. They whispered to one another that He was making light of the law. He read their thoughts, and answered them, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Here Jesus refutes the charge of the Pharisees. His mission to the world is to vindicate the sacred claims of that law which they charge Him with breaking. If the law of God could have been changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have suffered the consequences of our transgression. He came to explain the relation of the law to man, and to illustrate its precepts by His own life of obedience.

God has given us His holy precepts, because He loves mankind. To shield us from the results of transgression, He reveals the principles of righteousness. The law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. God desires us to be happy, and He gave us the precepts of the law that in obeying them we might have joy. When at Jesus' birth the angels sang,

"Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, good-will toward men" they were declaring the principles of the law which He had come to magnify and make honorable.

When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, God made known to men the holiness of His character, that by contrast they might see the sinfulness of their own. The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour. It would do this as its principles were applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. This work it is still to do. In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain; and as the Holy Spirit of God touches the heart, as the light of Christ reveals to men their need of His cleansing blood and His justifying righteousness, the law is still an agent in bringing us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

"Till heaven and earth pass," said Jesus, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The sun shining in the heavens, the solid earth upon which you dwell, are God's witnesses that His law is changeless and eternal. Tho they may pass away, the divine precepts shall endure. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." The system of types that pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, was to be abolished at His death; but the precepts of the Decalogue are as immutable as the throne of God.

Since "the law of the Lord is perfect," every variation from it must be evil. Those who disobey the commandments of God, and teach others to do so, are condemned by Christ. The Saviour's life of obedience maintained the claims of the law, and showed the excellence of character that obedience would develop. All who obey as He did, are likewise declaring that the law is "holy, and just, and good."

Jesus takes up the commandments separately, and explains the depth and breadth of their requirement. Instead of removing one jot of their force, He shows how far-reaching their principles are, and exposes the fatal mistake of the Jews in their outward show of obedience. He declares that by the evil thought or the lustful look the law of God is transgressed. One who becomes a party to the least injustice, is breaking the law, and degrading his own moral nature. Murder first exists in the mind. He who gives hatred a place in his heart, is setting his feet in the path of the murderer; and his offerings are abhorrent to God.

The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. The command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," is a promise. God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach.

April 12, 1910

Acquainted with God

Our Saviour said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." And God declared by the prophet, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am Jehovah, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Jesus declared to His disciples, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

In the last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world."

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered, "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?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." Only as we contemplate the great plan of redemption can we have a just appreciation of the character of God. The work of creation was a manifestation of His love; but the gift of God to save the guilty race, alone reveals the infinite depths of divine tenderness and compassion. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

While the law of God is maintained, and its justice vindicated, the sinner can be pardoned. The dearest gift that Heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." By that gift, men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin, to become children of God. Paul says, "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God, and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, “Our Father,” which is a sign of our affection for Him, a pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. And the Son of God, beholding the heirs of grace, “is not ashamed to call them brethren.” They have even a more sacred relationship to God than have the angels who have never fallen.

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean, when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue can not utter it; pen can not portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and breadth, the depth and height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.

Yet as we study the Bible, and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. And it will be ours to realize the blessing which Paul desired for the Ephesian church, when he prayed “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe.”

May 10, 1910

Principles of Service

Success in the work of God is not the result of chance, of accident, or of destiny, but the outworking of God’s providence, the award of faith and discretion, of virtue and persevering labor. It is the practise of truth that brings success and strength of moral power. The bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness are to be welcomed as the light of the mind; the principles of the character of Christ are to be made the principles of the human character. All of man’s attainments, all his capabilities, are to be laid at the foot of the cross of Calvary. His own righteousness is to be surrendered. Counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, and with the meekness and humility of a little child, he is to receive the engrafted Word, which is able to save the soul.

The life of the soul depends upon spiritual conformity to the life of Christ. The inviting paths that self may choose, will lead away from Christ. Self must be humbled before God; every obstacle to service be removed. When the human life is in communion with the life of Christ, then it is sanctified through the truth, and the prayer of Christ is answered: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.”

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is the love that is the fulfilling of the law. Only he whose heart is filled with compassion for fallen man, who loves to a purpose, revealing that love by the performance of Christlike deeds, will be able to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. He who loves not those for whom the Father has done so much, knows not God.

True Christianity All-Embracing

Theology is valueless unless it is saturated with the love of Christ. True Christianity diffuses love through the whole being. It touches every vital part,—the brain, the heart, the helping hands, the feet,—enabling men to stand firmly where God requires them to stand, lest the lame be turned out of the way. The burning, consuming love of Christ for perishing souls is the life of the whole system of Christianity.

The worker for God needs spiritual life. This life will give vigor to soul and body. Spiritual life yields to its possessor that which all the world is seeking, but which can never be obtained without an entire surrender to God. The contemplation of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, will make our lives sweet and fragrant, and give us power to perfect a Christian experience.

Laborer for God, the work given you is to represent Christ. He came to this world to shed upon you His own brightness and peace. Close the windows of your heart against the atmosphere of unbelief, and open them heavenward. It is your privilege to face the light, to talk faith and life. Let your countenance reflect the joy of the Lord. Speak of His goodness, tell of His power. Then your light will shine more and more distinctly. Above your trials and disappointments will be revealed the reflection of a pure, healthy, religious life. In the outworking of the inner life, there will be a wonderful peace and joy. You may reflect the beauty of the character of your risen Lord, who, tho He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich in the grace of heaven.

The Greatest Science

We can, we can reveal the likeness of our divine Lord. We can know the science of spiritual life. We can glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are His. O, what an illustrious example we have in the life that Christ lived on this earth! He has shown us what we can accomplish through cooperation with Him. We are to seek for union with Him. “Abide in Me,” He says, “and I in you.” This union is deeper, stronger, truer than any other union. The heart must be filled with the grace of Christ. His will must control us, moving us by His love to suffer with those who suffer, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to feel a deep tenderness for every soul in weakness, sorrow, or distress.

Being partakers of the divine nature, we shall reach forth a helping hand to those in need of relief. Christ’s heart was ever touched with pity at the sight of woe. He died on the cross of Calvary to lift from man the penalty of transgression. He came to our world to make it possible for sinful human beings to obtain salvation. He wept over the sorrow and suffering He saw on every hand. But He would not fail nor be discouraged. He must believe and press forward in order to make it possible for the fallen race to gain life eternal. Christ’s life on earth is a perfect reflection of the divine law. In Him is life and hope and light. Behold Him, and you will be changed into the same likeness, from character to character.

Christ has laid out in figures the plans we are to study and upon which we are to act. The fifth chapter of Matthew is full of precious instruction. Read this chapter, and write it upon the tablets of the soul. The Saviour declares, "Ye are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." If the character is not under the molding influence of the Spirit of God, if we have not the faith that works by love and purifies the soul from all objectionable tendencies, hereditary and cultivated, what does our profession avail? Where there should be seen the sweetness of humility, combined with firmness and solidity of character, there is seen a hard spirit, which is not a savor of life unto life, but of death unto death.

God's Will the Channel of Life

The life of the soul can not be sustained unless it is brought into subjection to the will of God. Every energy is to be exercised in doing the divine will. Our thoughts, if stayed upon God, will be guided by divine love and power.

Those who proclaim the third angel's message, must put on the whole armor of God, that they may stand boldly at their post in the face of detraction and falsehood, fighting the good fight of faith. They are to resist the enemy with the word, "It is written." They are to keep themselves where the three great powers of heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—can be their efficiency. These powers work with the one who gives himself unreservedly to God. The strength of heaven is at the command of God's believing ones. The man who makes God his trust is barricaded by an impregnable wall.

We lose many precious blessings by failing to bring our needs and cares and sorrows to our Saviour. He is the wonderful Counselor. He looks upon His church with intense interest and with tender sympathy. He enters into the depths of our necessities. But our ways are not always His ways. He sees the result of every action, and He asks us to trust patiently in His wisdom, not in the supposedly wise plans of our own making.

Cease not to pray. If the answer tarry, wait for it. Lay all your plans at the feet of your Redeemer. Let your importunate prayers ascend to God. If it be for His name's glory, the soothing words will be spoken, "Be it unto thee according to thy word."

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." These words are a pledge that all that an omnipotent Saviour can bestow will be given to those who trust in Him. As stewards of the grace of heaven, we are to ask in faith, and then wait trustingly for the salvation of God. We are not to step in before Him, trying in our own strength to bring about that which we desire. In His name we are to ask, and then act as tho we believed in His efficiency to send the answer.

May 24, 1910

Light-Bearers

The only light that can illuminate the darkness of a world lying in sin, must come from Christ; and this light is granted to all who will receive it. For, said the great Teacher, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Those who receive the divine radiance are in turn to become light-bearers to the world. Thus our Saviour taught His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill can not be hid.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Religion is not to be held as a precious treasure, jealously hoarded, and enjoyed only by the possessor. True religion can not be thus held; for such a spirit is contrary to the very principle of the Gospel. "Freely ye have received, freely give," are the words of our Master; and again He bids us, "Love one another as I have loved you." If Christ is dwelling in the heart, it is impossible to conceal the light of His presence; it is impossible for that light to grow dim. It will grow brighter and brighter, as day by day the mists of selfishness and sin that envelop the soul are dispelled by its bright beams.

The Need of Shining Lights

The world lies in darkness. All around us there are souls going down to ruin and death. As Christ sheds the light of His love upon His followers, they are to reflect this light upon others. God's Word declares that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The zeal and steadfastness of the lighthouse keeper, in his efforts to save men from destruction, put to shame the faith and devotion of many a professed Christian.

A story is told of the watchman at Calais lighthouse. He "was boasting of the brilliancy of his lantern, which can be seen ten leagues out at sea, when a visitor said to him:

"You speak with enthusiasm, sir, and that is well. I like to hear men tell what they are sure they have and know; but what if one of the lights should chance to go out?"

"Never, never! Absurd, impossible!" replied the sensitive watchman, in consternation at the mere supposition of such a thing. 'Why, sir,' he continued, and pointed to the ocean, 'yonder where nothing can be seen, there are ships going by to every port in the world. If, tonight, one of my burners were out, within six months would come a letter, perhaps from India, perhaps from Australia, perhaps from some port I never heard of before,—a letter, saying that on such a night, at such an hour, at such a minute, the light at Calais burned low and dim; that the watchman neglected his post; that vessels were consequently put in jeopardy on the high seas. Ah, sir,' and his face shone with the intensity of his thought, 'sometimes, in the dark nights, and in the stormy weather, I look out upon the sea, and feel as if the eye of the whole world were looking at my light. Go out? Burn dim? That flame flicker low or fail? No, sir, never!"

Shine for Christ

"Shall Christians, shining for tempted sinners, allow their light to fail? Forever out upon life's billowy sea, are souls we see not, strange sailors in the dark, passing by, struggling, it may be, amid the surges of temptation. Christ is the light, and the Christian is appointed to reflect the light. The ocean is vast, its dangers are many, and the eyes of far-away voyagers are turned toward the lighthouse—the church of Jesus Christ. The church is set to be the light of the world. Are its revolving lamps all trimmed and brightly burning?"

Think of this, professed Christians. A failure to let your light shine, a neglect to obtain heavenly wisdom that you may have light from God, may cause the loss of a soul. What is the life lost at sea,

in comparison with the eternal life which may be lost through your unfaithfulness? Can you endure the thought? Can you go on from day to day indifferent and careless, as tho there were no God, no hereafter; as tho you were not Christ's servant; as tho you had no blood-bought privileges? It is of the highest consequence that you stand at your post, like the faithful watchman, that your light may shine out before others. You should be so impressed with the importance of your work, that to the question, "What if your light should go out?" your whole soul would respond, "Never, never! for then souls would be lost!"

June 28, 1910

A Solemn Lesson

The solemn fate of the five foolish virgins, presented in the parable of the ten virgins, is recorded to warn those who, while professing the faith of Christ, have become cold and backslidden.

The five foolish virgins represent the careless, indolent, self-satisfied professors of religion. They have a calm expectation of entering heaven sometime, yet they have not purified their souls by obeying the truth. They understand the theory of truth, but have no vital connection with God. They trust to feeling, and neglect to search the - Scriptures. They are satisfied to walk in the sparks of their own kindling. We are all exhorted to be diligent, that we may make our calling and election sure. But I am greatly troubled, fearing, yes, knowing, that there are many who profess the truth who are not testing their lives and characters by God's great moral standard of righteousness. They are careless; they have not the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps. They are cherishing hidden sins, which no human eye can see. They know that they are not pure, and without spot, and should diligently seek God, that they may cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the sight of God.

There are many ideas in the world as to what is sin. The deist says that sin is dishonesty, a lack of patriotism, honor, and manliness. Those who have little idea as to what constitutes religion, will tell you that sin is murder, adultery, robbery, and crime. But what does the Word of God define it to be? John writes, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." Without the law we have no knowledge of what sin is. Those who have no respect for the law, will be deceived by entertaining hopes of entering heaven.

But a knowledge of the law is not enough. He who accepts the law, who acknowledges the claims of the law, who yet feels satisfied with himself, and has no experience in being born again, will fail of keeping the law, and will come under its condemnation. God's law not only covers every deed of outward life, but also penetrates to the intents and purposes of the heart. The man who will meet Christ in peace will be the man who follows in His footsteps, who takes Him for his example and righteousness. Jesus said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." He was perfect, pure, spotless. His life was the embodiment of all that was noble and holy; and whoever obeys Christ, fulfils the law of God, meets every claim upon him, treats every being as the purchase of the blood of Christ.

He who does not yield to the claims of the law of God, sets himself above God, breaks away from God's rule of right, and becomes disloyal, as did the great deceiver in the beginning. Would that some who claim to be commandment keepers could see how their cases stand in the register above.

O, that all who are falling short of the principles of righteousness, might realize that they do not meet the broad, far-reaching claims of the law of God upon them! Repentance for sin is the first step in conversion. Repentance is an intense hatred of sin in all its forms. Phariseism permits of self-complacency; and those who are self-righteous, appear to have a form of piety, but at heart they are corrupt. They may talk of their hope of heaven, when, in fact, they have not taken the first step toward heaven.

We are not under a system of mere requirements, mere justice, and unsympathizing rigor. The penalty of transgressing the law has fallen upon our Substitute and Surety, and for a time has been suspended, so that the guilty do not feel its weight; but the object of this suspension is not to teach us that its claims are over, its exactions set aside, but to attract us to holiness, to obedience. Nothing is changed except the manner of bringing men to obey the law. Obey its claims we must. The first step toward obedience is repentance. We are to see the excellence of its requirements by beholding the wrong of disobedience.

He who is truly repentant, he who is regenerated, hates sin. All manner of selfishness is distressing to him. Indifference to God on the part of those around him grieves him. He is not led to exalt self in the performance of his duty, but abhors self. "I abhor myself," is the language of the godly of all ages, who have had a clear view of the purity and holiness of Christ. But those who are but superficial Christians seek to exalt self by depreciating others. The clearer the views of the character of Christ the more humble will be our views of self. Like Job, Isaiah, Daniel, David, and Paul, we shall feel that our comeliness is turned in us into corruption.

Those who are represented by the foolish virgins have not this sense of their own unworthiness. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. The same principles of truth are presented in the parable of the two builders,—one built upon the rock, and the other upon the sand. Jesus says: "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."

It is not a matter of little consequence to us as to how we hear and how we treat the truth of God. To misunderstand the truth, to fail to appreciate it, because we do not cherish light that comes to us, will tend to make us careless in our character building, and we shall have our foundation laid upon the sand. The wise builder builds upon the Rock Christ Jesus, no matter what may be the inconvenience. He builds not upon human but upon divine merit, accepting the righteousness of Christ as his own, and as his only hope of salvation. The foolish builder built upon the sand, and through his carelessness, or prejudice, or through the deceptions of the natural heart, he cherishes a self-righteous spirit, and places human wisdom in the place where God's wisdom should have the supremacy; and how terrible are the consequences!

There are many unwise builders; and when the storm of temptation comes and beats upon them, it is made evident that their foundation is only sliding sand. They are left in gross darkness, without faith, without principles, and without foundation. The five foolish virgins had a real interest in the Gospel. They knew what was the perfect standard of righteousness; but their energies were

paralyzed with self-love, for they lived to please and glorify themselves, and had not the oil of grace in their vessels with which to replenish their lamps. They were often distressed by the enemy, who knew their weakness, and placed darkness before them in the semblance of light. Truth, precious, life-giving truth, represented as oil, appeared to them as unessential, and Satan took advantage of their blindness, ignorance, and weakness of faith, and they had a fluctuating experience, based on uncertain principles.

All who wait for the heavenly Bridegroom are represented in the parable as slumbering because their Lord delayed His coming; but the wise roused themselves at the message of His approach, and responded to the message, and their spiritual discernment was not all gone, and they sprang into line. As they took hold of the grace of Christ, their religious experience became vigorous and abundant, and their affections were set upon things above. They discerned where was the source of their supply, and appreciated the love that God had for them. They opened their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. Their lights were trimmed and burning, and sent forth steady rays into the moral darkness of the world. They glorified God, because they had the oil of grace in their hearts, and did the very work that their Master did before them, — went forth to seek and to save those who were lost.

August 30, 1910

Condemned by Righteousness

The whole world stands condemned before the great moral standard of righteousness. In the great day of judgment every soul that has lived on the earth will receive sentence in accordance as to whether his deeds have been good or evil in the light of the law of God. Every mouth will be stopped as the cross with its dying Victim shall be presented, and its real bearing shall be seen by every mind that has been sin-blinded and corrupted. Sinners will stand condemned before the cross, with its mysterious Victim bowing beneath the infinite burden of human transgression. How quickly will be swept away every subterfuge, every lying excuse! Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. They will then understand that they have chosen Barabbas instead of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

The mystery of the incarnation and the crucifixion will be plainly discerned; for it will be presented before the mind's eye and every condemned soul will read what has been the character of his rejection of truth. All will understand that they have erred from the truth by receiving the misinterpretations and bewitching lies of Satan instead of "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." They read the announcement, "Thou, O man, hast chosen to stand under the banner of the great rebel, Satan, and in so doing thou hast destroyed thyself." Whatever may have been the endowment of talent, whatever may have been the supposed wisdom, the rejecter of truth has then no ability to turn unto God. The door is shut, as was the door of the ark in Noah's day.

The great men of earth will then understand that they have surrendered mind and heart to ensnaring philosophy which pleased the carnal heart. Hope and grace and every inducement had been held out by One who loved them, and gave His life for them, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; but they refused the love of God. Their lofty opinions, their human reasonings, were extolled; they declared themselves sufficient in themselves to understand divine mysteries, and they thought their own powers of discrimination were strong

enough to discern truth for themselves. They fell an easy prey to Satan's subtlety, for he presented before them specious errors in human philosophy, which has an infatuation for human minds. They turned from the Source of all wisdom, and worshipped intellect. The message and the messengers of God were criticized and discarded as beneath their human, lofty ideas. The invitations of mercy were made a jest, and they denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and derided the idea of His preexistence before He assumed human nature. But the tattered shreds of human reasoning will be found to be only as ropes of sand in the great day of God.