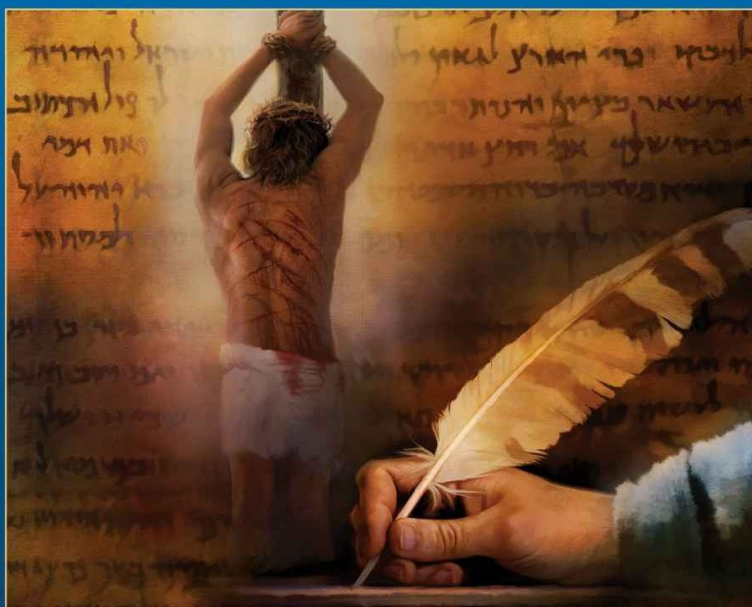
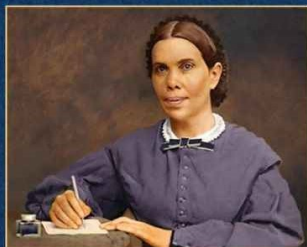


Ellen G. White NOTES

for the Sabbath School Lessons



ISAIAH

Jan | Feb | Mar 2021

Spirit of Prophecy quotations arranged for
daily study with the adult Bible study guides

E. G. White Notes
for the Adult Bible Study Guide

Ellen G. White Notes for the Sabbath School Lessons (ISSN 1076-2434) is published quarterly by Pacific Press ® Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Nampa, Idaho. One-year subscription in the USA, \$ 17.56; single copy, \$ 4.99. One-year subscription to countries outside USA, \$ 25.56. All prices at USA exchange. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses. Vol. 29, no. 1.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Ellen G. White Notes for the Sabbath School Lessons**, PO Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353.

Copyright © 2021 by Pacific Press ® Publishing Association.

Isaiah

Contents

- 1. Crisis of Identity** (December 26–January 1)
- 2. Crisis of Leadership** (January 2–8)
- 3. When Your World Is Falling Apart** (January 9–15)
- 4. The Hard Way** (January 16–22)
- 5. Noble Prince of Peace** (January 23–29)
- 6. Playing God** (January 30–February 5)
- 7. Defeat of the Assyrians** (February 6–12)
- 8. “Comfort My People”** (February 13–19)
- 9. To Serve and to Save** (February 20–26)
- 10. Doing the Unthinkable** (February 27–March 5)
- 11. Waging Love** (March 6–12)
- 12. Desire of Nations** (March 13–19)
- 13. Rebirth of Planet Earth** (March 20–26)

Crisis of Identity

Sabbath Afternoon, December 26

The professed people of God had separated from God, and had lost their wisdom and perverted their understanding. They could not see afar off; for they had forgotten that they had been purged from their old sins. They moved restlessly and uncertainly under darkness, seeking to obliterate from their minds the memory of the freedom, assurance, and happiness of their former estate. They plunged into all kinds of presumptuous, foolhardy madness, placed themselves in opposition to the providences of God, and deepened the guilt that was already upon them. They listened to the charges of Satan against the divine character, and represented God as devoid of mercy and forgiveness. The prophet writes of them, saying:

“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.”—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1137.

The work of restoration can never be thorough unless the roots of evil are reached. Again and again the shoots have been clipped, while the root of bitterness has been left to spring up and defile many; but the very depth of the hidden evil must be reached, the moral senses must be judged, and judged again, in the light of the divine presence. The daily life will testify whether or not the work is genuine. . . .

This is the work before the every soul who has dishonored God, and grieved the heart of Christ, by a denial of truth and righteousness. If the tempted soul endures the trying process, and self does not awake to life to feel hurt and abused under the test, that probing knife reveals that the soul is indeed dead to self, but alive unto God.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1152.

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. “Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the

Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 43, 44.

Sunday, December 27: “Hear, O Heavens!”

It is no light matter to sin against God, to set the perverse will of man in opposition to the will of his Maker. It is for the best interest of men, even in this world, to obey God’s commandments. And it is surely for their eternal interest to submit to God, and be at peace with Him. . . . Of all the creatures that God has made upon the earth, man alone is rebellious. Yet he possesses reasoning powers to understand the claims of the divine law and a conscience to feel the guilt of transgression and the peace and joy of obedience. God made him a free moral agent, to obey or disobey. The reward of everlasting life—an eternal weight of glory—is promised to those who do God’s will, while the threatenings of His wrath hang over all who defy His law.—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 76.

The history of the past shows an active, working devil. He can no more be idle than harmless. Satan was found in only one tree to endanger the safety of Adam and Eve. He planned to attract the holy pair to that one tree, that they might do the very thing God had said they should not do—eat of the tree of knowledge. There was no danger to them in approaching any other tree. How plausible his speech! He laid hold of the very arguments which he uses today,—flattery, envy, distrust, questioning, and unbelief. If Satan was so cunning at first, what must he be now after gaining an experience of many thousands of years? Yet God and holy angels, and all those who abide in obedience to all the Lord’s expressed will, are wiser than he. The subtlety of Satan will not decrease, but the wisdom given to men through a living connection with the Source of all light and divine knowledge will be proportionate to his arts and wiles.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 504.

Behold the world today in open rebellion against God. This is in truth a froward generation, filled with ingratitude, formalism, insincerity, pride, and apostasy. Men neglect the Bible and hate truth. Jesus sees His law rejected, His love despised, His ambassadors treated with indifference. He has spoken by His mercies, but these have been unacknowledged; He has spoken by warnings, but these have been unheeded. The temple courts of the human soul have been turned into places of unholy traffic. Selfishness, envy, pride, malice—all are cherished.

Many do not hesitate to sneer at the word of God. Those who believe that word just as it reads are held up to ridicule. There is a growing contempt for law and order, directly traceable to a violation of the plain commands of Jehovah. Violence and crime are the result of turning aside from the path of obedience. Behold the wretchedness and misery of multitudes who worship at the shrine of idols and who seek in vain for happiness and peace.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 185.

Monday, December 28: Rotten Ritualism

The Jews had become familiar with the offering of blood, and had almost lost sight of the fact that it was sin which made necessary all this shedding of the blood of beasts. They did not discern that it prefigured the blood of God's dear Son, which was to be shed for the life of the world, and that by the offering of sacrifices men were to be directed to a crucified Redeemer. . . .

. . . In place of humble repentance of sin, they had multiplied the sacrifice of beasts, as if God could be honored by a heartless service. The priests and rulers had hardened their hearts through selfishness and avarice. The very symbols pointing to the Lamb of God they had made a means of getting gain. Thus in the eyes of the people the sacredness of the sacrificial service had been in a great measure destroyed. The indignation of Jesus was stirred; He knew that His blood, so soon to be shed for the sins of the world, would be as little appreciated by the priests and elders as was the blood of beasts which they kept incessantly flowing.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 589, 590.

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Corinthians 7:11.

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has

committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 39, 40.

Tuesday, December 29: The Argument of Forgiveness

Whom Christ pardons, He first makes penitent, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin. Those whose hearts have been moved by the convicting Spirit of God see that there is nothing good in themselves. They see that all they have ever done is mingled with self and sin. Like the poor publican, they stand afar off, not daring to lift up so much as their eyes to heaven, and cry, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Luke 18:13, R.V., margin. And they are blessed. There is forgiveness for the penitent; for Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. God's promise is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 7, 8.

The Lord God through Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitations to the needy. He will receive all. He welcomes all. He rejects none. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the greatest depths of human wretchedness and guilt and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin. But man must will to come, and cooperate in the work of saving his soul by availing himself of opportunities given him of God. The Lord forces no one. The spotless wedding robe of Christ's righteousness is prepared to clothe the sinner, but if he refuses it he must perish.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 235.

Those who are deceived by Satan look upon God as hard and exacting. They regard Him as watching to denounce and condemn, as unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there is a legal excuse for not helping him. His law they regard as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they are glad to escape. But he whose eyes have been opened by the love of Christ will behold God as full of compassion. He does not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 204.

As the character of the Divine One was manifested to [John], he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily

life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love. Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 73.

Wednesday, December 30: To Eat or Be Eaten

God speaks to His people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, He speaks to them in blessings removed, that they may be led to see their sins, and return to Him with all the heart.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 470.

We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth" God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with "thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Isaiah 51:3.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 104.

God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service. But we can choose to serve God, we can give Him our will; then He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ.

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from above to hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 176.

Those who have genuine love for God will manifest an earnest desire to know His will and to do it. . . . The child who loves his parents will show that love by willing obedience; but the selfish, ungrateful child seeks to do as little as possible

for his parents, while he at the same time desires to enjoy all the privileges granted to the obedient and faithful.

The same difference is seen among those who profess to be children of God. Many who know that they are the objects of His love and care, and who desire to receive His blessing, take no delight in doing His will. They regard God's claims upon them as an unpleasant restraint, His commandments as a grievous yoke. But he who is truly seeking for holiness of heart and life delights in the law of God, and mourns only that he falls so far short of meeting its requirements. — *Reflecting Christ*, p. 96.

Thursday, December 31: Ominous Love Song

God had planted Israel as a goodly vine by the wells of life. He had made His vineyard "in a very fruitful hill." He had "fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine." Isaiah 5:1, 2.

"And He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." Isaiah 5:2. The people of Christ's day made a greater show of piety than did the Jews of earlier ages, but they were even more destitute of the sweet graces of the Spirit of God. The precious fruits of character . . . were not manifest in the Jewish nation.

God in His Son had been seeking fruit, and had found none. Israel was a cumberer of the ground. Its very existence was a curse; for it filled the place in the vineyard that a fruitful tree might fill. It robbed the world of the blessings that God designed to give. The Israelites had misrepresented God among the nations. They were not merely useless, but a decided hindrance. To a great degree their religion was misleading, and wrought ruin instead of salvation. — *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 214, 215.

There is too much self. We want self to die and be hid in Christ Jesus, then we will not talk of discouragement and difficulties and all these small things, but we will talk of the great plan of redemption and the matchless power of Jesus Christ to come to our world and take upon Him human nature that we through Him might be elevated and have a seat at His right hand. What could be more pleasant than that?

If this is not enough, what more could heaven do for the fallen race than has been done? "What more," says Christ, "could I do for My sheep than that I have done?" What more? Will He have to let us go? He will unless you change your attitude toward God, for He has done all He could to save us. According to the

light that we have received, so is our accountability before God. Walk in the light as He is in the light.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 216.

Of special value to God's church on earth today—the keepers of His vineyard—are the messages of counsel and admonition given through the prophets who have made plain His eternal purpose in behalf of mankind. In the teachings of the prophets, His love for the lost race and His plan for their salvation are clearly revealed. The story of Israel's call, of their successes and failures, of their restoration to divine favor, of their rejection of the Master of the vineyard, and of the carrying out of the plan of the ages by a goodly remnant to whom are to be fulfilled all the covenant promises—this has been the theme of God's messengers to His church throughout the centuries that have passed. . . .

Let Israel hope in God. The Master of the vineyard is even now gathering from among men of all nations and peoples the precious fruits for which He has long been waiting. Soon He will come unto His own; and in that glad day His eternal purpose for the house of Israel will finally be fulfilled. "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Verse 6.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 22.

Friday, January 1: For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, "Sure Remedy for Sin," p. 23;

Testimonies for the Church, "A Call for Reformation," vol. 8, pp. 250, 251.

Crisis of Leadership

Sabbath Afternoon, January 2

By their apostasy and rebellion those who should have been standing as light bearers among the nations were inviting the judgments of God. Many of the evils which were hastening the swift destruction of the northern kingdom, and which had recently been denounced in unmistakable terms by Hosea and Amos, were fast corrupting the kingdom of Judah. . . .

With oppression and wealth came pride and love of display, gross drunkenness, and a spirit of revelry. See Isaiah 2:11, 12; 3:16, 18-23; Isaiah 5:22, 11, 12. And in Isaiah's day idolatry itself no longer provoked surprise. See Isaiah 2:8, 9. Iniquitous practices had become so prevalent among all classes that the few who remained true to God were often tempted to lose heart and to give way to discouragement and despair. It seemed as if God's purpose for Israel were about to fail and that the rebellious nation was to suffer a fate similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 306.

In all His dealings with His creatures God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. The unconditional pardon of sin never has been, and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of righteousness, which are the very foundation of the government of God. It would fill the unfallen universe with consternation. God has faithfully pointed out the results of sin, and if these warnings were not true, how could we be sure that His promises would be fulfilled? That so-called benevolence which would set aside justice, is not benevolence, but weakness. . . .

There is a God in Israel, with whom is deliverance for all that are oppressed. Righteousness is the habitation of His throne.—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 73.

Let God's workmen study the sixth chapter of Isaiah, and the first and second chapters of Ezekiel.

To the prophet the wheel within a wheel, the appearances of living creatures connected with them, all seemed intricate and unexplainable. But the hand of Infinite Wisdom is seen among the wheels, and perfect order is the result of its work. Every wheel works in perfect harmony with every other.

I have been shown that human instrumentalities seek after too much power and

try to control the work themselves. They leave the Lord God, the Mighty Worker, too much out of their methods and plans, and do not trust everything to Him in regard to the advancement of the work. No one should fancy that he is able to manage these things which belong to the great I AM. God in His providence is preparing a way so that the work may be done by human agents. Then let every man stand at his post of duty, to act his part for this time, and know that God is his instructor.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 213, 214.

Sunday, January 3: The King Is Dead. Long Live the King!

The long reign of Uzziah in the land of Judah and Benjamin was characterized by a prosperity greater than that of any other ruler since the death of Solomon, nearly two centuries before. For many years the king ruled with discretion. Under the blessing of Heaven his armies regained some of the territory that had been lost in former years. Cities were rebuilt and fortified, and the position of the nation among the surrounding peoples was greatly strengthened. Commerce revived, and the riches of the nations flowed into Jerusalem. Uzziah's name "spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong." 2 Chronicles 26:15.

This outward prosperity, however, was not accompanied by a corresponding revival of spiritual power. The temple services were continued as in former years, and multitudes assembled to worship the living God; but pride and formality gradually took the place of humility and sincerity. Of Uzziah himself it is written: "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God." Verse 16.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 303, 304.

Obedience to the Lord always brings favor, and a faithful discharge of righteous principles will bear the divine credentials; but the Lord is dishonored when those who are placed as stewards of God's flock, sustain and sanction an evil work. . . .

The case of Uzziah the king reveals how God will punish the sin of presumption. . . The Lord has ordained men to certain positions in His church, and He would not have them step out of the places to which He has appointed them. When the Lord gives them a measure of success, they are not to become lifted up, and think themselves qualified to do a work for which they are not fitted, and to which God has not called them.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1132.

The Lord has given abundant evidence of the truthfulness of His promises and

threatenings. His people may trust His word. Will they then, in the face of light and evidence, follow a course of their own choosing, independent of God's ordained agencies? Even good men need to be guarded on every hand, lest they shall become so elevated over the blessings God has given them that the applause and praise from worldlings shall be as a stimulus for them to display their great wisdom and acquisitions.

The Lord sees, the Lord knows. He will certainly humble all such aspirations; for He hates pride and selfishness and covetousness. The more prosperous the work may be in itself, the less appropriate is it for men to exalt themselves, as though they were the ones who should be lifted up. Our trust must be in God. He has entrusted men with abilities and capabilities, that they may act a prominent part in His work. Let them take heed how they shall exalt themselves. —*This Day With God*, p. 193.

Monday, January 4: "Holy, Holy, Holy"

[Isaiah's] task seemed to him almost hopeless. Should he in despair relinquish his mission and leave Israel undisturbed to their idolatry? Were the gods of Nineveh to rule the earth in defiance of the God of heaven?

Such thoughts as these were crowding upon his mind as he stood under the portico of the holy temple. Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn, and he was permitted to gaze within, upon the holy of holies, where even the prophet's feet might not enter. There rose up before him a vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while His train filled the temple. On each side the throne hovered the seraphim, two wings bearing them up, two veiling their faces in adoration, and two covering their feet. These angel ministers lifted up their voices in solemn invocation, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory," until post and pillar and cedar gate seemed to tremble at the sound, and the house was filled with their praise. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 750.

The temple of God is opened in heaven, and the threshold is flushed with the glory that is for every church that will love God and keep His commandments. We need to study, to meditate, and to pray. Then we shall have spiritual eyesight to discern the inner courts of the celestial temple. We shall catch the themes of song and thanksgiving of the heavenly choir round about the throne. When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating, and precious songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assembly of the saints. Murmurings, complainings, and lamentations over little disappointments and difficulties will be lost sight of. As we apply the golden eyesalve we shall see the glories beyond. Faith will cut through the hellish shadow of Satan, and we shall

see our Advocate offering up the incense of His own merits in our behalf.

Let us take up the praise of God here below. Let us unite with the heavenly company above. Then we shall represent the truth as it is—a power to all who believe.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 273.

It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.

Tuesday, January 5: New Personality

As the prophet Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord, he was amazed, and, overwhelmed with a sense of his own weakness and unworthiness, he cried, “Woe is me! . . .”

Isaiah had denounced the sin of others; but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation he had pronounced upon them. He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in his worship of God. He had not known this until the vision was given him of the Lord. How little now appeared his wisdom and talents as he looked upon the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary. . . . His view of himself might be expressed in the language of the apostle Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Romans 7:24. . . .

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” Isaiah 6:6, 7.—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 190.

Our Heavenly Father . . . has His purpose in the whirlwind and the storm, in the fire and in the flood. The Lord permits calamities to come to His people to save them from greater dangers. He desires everyone to examine his own heart closely and carefully, and then draw near to God, that God may draw near to him. Our life is in the hands of God. He sees dangers threatening us that we cannot see. He is the Giver of all our blessings; the Provider of all our mercies; the Orderer of all our experiences. He sees the perils that we cannot see. He may permit to come upon His people that which fills their hearts with sadness, because He sees that they need to make straight paths for their feet, lest the

lame be turned out of the way. He knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. Even the very hairs of our head are numbered. . . .

Trials come to us all to lead us to investigate our hearts, to see if they are purified from all that defiles. Constantly the Lord is working for our present and eternal good. Things occur which seem inexplicable, but if we trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, humbling our hearts before Him, He will not permit the enemy to triumph.—*The Upward Look*, p. 65.

In the warfare, the enemy takes advantage of the weakest points in the defence of those he is attacking. Here he makes his fiercest assaults. The Christian should have no weak points in his defence. He should be barricaded by the support that the Scriptures give to the one who is doing God's will. The tempted soul will bear away the victory, if he follows the example of Him who met the tempter with the word, "It is written." He can stand securely in the protection of a "Thus saith the Lord." . . .

The Lord permits His children to fall; and then, if they repent of their wrongdoing, He helps them to stand on vantage ground. As fire purifies gold, so Christ purifies His people by temptation and trial.—*This Day With God*, p. 259.

Wednesday, January 6: Royal Commission

A seraph came to him to fit him for his great mission. A living coal from the altar was laid upon his lips. . . . And when the voice of God was heard saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah with holy confidence responded, "Here am I; send me."

What though earthly powers should be arrayed against Judah? What though Isaiah should meet with opposition and resistance in his mission? He had seen the King, the Lord of hosts; he had heard the song of the seraphim, "The whole earth is full of His glory;" and the prophet was nerved for the work before him. The memory of this vision was carried with him throughout his long and arduous mission.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 750, 751.

With grace in their hearts believers are to work the works of Christ, placing themselves, soul, body, and spirit, on His side, as His human hand, to impart His love to those who are out of the fold. Believers are to associate together in Christian fellowship, regarding one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. They are to love one another as Christ loved them. They are to be lights for God, shining in the church and in the world, receiving grace for grace as they impart to others. Thus they are constantly kept in spiritual nearness to God. They reflect the image of Christ.—*Medical Ministry*, p. 316.

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls.

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 100.

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. The longing that we should have for spiritual blessings is described in the words, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." We need a deeper soul-hunger for the rich gifts that heaven has to bestow.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 121.

Thursday, January 7: Appalling Appeal

The unfruitful hearers are specified by our Lord as the skeptical, the superficial, or the secular. These cannot discern the moral glory of the truth or its practical personal application to their own hearts. They lack that faith which overcomes the world, and as the sure consequence the world overcomes them. . . .

It is the close connection with God which opens and makes quick and sharp the understanding. Men in Christ's day brought upon themselves that blindness that in seeing they see not and the willful deafness that in hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. Jesus told them that there was no reason for them to be surprised at what He had stated in regard to their unbelief, for Isaiah had predicted the same [Matthew 13:13-15 quoted].—*This Day With God*, p. 361.

God had declared concerning Pharaoh, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." Exodus 4:21. There was no exercise of supernatural power to harden the heart of the king. God gave to Pharaoh the most striking evidence of

divine power, but the monarch stubbornly refused to heed the light. Every display of infinite power rejected by him, rendered him the more determined in his rebellion. The seeds of rebellion that he sowed when he rejected the first miracle, produced their harvest. As he continued to venture on in his own course, going from one degree of stubbornness to another, his heart became more and more hardened, until he was called to look upon the cold, dead faces of the first-born.

God speaks to men through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin. He gives to each an opportunity to correct his errors before they become fixed in the character; but if one refuses to be corrected, divine power does not interpose to counteract the tendency of his own action. He finds it more easy to repeat the same course. He is hardening the heart against the influence of the Holy Spirit. A further rejection of light places him where a far stronger influence will be ineffectual to make an abiding impression. — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 268.

The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay. But the coming of the morning to the faithful, and of the night to the unfaithful, is right upon us. By waiting and watching, God's people are to manifest their peculiar character, their separation from the world. By our watching position we are to show that we are truly strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. The difference between those who love the world and those who love Christ is so plain as to be unmistakable. While worldlings are all earnestness and ambition to secure earthly treasure, God's people are not conformed to the world, but show by their earnest, watching, waiting position that they are transformed; that their home is not in this world, but that they are seeking a better country, even a heavenly. — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 194.

Friday, January 8: For Further Reading

God's Amazing Grace, "Guarded by Seraphim," p. 72;

This Day With God, "Consciousness of Sins Forgiven," p. 261.

When Your World Is Falling Apart

Sabbath Afternoon, January 9

As His people returned to their evil ways, the Lord permitted them to be still oppressed by their powerful enemies, the Philistines. For many years they were constantly harassed, and at times completely subjugated, by this cruel and warlike nation. They had mingled with these idolaters, uniting with them in pleasure and in worship, until they seemed to be one with them in spirit and interest. Then these professed friends of Israel became their bitterest enemies and sought by every means to accomplish their destruction.

Like Israel, Christians too often yield to the influence of the world and conform to its principles and customs, in order to secure the friendship of the ungodly; but in the end it will be found that these professed friends are the most dangerous of foes. . . . Satan works through the ungodly, under cover of a pretended friendship, to allure God's people into sin, that he may separate them from Him; and when their defense is removed, then he will lead his agents to turn against them and seek to accomplish their destruction.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 558, 559.

We are admonished by the apostle: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 171.

How true was the Saviour's friendship for Peter! how compassionate His warning! But the warning was resented. In self-sufficiency Peter declared confidently that he would never do what Christ had warned him against. "Lord," he said, "I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Verse 33). His self-confidence proved his ruin. He tempted Satan to tempt him, and he fell under the arts of the wily foe. When Christ needed him most, he stood on the

side of the enemy, and openly denied his Lord. . . .

. . . Those who realize their weakness trust in a power higher than self. And, while they look to God, Satan has no power against them. But those who trust in self are easily defeated. Let us remember that, if we do not heed the cautions that God gives us, a fall is before us. Christ will not save from wounds the one who places himself unbidden on the enemy's ground. He lets the self-sufficient one, who acts as if he knew more than his Lord, go on in his supposed strength. Then comes suffering and a crippled life, or perhaps defeat and death.—*This Day With God*, p. 259.

Sunday, January 10: Danger From the North

Had Ahaz and the chief men of his realm been true servants of the Most High, they would have had no fear of so unnatural an alliance as had been formed against them. But repeated transgression had shorn them of strength. Stricken with a nameless dread of the retributive judgments of an offended God, the heart of the king "was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." Isaiah 7:2. In this crisis the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, bidding him meet the trembling king and say:

"Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted. . . . Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it: . . . thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." The prophet declared that the kingdom of Israel, and Syria as well, would soon come to an end. "If ye will not believe," he concluded, "surely ye shall not be established." Verses 4-7, 9. . . .

. . . But choosing to lean on the arm of flesh, [Ahaz] sought help from the heathen. In desperation he sent word to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria: "I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me." 2 Kings 16:7. The request was accompanied by a rich present from the king's treasure and from the temple storehouse.

The help asked for was sent, and King Ahaz was given temporary relief, but at what a cost to Judah!—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 328, 329.

In summer, as we look upon the trees of the distant forest, all clothed with a beautiful mantle of green, we may not be able to distinguish between the evergreens and the other trees. But as winter approaches, and the frost king encloses them in his icy embrace, stripping the other trees of their beautiful

foliage, the evergreens are readily discerned. Thus it will be with all who are walking in humility, distrustful of self, but clinging tremblingly to the hand of Christ. While those who are self-confident, and trust in their own perfection of character, lose their false robe of righteousness when subjected to the storms of trial, the truly righteous, who sincerely love and fear God, wear the robe of Christ's righteousness in prosperity and adversity alike.—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 11.

Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God's power to save do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God . . . [seal] their destiny.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 213.

Monday, January 11: Attempted Interception

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered—a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil must be overcome. Often the education and training of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward. The principles of the word of God—principles that are as high as heaven, and that compass eternity—we are to understand in their bearing upon our daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. All must be brought into harmony with, and subject to, Christ.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 453, 454.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

Those who are quieting a guilty conscience with the thought that they can change a course of evil when they choose, that they can trifle with the invitations of mercy, and yet be again and again impressed, take this course at their peril. They think that after casting all their influence on the side of the great rebel, in a moment of utmost extremity, when danger compasses them

about, they will change leaders. But this is not so easily done. The experience, the education, the discipline of a life of sinful indulgence, has so thoroughly molded the character that they cannot then receive the image of Jesus. . . . After light has been long rejected and despised, it will be finally withdrawn.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 269.

God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. . . . The fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine.—*My Life Today*, p. 92.

Tuesday, January 12: Another Chance

Let us go to the word of God for guidance. Let us seek for a "Thus saith the Lord." We have had enough of human methods. A mind trained only in worldly science will fail to understand the things of God; but the same mind, converted and sanctified, will see the divine power in the Word. Only the mind and heart cleansed by the sanctification of the Spirit can discern heavenly things.

Brethren, in the name of the Lord I call upon you to awake to your duty. Let your hearts be yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit, and they will be made susceptible to the teachings of the Word. Then you will be able to discern the deep things of God.

May God bring His people under the deep movings of His Spirit! May He arouse them to see their peril, and to prepare for what is coming upon the earth!—*Gospel Workers*, p. 310.

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"—the human heart, with its conflicting emotions of joy and sorrow; the wandering, wayward heart, which is the abode of so much impurity and deceit. 1 Samuel 16:7. [God] knows its motives, its very intents and purposes. Go to Him with your soul all stained as it is. Like the psalmist, throw its chambers open to the all-seeing eye, exclaiming, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24. . . .

As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but—O wondrous love!—God in Christ is "reconciling the world unto

Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of His children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 34, 35.

Naturally we are self-centered and opinionated. But when we learn the lessons that Christ desires to teach us, we become partakers of His nature; henceforth we live His life. The wonderful example of Christ, the matchless tenderness with which He entered into the feelings of others, weeping with those who wept, rejoicing with those who rejoiced, must have a deep influence upon the character of all who follow Him in sincerity. By kindly words and acts they will try to make the path easy for weary feet. . . .

All around us are afflicted souls. Here and there, everywhere, we may find them. Let us search out these suffering ones and speak a word in season to comfort their hearts. Let us ever be channels through which shall flow the refreshing waters of compassion.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 157, 158.

Wednesday, January 13: Sign of a Son

It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." . . . In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

"Emmanuel, God with us," this means everything to us. What a broad foundation does it lay for our faith. What a hope big with immortality does it place before the believing soul. God with us in Christ Jesus to accompany us every step of the journey to heaven. The Holy Spirit with us as a comforter, a guide in our perplexities, to soothe our sorrows, and shield us in temptation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" . . .

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners.—*My Life Today*, p. 290.

The more we think about Christ's becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine Son of God?—*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 128.

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.—*The Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1896.

Thursday, January 14: "God Is With Us"!

As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. "Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God." Jesus says, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Ezekiel 34:31; Isaiah 43:1; 49:16).

Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 479.

When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us. "Fear not," He says; "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." Isaiah 43:1-3.

Jesus read the character of His disciples. He knew how sorely their faith was to be tried. In this incident on the sea He desired to reveal to Peter his own weakness,—to show that his safety was in constant dependence upon divine power. Amid the storms of temptation he could walk safely only as in utter self-distrust he should rely upon the Saviour. It was on the point where he thought himself strong that Peter was weak; and not until he discerned his weakness could he realize his need of dependence upon Christ. Had he learned the lesson that Jesus sought to teach him in that experience on the sea, he would not have failed when the great test came upon him.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 382.

Friday, January 15: For Further Reading

The Faith I Live By, “God Will Take Care of His Church,” p. 282;

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, “An Exalted Privilege,” p. 480.

The Hard Way

Sabbath Afternoon, January 16

Brethren, with the beloved John I call upon you to “behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” . . . We may address Him by the endearing name, “Our Father,” which is a sign of our affection for Him and a pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. . . .

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 cannot utter it; pen cannot 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 the breadth, the depth and the 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. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 739, 740.

Our trust must be wholly in God. He will be to us a present help in every time of need. Let us wait upon the Lord and exercise faith in His promises. He will hear us. Only believe. The Captain of our salvation will not leave us to guide our own bark. We shall have His help and His wisdom just when He sees we need it.— Letter 24, December 18, 1882.

In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy.

In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 362, 363.

Sunday, January 17: Prophecy Fulfilled

In [the] hope of a sure inheritance in the earth made new, the early Christians rejoiced, even in times of severe trial and affliction. “Ye greatly rejoice,” Peter wrote, “though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” . . .

The apostle’s words were written for the instruction of believers in every age, and they have a special significance for those who live at the time when “the end of all things is at hand.” His exhortations and warnings, and his words of faith and courage, are needed by every soul who would maintain his faith “steadfast unto the end.” Hebrews 3:14.

The apostle sought to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentinelled, or evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander in darkness.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 517, 518.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” [1 John 5:4.] It is faith that enables us to look beyond the present, with its burdens and cares, to the great hereafter, where all that now perplexes us shall be made plain. Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Faith sees the robe and crown prepared for the overcomer, and hears the song of the redeemed. . . .

Faith is not feeling. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” [Hebrews 11:1.] True faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption, for presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith.

Faith claims God's promises and brings forth fruit in obedience. . . . Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 259, 260.

Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency.

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 146, 147.

Monday, January 18: Foreseen Consequences

"The Lord brought Judah low" because of continued transgression. In this time of chastisement Ahaz, instead of repenting, trespassed "yet more against the Lord: . . . for he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus." . . . 2 Chronicles 28:19, 22, 23. . . .

As the apostate king neared the end of his reign, he caused the doors of the temple to be closed. The sacred services were interrupted. No longer were the candlesticks kept burning before the altar. No longer were offerings made for the sins of the people. No longer did sweet incense ascend on high at the time of the morning and the evening sacrifice. Deserting the courts of the house of God and locking fast its doors, the inhabitants of the godless city boldly set up altars for the worship of heathen deities on the street corners throughout Jerusalem. Heathenism had seemingly triumphed; the powers of darkness had well-nigh prevailed.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 330.

From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld,—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring,—how completely has it passed away! As "the flower of the grass," it has perished. James 1:10. . . . And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.

A careful study of the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and

in the revelation of things to come, will help us to estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen, and to learn what is the true aim of life.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 548.

Every individual must seek by earnest prayer to know the Word of God for himself, and then to do it. Only in day by day putting his trust in God, and not in the arm of flesh, will any soul obtain the experience essential to answer the prayer of Christ, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). . . . In all your temporal concerns, in all your cares and anxieties, wait upon the Lord. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of man because they may be in positions of trust. The Lord has united your heart with Him. If you love Him, and are accepted in His service, bring all your burdens, both public and private, to the Lord and wait upon Him. You will then have an individual experience, a conviction of His presence and His readiness to hear your prayer for wisdom and for instruction that will give you assurance and confidence in the Lord’s willingness to succor you in your perplexities.—*This Day With God*, p. 82.

Tuesday, January 19: What’s in a Name?

The Lord’s injunction, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14), refers not only to the marriage of Christians with the ungodly, but to all alliances in which the parties are brought into intimate association, and in which there is need of harmony in spirit and action. The Lord gave special direction to Israel to keep themselves distinct from idolaters. They were not to intermarry with the heathen nor form any confederacy with them: “Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exodus 34:12-14).

“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 ye were more in number than any people; for ye 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.” (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 122.

We know but little of our own hearts and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us and which we should manifest toward one

another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals like ourselves. Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been overborne by temptation and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error, what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from the Bible that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither did He cast off His servants. When they repented, He graciously forgave them and revealed to them His presence and wrought through them. Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 246, 247.

How great is the long-suffering of God toward the wicked! The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. The forbearance of God was very great toward the children of men; but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand. They refused to listen to the voice of God in His created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word, and thus He was forced to speak to them through judgments.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 587, 588.

Wednesday, January 20: Nothing to Fear When We Fear God Himself

Our work is to proclaim to the world the first, second, and third angels' messages. In the discharge of our duties, we are neither to despise nor fear our enemies. . . .

. . . Putting our trust in God, we are to move steadily forward, doing His work with unselfishness, in humble dependence upon Him, committing ourselves and all that concerns our present and future to His wise providence, holding the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end, remembering that it is not because of our worthiness that we receive the blessings of heaven, but because of the worthiness of Christ, and our acceptance, through faith in Him, of God's abounding grace.—*This Day With God*, p. 196.

The humility of Solomon at the time he began to bear the burdens of state, when he acknowledged before God, "I am but a little child" (1 Kings 3:7), his marked love of God, his profound reverence for things divine, his distrust of self, and his exaltation of the infinite Creator of all—all these traits of character, so worthy of emulation, were revealed during the services connected with the completion of the temple, when during his dedicatory prayer he knelt in the

humble position of a petitioner. Christ's followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures teach men how they should approach their Maker—with humility and awe, through faith in a divine Mediator.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 47.

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, "Follow Me," and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth. . . .

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.

Thursday, January 21: Gloom of the Ungrateful Living Dead

Many are investigating Spiritualism simply from curiosity. They have no real faith in it, and would start back horrified at the idea of becoming mediums; but they are venturing on forbidden and dangerous ground. When they are fast in the toils of the deceiver, they find they are in the power of him who makes the most abject slaves of his servants, and nothing can deliver them but the power of God. The only safety for us is in trusting implicitly and following faithfully the instruction of the Word of God. The Bible is the only chart that marks out the narrow path which shuns the pitfalls of destruction.—*This Day With God*, p. 247.

Satan is making the world believe that the Bible is a mere fiction, or at least a book suited to the infancy of the race, but now to be lightly regarded or cast aside as obsolete. And to take the place of the Word of God he holds out spiritual manifestations. Here is a channel wholly under his control; by this means he can make the world believe what he will. The Book that is to judge him and his followers he puts into the shade, just where he wants it; the Saviour of the world he makes to be no more than a common man. . . .

Says the prophet Isaiah: "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the

testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:19, 20.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 396, 397.

I saw that soon . . . Satan’s power would increase and some of his devoted followers would have power to work miracles and even to bring down fire from heaven in the sight of men. . . . I was pointed back to the time of Moses and saw the signs and wonders which God wrought through him before Pharaoh, most of which were imitated by the magicians of Egypt; and that just before the final deliverance of the saints, God would work powerfully for His people, and these modern magicians would be permitted to imitate the work of God.

That time will soon come, and we shall have to keep hold of the strong arm of Jehovah; for all these great signs and mighty wonders of the devil are designed to deceive God’s people and overthrow them. Our minds must be stayed upon God, and we must not fear the fear of the wicked, that is, fear what they fear, and reverence what they reverence, but be bold and valiant for the truth. Could our eyes be opened, we should see forms of evil angels around us, trying to invent some new way to annoy and destroy us. And we should also see angels of God guarding us from their power; for God’s watchful eye is ever over Israel for good, and He will protect and save His people, if they put their trust in Him. — *Early Writings*, pp. 59, 60.

Friday, January 22: For Further Reading

The Upward Look, “Hope Thou in God,” p. 222;

Patriarchs and Prophets, “Ancient and Modern Sorcery, pp. 683–689.

Noble Prince of Peace

Sabbath Afternoon, January 23

Christ is “the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

Christ’s followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.

Words have been given me to speak to the people of God: “Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary. Let humanity stand back, that all may behold Him in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered. Says the prophet Isaiah: ‘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.’ Let the church and the world look upon their Redeemer. Let every voice proclaim with John: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ ” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 729.

Shortly before His crucifixion Christ bequeathed to His disciples a legacy of peace. . . . This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity with the world. It is an internal rather than an external peace. Without will be wars and fightings, through the opposition of avowed enemies, and the coldness and suspicion of those who claim to be friends. The peace of Christ is not to banish division, but it is to remain amid strife and division. . . .

The peace that Christ gave to His disciples, and for which we pray, is the peace

that is born of truth, a peace that is not to be quenched because of division. Without may be wars and fightings, jealousies, envies, hatred, strife; but the peace of Christ is not that which the world giveth or taketh away.—*Our High Calling*, p. 328.

Sunday, January 24: End of Gloom for Galilee

The prophet was permitted to look down the centuries to the time of the advent of the promised Messiah. At first he beheld only “trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish.” Isaiah 8:22. Many who were longing for the light of truth were being led astray by false teachers into the bewildering mazes of philosophy and spiritism; others were placing their trust in a form of godliness, but were not bringing true holiness into the life practice. The outlook seemed hopeless; but soon the scene changed, and before the eyes of the prophet was spread a wondrous vision. He saw the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and, lost in admiration, he exclaimed: “. . . The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Isaiah 9:2.

This glorious Light of the world was to bring salvation to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Of the work before Him, the prophet heard the eternal Father declare: “It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.” Isaiah 49:6.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 373.

In every way possible the enemy of truth and righteousness worked to cause the descendants of Abraham to forget their high and holy calling, and to turn aside to the worship of false gods. And often his efforts were all but successful. For centuries preceding Christ’s first advent, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Satan was throwing his hellish shadow athwart the pathway of men, that he might prevent them from gaining a knowledge of God and of the future world. Multitudes were sitting in the shadow of death. Their only hope was for this gloom to be lifted, that God might be revealed.

With prophetic vision David, the anointed of God, had foreseen that the coming of Christ should be “as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.” 2 Samuel 23:4. And Hosea testified, “His going forth is prepared as the morning.” Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness and waking the earth to life. . . . The multitudes dwelling “in the land of the shadow of death” were to see “a great light.” Isaiah 9:2.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 687, 688.

Christ came to heal the sick, to proclaim deliverance to the captives of Satan. He was in Himself health and strength. He imparted His life to the sick, the afflicted, those possessed of demons. He turned away none who came to receive His healing power. He knew that those who petitioned Him for help had brought disease upon themselves; yet He did not refuse to heal them. And when virtue from Christ entered into these poor souls, they were convicted of sin, and many were healed of their spiritual disease, as well as of their physical maladies. The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?—*Lift Him Up*, p. 258.

Monday, January 25: A Child for Us

Mary did not understand Christ's mission. Simeon had prophesied of Him as a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as a glory to Israel. Thus the angels had announced the Saviour's birth as tidings of joy to all peoples. God was seeking to correct the narrow, Jewish conception of the Messiah's work. He desired men to behold Him, not merely as the deliverer of Israel, but as the Redeemer of the world. But many years must pass before even the mother of Jesus would understand His mission.

Mary looked forward to the Messiah's reign on David's throne, but she saw not the baptism of suffering by which it must be won. Through Simeon it is revealed that the Messiah is to have no unobstructed passage through the world. In the words to Mary, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also," God in His tender mercy gives to the mother of Jesus an intimation of the anguish that already for His sake she had begun to bear.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 56.

Christ brought men and women power to overcome. He came to this world in human form, to live a man amongst men. He assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried. In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world—the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.

From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity [Hebrews 2:14 quoted].—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1114, 1115.

The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul

who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord “telleteth the number of the stars;” and yet “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:4, 3. . . .

. . . The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 71, 72.

Tuesday, January 26: The Rod of God’s Anger

“For all this they sinned still, and believed not for His wondrous works. . . . When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer.” Psalm 78:32-35. Yet [the children of Israel] did not turn to God with a sincere purpose. Though when afflicted by their enemies they sought help from Him who alone could deliver, yet “their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant. But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away. . . . For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.” Verses 37-39.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 410.

The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner. But “righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne.” Psalm 97:2, margin. “The Lord is slow to anger;” but He is “great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” Nahum 1:3.

The world has become bold in transgression of God’s law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” Psalm 73:11. But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 177, 178.

Though no miraculous deliverance was granted John [the Baptist], he was not forsaken. He had always the companionship of heavenly angels, who opened to him the prophecies concerning Christ, and the precious promises of Scripture. These were his stay, as they were to be the stay of God's people through the coming ages. To John the Baptist, as to those that came after him, was given the assurance, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end." Matthew 28:20, R. V., margin.

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 224, 225.

Wednesday, January 27: Root and Branch in One

With awed yet exultant spirit [John the Baptist] searched in the prophetic scrolls the revelations of the Messiah's coming,—the promised seed that should bruise the serpent's head; Shiloh, "the peace giver," who was to appear before a king should cease to reign on David's throne. Now the time had come. A Roman ruler sat in the palace upon Mount Zion. By the sure word of the Lord, already the Christ was born.

Isaiah's rapt portrayals of the Messiah's glory were his study by day and by night,—the Branch from the root of Jesse; a King to reign in righteousness, judging "with equity for the meek of the earth;" Isaiah 11:4. . . . The heart of the lonely exile was filled with the glorious vision.

He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was forgotten. He beheld the majesty of holiness, and felt himself to be inefficient and unworthy. He was ready to go forth as Heaven's messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine. He could stand erect and fearless in the presence of earthly monarchs, because he had bowed low before the King of kings.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 103.

The Saviour longs to manifest His grace and stamp His character on the whole world. It is His purchased possession, and He desires to make men free, and pure, and holy. Though Satan works to hinder this purpose, yet through the blood shed for the world there are triumphs to be achieved that will bring glory

to God and the Lamb. Christ will not be satisfied till the victory is complete, and "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53:11. All the nations of the earth shall hear the gospel of His grace. Not all will receive His grace; but "a seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Psalm 22:30.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 827, 828.

The gospel message proclaimed by Christ's disciples was the announcement of His first advent to the world. It bore to men the good tidings of salvation through faith in Him. It pointed forward to His second coming in glory to redeem His people, and it set before men the hope, through faith and obedience, of sharing the inheritance of the saints in light. This message is given to men today, and at this time there is coupled with it the announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. The signs which He Himself gave of His coming have been fulfilled, and by the teaching of God's word we may know that the Lord is at the door.

John in the Revelation foretells the proclamation of the gospel message just before Christ's second coming. He beholds an angel 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." Revelation 14:6, 7.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 226, 227.

Thursday, January 28: "You Comforted Me"

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:10.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 483.

Jesus is the substance, the glory and fragrance, the very life itself. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Then the royal path cast up the ransomed to walk in is not discouraging darkness. Our pilgrimage would indeed be lonely and painful were it not for

Jesus. "I will not," He says, "leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). Then let us gather every registered promise. Let us repeat them by day and meditate upon them in the night season, and be happy.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isaiah 12:1-6).

Is not this indeed a royal path we are traveling, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in? Can there be provided a better path? A safer way? No! No! Then let us practice the instruction given. Let us see our Saviour as our refuge, as our shield on our right hand to defend us from the arrows of Satan.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 244.

Friday, January 29: For Further Reading

The Upward Look, "Our Competent Saviour," p. 39;

That I May Know Him, "Why the Lord Delays," p. 349.

Playing God

Sabbath Afternoon, January 30

It was pride and ambition that prompted Lucifer to complain of the government of God, and to seek the overthrow of the order which had been established in heaven. Since his fall it has been his object to infuse the same spirit of envy and discontent, the same ambition for position and honor, into the minds of men. He thus worked upon the minds of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to arouse the desire for self-exaltation and excite envy, distrust, and rebellion. Satan caused them to reject God as their leader, by rejecting the men of God's appointment. Yet while in their murmuring against Moses and Aaron they blasphemed God, they were so deluded as to think themselves righteous, and to regard those who had faithfully reproved their sins as actuated by Satan.

Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah's ruin? Pride and ambition are widespread; and when these are cherished, they open the door to envy, and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 403, 404.

When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realize their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 605, 606.

Advancement in Christian experience is characterized by increasing humility, as the result of increasing knowledge. Everyone who is united to Christ will depart from all iniquity. I tell you, in the fear of God, I have been shown that many of you will fail of everlasting life because you are building your hopes of heaven on a false foundation. God is leaving you to yourselves, "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart." You have neglected the Scriptures. You despise and reject the testimonies because they reprove your darling sins and disturb your self-complacency. When Christ is cherished in the heart, His likeness will be revealed in the life. Humility will reign where pride was once predominant. Submission, meekness, patience, will soften down the rugged features of a naturally perverse, impetuous disposition. Love to Jesus will be manifested in love to His people. It is not fitful, not spasmodic, but calm and deep and strong. The life of the Christian will be divested of all pretense, free from all affectation, artifice, and falsehood. It is earnest, true, sublime. Christ

speaks in every word. He is seen in every deed. The life is radiant with the light of an indwelling Saviour.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 49, 50.

Sunday, January 31: Doom on the Nations

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500.

In sparing the life of Cain the murderer, God gave the world an example of what would be the result of permitting the sinner to live to continue a course of unbridled iniquity. Through the influence of Cain's teaching and example, multitudes of his descendants were led into sin, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:5, 11.

In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. Through the deceptive power of Satan the workers of iniquity obtain sympathy and admiration, and are thus constantly leading others to rebellion. It was so in Cain's and in Noah's day, and in the time of Abraham and Lot; it is so in our time. It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 543.

It was Satan that prompted the world's rejection of Christ. The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour's mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God. Satan contested every claim put forth by the Son of God and employed men as his agents to fill the Saviour's life with suffering and sorrow. The sophistry and falsehood by which he had sought to hinder the work of Jesus, the hatred manifested through the children of disobedience, his cruel accusations against Him whose life was one of unexampled goodness, all sprang from deep-seated revenge. The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God, while all heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror.

When the great sacrifice had been consummated, Christ ascended on high, refusing the adoration of angels until He had presented the request: "I will that

they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.” John 17:24. Then with inexpressible love and power came forth the answer from the Father’s throne: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Hebrews 1:6. Not a stain rested upon Jesus. His humiliation ended, His sacrifice completed, there was given unto Him a name that is above every name.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 501, 502.

Monday, February 1: The Late Great City of Babylon

“Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed.” “The spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts.”

“I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord. The Lord hath opened His armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of His indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.”

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is His name: He shall thoroughly plead their cause, that He may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.” Jeremiah 51:41; 50:23, 46; Jeremiah 51:8, 56, 57; 50:24, 25, 33, 34.

Thus “the broad walls of Babylon” became “utterly broken, and her high gates . . . burned with fire.” Thus did Jehovah of hosts “cause the arrogance of the proud to cease,” and lay low “the haughtiness of the terrible.” Thus did “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency,” become as Sodom and Gomorrah—a place forever accursed. “It shall never be inhabited,” Inspiration has declared, “neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.” “I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.” Jeremiah 51:58; Isaiah 13:11, 19-22; 14:23.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 532, 533.

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the Watcher and the Holy One. Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world's great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed.

While nations have rejected God's principles, and in this rejection have wrought their own ruin, yet a divine, overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 535.

Tuesday, February 2: Fall of the Mountain "King"

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. . . . Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 758, 759.

The teaching of this parable [of the wheat and the tares] is illustrated in God's own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan?—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 72.

Meekness is a precious grace, willing to suffer silently, willing to endure trials. Meekness is patient and labors to be happy under all circumstances. Meekness is always thankful and makes its own songs of happiness, making melody in the heart of God. Meekness will suffer disappointment and wrong and will not retaliate. . . .

. . . It is the humble life of goodness, of fidelity that will make you the object of the heavenly angels' special guardianship. The Pattern Man . . . lived nearly thirty years in an obscure Galilean town, hidden away among the hills. All the angel host was at His command, yet He did not claim to be anything great or exalted. . . . He was a carpenter, working for wages, a servant to those for whom He labored, showing that heaven may be very near to us in the common walks of life, and that angels from the heavenly courts will take charge of the steps of those who come and go at God's command.—*My Life Today*, p. 56.

Wednesday, February 3: Heaven's Gate

The term "Babylon" is derived from "Babel," and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion. In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman—a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

The Lord knew the evil influences that would surround Jacob, and the perils to which he would be exposed. In mercy He opened up the future before the repentant fugitive, that he might understand the divine purpose with reference to himself, and be prepared to resist the temptations that would surely come to him when alone amid idolaters and scheming men. . . .

In the vision the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder revealed to him in his dream was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael. Said He, "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." John 1:51. . . . The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power. . . .

Jacob awoke from his sleep in the deep stillness of night. The shining forms of his vision had disappeared. Only the dim outline of the lonely hills, and above them the heavens bright with stars, now met his gaze. But he had a solemn sense that God was with him. An unseen presence filled the solitude. "Surely the

Lord is in this place,” he said, “and I knew it not. . . . This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 184, 187.

Our house of worship may be very humble, but it is none the less acknowledged by God. If we worship in spirit and in truth and in the beauty of holiness, it will be to us the very gate of heaven. As lessons of the wondrous works of God are repeated, and as the heart’s gratitude is expressed in prayer and song, angels from heaven take up the strain and unite in praise and thanksgiving to God. These exercises drive back the power of Satan. They expel murmurings and complainings, and Satan loses ground.

God teaches us that we should assemble in His house to cultivate the attributes of perfect love. This will fit the dwellers of earth for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him, where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, from one new moon to another, they will assemble in the sanctuary to unite in loftier strains of song, in thanksgiving and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 288.

Thursday, February 4: Final Triumph of Zion

Men are prone to abuse the long-suffering of God, and to presume on His forbearance. But there is a point in human iniquity when it is time for God to interfere; and terrible are the issues. “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked” (Nahum 1:3). The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts constraint on His own attributes; but punishment is nonetheless certain. Every century of profligacy has treasured up wrath against the day of wrath; and when the time comes, and the iniquity is full, then God will do His strange work. It will be found a terrible thing to have worn out the divine patience; for the wrath of God will fall so signally and strongly that it is presented as being unmixed with mercy; and the very earth will be desolated.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 372, 373.

Paul writes: “. . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9).

The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. To believe that He will save others, but will not save you is not genuine faith; but when the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then

genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 391, 392.

From India, from Africa, from China, from the islands of the sea, from the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption, not by a sea of water as in Noah's day, but by a sea of fire that cannot be quenched by any human devising. . . .

From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. . . . "The rebuke of His people shall He take away." Isaiah 25:8. White robes will be given to every one of them. (Revelation 6:11.) And "they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Isaiah 62:12.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 179.

Friday, February 5: For Further Reading

Reflecting Christ, "Revealing the Triumphs of Grace," p. 347;

Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, "Battling With Unseen Powers," vol. 6, pp. 1118, 1119.

Defeat of the Assyrians

Sabbath Afternoon, February 6

The rise and fall of the Assyrian Empire is rich in lessons for the nations of earth today. Inspiration has likened the glory of Assyria at the height of her prosperity to a noble tree in the garden of God, towering above the surrounding trees.

“The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. . . . Under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. . . . All the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.” Ezekiel 31:3-9.

But the rulers of Assyria, instead of using their unusual blessings for the benefit of mankind, became the scourge of many lands. Merciless, with no thought of God or their fellow men, they pursued the fixed policy of causing all nations to acknowledge the supremacy of the gods of Nineveh, whom they exalted above the Most High. God had sent Jonah to them with a message of warning, and for a season they humbled themselves before the Lord of hosts and sought forgiveness. But soon they turned again to idol worship and to the conquest of the world.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 362, 363.

The power of God has not decreased. His power, I saw, would be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob, crying: “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Enduring faith has been dying away. It must be revived in the hearts of God’s people. There must be a claiming of the blessing of God. Faith, living faith, always bears upward to God and glory; unbelief, downward to darkness and death.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144.

To the omnipotence of the King of kings our covenant-keeping God unites the gentleness and care of the tender shepherd. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to all who trust in Him. He has means for the removal of every difficulty, that those who serve Him and respect the means He employs may be sustained. His love is as far above all other love as the heavens are above the earth. He watches over His children with a love that is measureless and everlasting.

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 481, 482.

Sunday, February 7: Strings Attached

Hezekiah, in the earlier years of his reign, had continued to pay tribute to Assyria, in harmony with the agreement entered into by Ahaz. Meanwhile the king had taken “counsel with his princes and his mighty men,” and had done everything possible for the defense of his kingdom. He had made sure of a bountiful supply of water within the walls of Jerusalem, while without the city there should be a scarcity. “Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people.” 2 Chronicles 32:3, 5, 6. Nothing had been left undone that could be done in preparation for a siege.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 350, 351.

In a time of grave national peril, when the hosts of Assyria were invading the land of Judah and it seemed as if nothing could save Jerusalem from utter destruction, Hezekiah rallied the forces of his realm to resist with unflinching courage their heathen oppressors and to trust in the power of Jehovah to deliver. “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him,” Hezekiah exhorted the men of Judah; “for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.” 2 Chronicles 32:7, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 349.

The Lord knows that if we look to man, and trust to man, we are leaning on an arm of flesh. He invites our confidence. There is no limit to His power. Think of the Lord Jesus, and His merits and His love, but do not seek to find the defects and dwell upon the mistakes that others have made. Call to your mind the things worthy of your recognition and your praise; and if you are sharp to discern errors in others, be more sharp to recognize the good and praise the good. You may, if you criticize yourself, find things just as objectionable as that which you see in others. Then let us work constantly to strengthen one another in the most holy faith.—*This Day With God*, p. 300.

[Each of us] will have hard battles to fight with self, and these combats will not become fewer. But if we are constantly growing in Christian experience, if we continue to look to Jesus in faith, strength will be given us for every emergency. All the powers and faculties of a regenerated nature must be brought into

constant, daily exercise. Every day we shall have occasion to crucify self, to war against inclination and a perverse temperament that would draw the will in a wrong direction. The repose and triumph of victory are not yet ours, except as we by faith enter into the victory that Christ has gained for us.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 108.

Monday, February 8: Propaganda

The Assyrian officers, sure of the strength of their disciplined forces, arranged for a conference with the chief men of Judah, during which they insolently demanded the surrender of the city. This demand was accompanied by blasphemous revilings against the God of the Hebrews. Because of the weakness and apostasy of Israel and Judah, the name of God was no longer feared among the nations, but had become a subject for continual reproach... .

Rabshakeh . . . lifted his voice . . . and . . . said:

“Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 352, 353.

When we are burdened, when we are pressed with temptation, when the feelings and desires of the natural heart are contending for the victory, we should offer up fervent, importunate prayer to our heavenly Father in the name of Christ, and this will bring Jesus to our help, so that through His all-powerful and efficacious name we may gain the victory and banish Satan from our side. . . .

There is help for us only in God. We should not flatter ourselves that we have any strength in wisdom of our own, for our strength is weakness, our judgment foolishness. Christ conquered the foe in our behalf because He pitied our weakness and knew that we would be overcome and would perish if He did not come to our help. He clothed His divinity with humanity, and thus was qualified to reach man with His human arm while with His divine arm He grasped the throne of the Infinite. The merits of Christ elevate and ennoble humanity, and through the name and grace of Christ it is possible for man to overcome the degradation caused by the Fall, and through the exalted, divine nature of Christ to be linked to the Infinite.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 269.

If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

whither the Forerunner is for us entered.” It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens. His watchcare extends to every household and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us, “that we might be partakers of His holiness” and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 742.

Tuesday, February 9: Shaken but Not Forsaken

The land of Judah had been laid waste by the army of occupation, but God had promised to provide miraculously for the needs of the people. To Hezekiah came the message: “This shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David’s sake.” [2 Kings 19:]29-34.

That very night deliverance came.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 360, 361.

The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God’s people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. “The just shall live by his faith.” In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will give them the wisdom their varied necessities demand. . . .

We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God and waits for

deliverance in His appointed time and way. The sure word of prophecy will meet its final fulfillment in the glorious advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The time of waiting may seem long, the soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Habakkuk 2:20.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 386–388.

When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. . . . But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 100, 101.

Wednesday, February 10: The Rest of the Story

As God's messengers [angels] go forth, like "the appearance of a flash of lightning," (Ezekiel 1:14), so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight. The angel that appeared at the Saviour's tomb, his countenance "like lightning, and his raiment white as snow," caused the keepers for fear of him to quake, and they "became as dead men." Matthew 28:3, 4. When Sennacherib, the haughty Assyrian, reproached and blasphemed God, and threatened Israel with destruction, "it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." There were "cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains," from the army of Sennacherib. "So he returned with shame of face to his own land." 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 512.

Tidings of this terrible judgment upon the army that had been sent to take Jerusalem, soon reached Sennacherib, who was still guarding the approach to Judea from Egypt. Stricken with fear, the Assyrian king hastened to depart. . . . But he had not long to reign. In harmony with the prophecy that had been uttered concerning his sudden end, he was assassinated by those of his own home, "and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." Isaiah 37:38.

The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations. In Jerusalem the hearts of the people were filled with holy joy. Their earnest entreaties for

deliverance had been mingled with confession of sin and with many tears. In their great need they had trusted wholly in the power of God to save, and He had not failed them. Now the temple courts resounded with songs of solemn praise.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 361, 362.

Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Let us obey the command, even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.

The worker for God needs strong faith. Appearances may seem forbidding; but in the darkest hour there is light beyond. The strength of those who, in faith, love and serve God, will be renewed day by day. The understanding of the Infinite is placed at their service, that in carrying out His purposes they may not err. Let these workers hold the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end, remembering that the light of God's truth is to shine amid the darkness that enshrouds our world.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 262.

Thursday, February 11: In Sickness and in Wealth

The visit of these messengers from the ruler of a far-away land gave Hezekiah an opportunity to extol the living God. How easy it would have been for him to tell them of God, the upholder of all created things, through whose favor his own life had been spared when all other hope had fled! What momentous transformations might have taken place had these seekers after truth from the plains of Chaldea been led to acknowledge the supreme sovereignty of the living God!

But pride and vanity took possession of Hezekiah's heart, and in self-exaltation he laid open to covetous eyes the treasures with which God had enriched His people. The king "showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." Isaiah 39:2. Not to glorify God did he do this, but to exalt himself in the eyes of the foreign princes. He did not stop to consider that these men were representatives of a powerful nation that had not the fear nor the love of God in their hearts, and that it was imprudent to make them his confidants concerning the temporal riches of the

nation.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 344–346.

The story of Hezekiah's failure to prove true to his trust . . . is fraught with an important lesson for all. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience, of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. When mind and heart are filled with the love of God, it will not be difficult to impart that which enters into the spiritual life. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will find expression in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure. . . .

What have your friends and acquaintances seen in your house? Are you, instead of revealing the treasures of the grace of Christ, displaying those things that will perish with the using? Or do you, to those with whom you are brought in contact, communicate some new thought of Christ's character and work? . . . O that those for whom God has done marvelous things would show forth His praises, and tell of His mighty works. But how often those for whom God works are like Hezekiah—forgetful of the Giver of all their blessings.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 241.

Friday, February 12: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, "He Is Near to All Who Call Upon Him," p. 19;

Reflecting Christ, "Jesus Willed Us Peace," p. 278.

“Comfort My People”

Sabbath Afternoon, February 13

In the darkest days of her long conflict with evil, the church of God has been given revelations of the eternal purpose of Jehovah. His people have been permitted to look beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future, when, the warfare having been accomplished, the redeemed will enter into possession of the promised land. These visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, should be dear to His church today, when the controversy of the ages is rapidly closing and the promised blessings are soon to be realized in all their fullness. . . .

. . . Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things “shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” . . .

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed.—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 372.

Many were the messages of comfort given the church by the prophets of old. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people” (Isaiah 40:1), was Isaiah’s commission from God; and with the commission were given wonderful visions that have been the believers’ hope and joy through all the centuries that have followed. Despised of men, persecuted, forsaken, God’s children in every age have nevertheless been sustained by His sure promises. By faith they have looked forward to the time when He will fulfill to His church the assurance, “I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.” Isaiah 60:15.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 722, 723.

The Father’s presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord’s permission. All

our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, in short, all things work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 488, 489.

Sunday, February 14: Comfort for the Future

The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time. Of the nations of earth today who in arrogance and pride array themselves against Him, God inquires, "To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth." Verse 18.

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end" of all who endeavor to exalt themselves above the Most High. Nahum 1:7, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 366.

That heart is the happiest that has Christ as an abiding guest. That home is the most blessed where godliness is a controlling principle. . . . In the workshop where the peace and heavenly presence of Christ dwells, the workers will be the most trustworthy, the most faithful, and the most efficient. The fear and love of God are seen.

In this world there is neither comfort nor happiness without Jesus. Let us acknowledge Him as our Friend and Saviour. . . . In Him are matchless charms. O may we all so live during this brief period of probationary time that we shall reign with Him throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity!—*My Life Today*, p. 157.

It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.

Is Jesus true? Does He mean what He says? Answer decidedly, Yes, every word. Then if you have settled this, by faith claim every promise that He has made, and receive the blessing; for this acceptance by faith gives life to the soul. You may believe that Jesus is true to you, even though you feel yourself to be the weakest and most unworthy of His children. And as you believe, all your dark,

brooding doubts are thrown back upon the archdeceiver who originated them. You can be a great blessing if you will take God at His word. By living faith you are to trust Him, even though the impulse is strong within you to speak words of distrust.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 517.

The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. . . . When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, [let us] cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 621.

Monday, February 15: Presence, Word, and Roadwork

Anciently, when a king journeyed through the less frequented parts of his dominion, a company of men was sent ahead of the royal chariot to level the steep places and to fill up the hollows, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. This custom is employed by the prophet to illustrate the work of the gospel. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. "Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" are cast down; every thought is brought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5. Then humility and self-sacrificing love, so little valued among men, are exalted as alone of worth. This is the work of the gospel, of which John's message was a part.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 135.

What is our work? The same as that given to John the Baptist, of whom we read: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Matthew 3:1-3. . . .

The word of the Lord to us is: "Repent ye; prepare the way for a revival of My work." . . .

Obstacles to the advancement of the work of God will appear; but fear not. To the omnipotence of the King of Kings, our covenant-keeping God unites the

gentleness and care of a tender shepherd. Nothing can stand in His way. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to His people. . . . His goodness and love are infinite, and His covenant is unalterable.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 9, 10.

The infidel Voltaire once boastingly said: “I am weary of hearing people repeat that twelve men established the Christian religion. I will prove that one man may suffice to overthrow it.” Generations have passed since his death. Millions have joined in the war upon the Bible. But it is so far from being destroyed, that where there were a hundred in Voltaire’s time, there are now ten thousand, yes, a hundred thousand copies of the book of God. In the words of an early Reformer concerning the Christian church, “The Bible is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.” Saith the Lord: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.” Isaiah 54:17.

“The word of our God shall stand forever.” Isaiah 40:8. Whatever is built upon the authority of man will be overthrown; but that which is founded upon the rock of God’s immutable word shall stand forever.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 288.

Tuesday, February 16: The Birth of Evangelism

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.

This is the work outlined by the prophet Isaiah in the words, “O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.” Isaiah 40:9, 10.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 415.

The unselfish labor of Christians in the past should be to us an object lesson and an inspiration. The members of God’s church are to be zealous of good works, separating from worldly ambition and walking in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. With hearts filled with sympathy and compassion, they are to minister to those in need of help, bringing to sinners a knowledge of the Saviour’s love. Such work calls for laborious effort, but it brings a rich reward. Those who engage in it with sincerity of purpose will see souls won to the

Saviour, for the influence that attends the practical carrying out of the divine commission is irresistible.

Not upon the ordained minister only rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfill this commission. Everyone who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Revelation 22:17. The charge to give this invitation includes the entire church. Everyone who has heard the invitation is to echo the message from hill and valley, saying, "Come." — *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 109, 110.

"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . And the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He depends not upon force or fear; but going before, he calls them. They know his voice, and obey the call. So does the Saviour-Shepherd with His sheep. . . .

As the shepherd goes before his sheep, himself first encountering the perils of the way, so does Jesus with His people. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." The way to heaven is consecrated by the Saviour's footprints. The path may be steep and rugged, but Jesus has traveled that way; His feet have pressed down the cruel thorns, to make the pathway easier for us. Every burden that we are called to bear He Himself has borne. — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.

Wednesday, February 17: Merciful Creator

Men of the greatest intellect cannot understand the mysteries of Jehovah as revealed in nature. Divine inspiration asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention to the deep mysteries of God and to teach us that our wisdom is limited; that in the surroundings of our daily life there are many things beyond the comprehension of finite beings.

Skeptics refuse to believe in God because they cannot comprehend the infinite power by which He reveals Himself. But God is to be acknowledged as much from what He does not reveal of Himself, as from that which is open to our limited comprehension. Both in divine revelation and in nature, God has given mysteries to command our faith. This must be so. We may be ever searching, ever inquiring, ever learning, and yet there is an infinity beyond. — *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 431.

He who has chosen Christ has joined himself to a power that no array of human

wisdom or strength can overthrow. . . .

“To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth. . . . Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:25, 26, 28-31.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 39, 40.

God calls men to look upon the heavens. See Him in the wonders of the starry heavens. [Isaiah 40:26 quoted.] We are not merely to gaze upon the heavens; we are to consider the works of God. He would have us study the works of infinity, and from this study, learn to love and reverence and obey Him. The heavens and the earth with their treasures are to teach the lessons of God’s love, care, and power. . . .

. . . God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handiwork. The heavenly bodies are worthy of contemplation. God has made them for the benefit of man, and as we study His works, angels of God will be by our side to enlighten our minds, and guard them from satanic deception. As you look at the wonderful things God’s hand has made, let your proud, foolish heart feel its dependence and inferiority. As you consider these things, you will have a sense of God’s condescension.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1145.

Thursday, February 18: The Problem With Idolatry

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The God of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets,

politicians, journalists—the God of polished fashionable circles. . . . is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 583.

All false worship is spiritual adultery. The second precept, which forbids false worship, is also a command to worship God, and Him only serve. The Lord is a jealous God. He will not be trifled with. He has spoken concerning the manner in which He should be worshiped. He has a hatred of idolatry; for its influence is corrupting. It debases the mind, and leads to sensuality and all kinds of sin.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1106.

He who searches the heart, desires to win His people from every species of idolatry. Let the Word of God, the blessed book of life, occupy the tables now filled with useless ornaments. Spend your money in buying books that will be the means of enlightening the mind in regard to present truth. The time you waste in moving and dusting the multitudinous ornaments in your house, spend in writing a few lines to your friends, in sending papers or leaflets or little books to someone who knows not the truth. Grasp the Word of the Lord as the treasure of infinite wisdom and love; this is the Guidebook that points out the path to heaven. It points us to the sin-pardoning Saviour, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

O that you would search the Scriptures with prayerful hearts, and a spirit of surrender to God! O that you would search your hearts as with a lighted candle, and discover and break the finest thread that binds you to worldly habits, which divert the mind from God! Plead with God to show you every practice that draws your thoughts and affections from Him. God has given His holy law to man as His measure of character. By this law you may see and overcome every defect in your character. You may sever yourself from every idol, and link yourself to the throne of God by the golden chain of grace and truth.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 318.

Friday, February 19: For Further Reading

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, “An Exalted Privilege,” pp. 478–480;

Testimonies for the Church, “Conflicts and Victory,” vol. 1, pp. 608, 609.

To Serve and to Save

Sabbath Afternoon, February 20

John [the Baptist] recalled the prophecy concerning the Messiah, “Jehovah hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor, and . . . to comfort all that mourn.” Isaiah 61:1, 2, A.R.V. Jesus of Nazareth was the Promised One. The evidence of His divinity was seen in His ministry to the needs of suffering humanity. His glory was shown in His condescension to our low estate.

The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. To John was opened the same truth that had come to Elijah in the desert, when “a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire:” and after the fire, God spoke to the prophet by a still, small voice. 1 Kings 19:11, 12. So Jesus was to do His work, not by the overturning of thrones and kingdoms, not with pomp and outward display, but through speaking to the hearts of men by a life of mercy and self-sacrifice.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 35, 36.

In His life no self-assertion was to be mingled. The homage which the world gives to position, to wealth, and to talent, was to be foreign to the Son of God. None of the means that men employ to win allegiance or to command homage, was the Messiah to use. His utter renunciation of self was foreshadowed in the words:

“He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.”

In marked contrast to the teachers of His day was the Saviour to conduct Himself among men. In His life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever to be witnessed. The Messiah was to be hid in God, and God was to be revealed in the character of His Son. Without a knowledge of God, humanity would be eternally lost. Without divine help, men and women would sink lower and lower. Life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world. Man’s necessities could be met in no other way.—

Prophets and Kings, pp. 692, 693.

Christ saw the work of the priests and rulers. The very ones who needed help, the afflicted, the distressed, were treated with words of censure and rebuke, and He forbore to speak any word that would break the feeble reed. The dimly burning wick of faith and hope, He would encourage, and not quench. He would feed His flock like a shepherd; He would gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1146.

Sunday, February 21: Servant Nation

To the prophet [Isaiah] was given a revelation of the beneficent design of God in scattering impenitent Judah among the nations of earth. “My people shall know My name,” the Lord declared; “they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak.” Isaiah 52:6. And not only were they themselves to learn the lesson of obedience and trust; in their places of exile they were also to impart to others a knowledge of the living God. Many from among the sons of the strangers were to learn to love Him as their Creator and their Redeemer; they were to begin the observance of His holy Sabbath day as a memorial of His creative power; and when He should make “bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,” to deliver His people from captivity, “all the ends of the earth” should see of the salvation of God. Verse 10. Many of these converts from heathenism would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites and accompany them on the return journey to Judea. None of these were to say, “The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people” (Isaiah 56:3), for the word of God through His prophet to those who should yield themselves to Him and observe His law was that they should thenceforth be numbered among spiritual Israel—His church on earth.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 371, 372.

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. . . .

[At His second coming] the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance. Thus God’s purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul. Even amid the working of evil, God’s purposes have been moving steadily forward to their accomplishment. It was thus with the house of Israel throughout the history of the divided monarchy; it is thus with spiritual Israel today.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 720.

Christ taught His disciples precious lessons in regard to the necessity of trusting in God. These lessons were designed to encourage the children of God through all ages, and they have come down to our time full of instruction and comfort. . .

We cannot but look forward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may look on what is past as well as on what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deuteronomy 33:25. The trial will not exceed the strength that shall be given us to bear it. . . .

And by and by the gates of heaven will be thrown open to admit God's children, and from the lips of the King of glory the benediction will fall on their ears like richest music, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 123, 125, 126.

Monday, February 22: Unnamed Individual Servant

When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God. God gave His Son to die for sinful human beings a death of ignominy and shame. He who was Commander in the heavenly courts laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothing His divinity with humanity, came to this world to stand at the head of the human race as the pattern-man. He humbled Himself to suffer with the race, to be afflicted in all their afflictions. . . .

The Son of God came voluntarily to accomplish the work of atonement. There was no obligatory yoke upon Him; for He was independent and above all law.

The angels, as God's intelligent messengers, were under the yoke of obligation; no personal sacrifice of theirs could atone for fallen man. Christ alone was free from the claims of the law to undertake the redemption of the sinful race. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again. "Being in the form of God," He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 904.

As the high priest laid aside his pontifical dress, and officiated in the white linen dress of a common priest, so Christ emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. As the high priest, after performing his service in the holy of holies, came forth to the waiting congregation in his pontifical robes, so Christ will come the second time clothed in glorious garments of the whitest white, "such as no fuller on earth can whiten them." He will come in His own glory, and in the glory of His Father,

as King of kings and Lord of lords, and all the angelic host will escort Him on His way.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1111, 1112.

Christ has entered the world as Satan's destroyer, and the Redeemer of the captives bound by his power. He would leave an example in His own victorious life for man to follow and overcome the temptations of Satan. As soon as Christ entered the wilderness of temptation, His visage changed. . . . The weight of the sins of the world was pressing His soul, and His countenance expressed unutterable sorrow, a depth of anguish that fallen man had never realized. He felt the overwhelming tide of woe that deluged the world. He realized the strength of indulged appetite and of unholy passion that controlled the world, which had brought upon man inexpressible suffering. . . .

As man could not, in his human strength, resist the power of Satan's temptations, Jesus volunteered to undertake the work, and bear the burden for man, and overcome the power of appetite in his behalf.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 271, 272.

Tuesday, February 23: Persian "Messiah"

The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down, and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light. . . .

There have been one and another who in studying their Bibles thought they discovered great light, and new theories, but these have not been correct. The Scripture is all true, but by misapplying the Scripture men arrive at wrong conclusions. We are engaged in a mighty conflict, and it will become more close and determined, as we near the final struggle. We have a sleepless adversary, and he is constantly at work upon human minds that have not had a personal experience in the teachings of the people of God for the past fifty years. . . .

. . . Those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 101–103.

The Lord has resources. His hand is on the machinery. When the time came for His temple to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning Himself, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty. And

more, Cyrus furnished them the necessary facilities for rebuilding the temple of the Lord. This work began under Cyrus, and his successor carried on the work begun.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1175.

In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf; for inseparably linked with the prophecy outlining the manner of Babylon's capture and fall were the words:

"Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 44:28; 45:13.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 552.

Wednesday, February 24: Hope in Advance

How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, "What shall we do?" The first word of Peter's answer was, "Repent." Acts 2:37, 38. At another time, shortly after, he said, "Repent, . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19.

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

The true penitent does not put his past sins from his remembrance. He does not, as soon as he has obtained peace, grow unconcerned in regard to the mistakes he has made. He thinks of those who have been led into evil by his course, and tries in every possible way to lead them back into the true path. The clearer the light that he has entered into, the stronger is his desire to set the feet of others in the right way. He does not gloss over his wayward course, making his wrong a light thing, but lifts the danger signal, that others may take warning. . . .

. . . We should learn that in watchfulness and prayer is the only safety for both young and old. Security does not lie in exalted position and great privileges. One may for many years have enjoyed a genuine Christian experience, but he is still exposed to Satan's attacks. In the battle with inward sin and outward temptation, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His failure teaches us that, whatever a man's intellectual qualities may be, and however faithfully he may have served God in the past, he can never with safety trust in his own wisdom and integrity.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 78, 82.

I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church. . . .

. . . Let this be our language, from hearts that respond to the great goodness and love of God to us as a people and to us individually, "Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever." . . . Consider, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord has a people, a chosen people, His church, to be His own, His own fortress, which He holds in a sin-stricken, revolted world; and He intended that no authority should be known in it, no laws be acknowledged by it, but His own.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 15, 16.

Thursday, February 25: A Feeling and Suffering Servant

In the later centuries of Israel's history prior to the first advent it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:6. . . .

It was to Christ that the prophetic promise was given: "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, . . . thus saith the Lord, . . . I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. . . . They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Isaiah 49:7-10.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 688, 689.

As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. . . .

Upon [the promises in God's] word Jesus rested, and He gave Satan no advantage. When the last steps of Christ's humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." "The prince of this world is judged." Now shall he be cast out. John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 678, 679.

In every trial we have strong consolation. Is not our Saviour touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Has He not been tempted in all points like as we are? And has He not invited us to take every trial and perplexity to Him? Then let us not make ourselves miserable over tomorrow's burdens. Bravely and cheerfully carry the burdens of today. Today's trust and faith we must have. But we are not asked to live more than a day at a time. He who gives strength for today will give strength for tomorrow.

Nothing wounds the soul like the sharp darts of unbelief. When trial comes, as it will, do not worry or complain. Silence in the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. "Then are they glad because they be quiet" (Psalm 107:30). Remember that underneath you are the everlasting arms. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7). He is guiding you into a harbor of gracious experience.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 269.

Friday, February 26: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, "In the School of Christ," p. 162;

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, "Precious Words of Warning and Promise," pp. 126, 127.

Doing the Unthinkable

Sabbath Afternoon, February 27

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. . . .

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father’s side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 22, 23.

For the first time the child Jesus looked upon the temple. He saw the white-robed priests performing their solemn ministry. He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With the worshipers He bowed in prayer, while the cloud of incense ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 78.

Paul showed how closely God had linked the sacrificial service with the prophecies relating to the One who was to be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” The Messiah was to give His life as “an offering for sin.” Looking down through the centuries to the scenes of the Saviour’s atonement, the prophet Isaiah had testified that the Lamb of God “poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:7, 10, 12.

The Saviour of prophecy was to come, not as a temporal king, to deliver the Jewish nation from earthly oppressors, but as a man among men, to live a life of poverty and humility, and at last to be despised, rejected, and slain. The Saviour

foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures was to offer Himself as a sacrifice in behalf of the fallen race, thus fulfilling every requirement of the broken law. In Him the sacrificial types were to meet their antitype, and His death on the cross was to lend significance to the entire Jewish economy.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 227, 228.

Sunday, February 28: Isaiah's Testing Truth

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Matthew 20:28. Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed. "The Lord God hath given Me," He said, "the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." Isaiah 50:4.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 139.

It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Isaiah 50:6. . . .

. . . The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and "all things" that are permitted "work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

"He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:31). It is because Christ would not save Himself that the sinner has any hope of pardon or favor with God. If, in His undertaking to save the sinner, Christ had failed or become discouraged, the last hope of every son and daughter of Adam would have been at an end. The entire life of Christ was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice. . . .

Oh, what soul hunger and longing had Christ to save that which was lost! The body crucified upon the cross did not detract from His divinity, His power of God to save through the human sacrifice, all who would accept His righteousness. In

dying upon the cross, He transferred the guilt from the person of the transgressor to that of the divine Substitute through faith in Him as his personal Redeemer.—*This Day With God*, p. 236.

Monday, March 1: The Suffering Servant Poem

Christ was not insensible to ignominy and disgrace. He felt it all most bitterly. He felt it as much more deeply and acutely than we can feel suffering, as His nature was more exalted and pure and holy than that of the sinful race for whom He suffered. He was the Majesty of heaven, He was equal with the Father, He was the Commander of the hosts of angels, yet He died for man the death that was, above all others, clothed with ignominy and reproach. O that the haughty hearts of men might realize this! O that they might enter into the meaning of redemption and seek to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus!—*That I Might Know Him*, p. 339.

Who can comprehend the love here displayed! The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief Him who had been the Majesty of heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient Sufferer! Upon His head is the thorny crown. His lifeblood flows from every lacerated vein. All this in consequence of sin! Nothing could have induced Christ to leave His honor and majesty in heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected by those He came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery. . . .

While the nails were being driven through His hands, and the sweat drops of agony were forced from His pores, from the pale, quivering lips of the innocent Sufferer a prayer of pardoning love was breathed for His murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." All heaven was gazing with profound interest upon the scene. The glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law. He was about to ransom His people with His own blood. He was paying the just claims of God's holy law. This was the means through which an end was to be finally made of sin and Satan, and his host to be vanquished.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 207–209.

The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes

from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 244.

Tuesday, March 2: Who Has Believed?

It is by suffering that our virtues are tested, and our faith tried. It is in the day of trouble that we feel the preciousness of Jesus. You will be given opportunity to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). Oh, it is so precious to think that opportunities are afforded us to confess our faith in the face of danger, and amid sorrow, sickness, pain, and death.

With us, everything depends on how we accept the Lord's terms. As is our spirit, so will be the moral result upon our future life and character. Each individual soul has victories to gain, but he must realize that he cannot have things just as he wants them. We are to observe carefully every lesson Christ has given throughout His life and teaching. He does not destroy; He improves whatever He touches.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 117, 118.

Do not talk of your lack of faith and your sorrows and sufferings. The tempter delights to hear such words. When talking on gloomy subjects, you are glorifying him. We are not to dwell on the great power of Satan to overcome us. Often we give ourselves into his hands by talking of his power. Let us talk instead of the great power of God to bind up all our interests with His own. Tell of the matchless power of Christ, and speak of His glory. All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. Have we not reason to be thankful every moment, thankful even when there are apparent difficulties in our pathway?—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 253, 254.

Our Lord says, . . . Remember that I died for you. When oppressed and persecuted and afflicted for My sake and the gospel's, remember My love, so great that for you I gave My life. When your duties appear stern and severe, and your burdens too heavy to bear, remember that for your sake I endured the cross, despising the shame. When your heart shrinks from the trying ordeal, remember that your Redeemer liveth to make intercession for you.

These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. . . . There can be no

union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 659, 660.

Wednesday, March 3: The Unreachable Is Us!

A short time before, Jesus had stood like a mighty cedar, withstanding the storm of opposition that spent its fury upon Him. Stubborn wills, and hearts filled with malice and subtlety, had striven in vain to confuse and overpower Him. He stood forth in divine majesty as the Son of God. Now He was like a reed beaten and bent by the angry storm. He had approached the consummation of His work a conqueror, having at each step gained the victory over the powers of darkness. As one already glorified, He had claimed oneness with God. In unfaltering accents He had poured out His songs of praise. He had spoken to His disciples in words of courage and tenderness. Now had come the hour of the power of darkness. Now His voice was heard on the still evening air, not in tones of triumph, but full of human anguish. . . . “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 689, 690.

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption.

Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labor and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father’s house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart’s loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?—*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far from us. But instead of moving farther away from us, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain to perfection. By a death of shame and suffering He paid man’s ransom.

What self-sacrificing love is this! From the highest excellency He came, His divinity clothed with humanity, descending step by step to the very depths of humiliation. No line can measure the depth of this love. Christ has shown us how much God can love and our Redeemer suffer in order to secure our complete restoration. He desires His children to reveal His character, to exert His influence, that other minds may be drawn into harmony with His mind.—*The Upward Look*, p. 191.

Thursday, March 4: A Transforming Reparation Offering

Christ, our Saviour, in whom dwelt absolute perfection, became sin for the fallen race. He did not know sin by the experience of sinning, but He bore the terrible weight of the guilt of the whole world. He became our propitiation, that all who receive Him may become sons of God. The cross was erected to save man. Christ lifted on the cross was the means devised in heaven for awakening in the repenting soul a sense of the sinfulness of sin. By the cross Christ sought to draw all to Himself. He died as the only hope of saving those who, because of sin, were in the gall of bitterness. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, a new principle of mental and spiritual power was to be brought to man, who, through association with divinity, was to become one with God.

To break down the barriers that Satan had erected between God and man, Christ made a full and complete sacrifice, revealing unexampled self-denial. He revealed to the world the amazing spectacle of God living in human flesh, and sacrificing Himself to save fallen man. What wonderful love!—*The Upward Look*, p. 191.

In all this conflict with the power of evil there was ever before Christ the darkened shadow into which He Himself must enter. Ever before Him was the means by which He must pay the ransom for these souls. . . . When He raised Lazarus from the dead He knew that for that life He must pay the ransom on the cross of Calvary. Every rescue made was to cause Him the deepest humiliation. He was to taste death for every man. . . . Of the suffering multitudes brought to Christ it is said, "He healed them all" (Matthew 12:15). Thus He expressed His love for the children of men. His miracles were part of His mission. . . . He knows how to speak the word "Be whole," and when He has healed the sufferer He says, "Go and sin no more."—*That I Might Know Him*, p. 48.

Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had

been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.— *The Desire of Ages*, p. 753

Friday, March 5: For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, "Kind and Courteous Words," p. 181;

That I Might Know Him, "Despised and Rejected," p. 66.

Waging Love

Sabbath Afternoon, March 6

Good deeds are twice a blessing, benefiting both the giver and the receiver of the kindness. The consciousness of right-doing is one of the best medicines for diseased bodies and minds. When the mind is free and happy from a sense of duty well done and the satisfaction of giving happiness to others, the cheering, uplifting influence brings new life to the whole being.

Let the invalid, instead of constantly requiring sympathy, seek to impart it. Let the burden of your own weakness and sorrow and pain be cast upon the compassionate Saviour. Open your heart to His love, and let it flow out to others. Remember that all have trials hard to bear, temptations hard to resist, and you may do something to lighten these burdens. Express gratitude for the blessings you have; show appreciation of the attentions you receive. Keep the heart full of the precious promises of God, that you may bring forth from this treasure, words that will be a comfort and strength to others. This will surround you with an atmosphere that will be helpful and uplifting. Let it be your aim to bless those around you, and you will find ways of being helpful, both to the members of your own family and to others.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 257, 258.

Read Isaiah 58, ye who claim to be children of the light. Especially do you read it again and again who have felt so reluctant to inconvenience yourselves by favoring the needy. You whose hearts and houses are too narrow to make a home for the homeless, read it; you who can see orphans and widows oppressed by the iron hand of poverty and bowed down by hardhearted worldlings, read it. Are you afraid that an influence will be introduced into your family that will cost you more labor, read it. Your fears may be groundless, and a blessing may come, known and realized by you every day. But if otherwise, if extra labor is called for, you can draw upon One who has promised: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily." . . . The prophet is addressing Sabbathkeepers, not sinners, not unbelievers, but those who make great pretensions to godliness. . . . Our souls must expand. Then God will make them like a watered garden, whose waters fail not.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 35, 36.

The work of beneficence enjoined in [Isaiah 58] is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment. We are not left in doubt as to where the message applies, and the time of its marked fulfillment . . . and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work

becomes. All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of paths to dwell in. . . . This is the ministry which God's people are to carry forward at this time. This ministry, rightly performed, will bring rich blessings to the church.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 265, 266.

Sunday, March 7: Buy Something Free?

Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, . . . without money and without price." "Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord," and, "This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness." Isaiah 55:1; 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6.

No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But 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." "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Revelation 3:20; John 6:35. . . .

As the weary traveler seeks the spring in the desert and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst, so will the Christian thirst for and obtain the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 18, 19.

Salvation is a free gift, and yet it is to be bought and sold. In the market of which divine mercy has the management, the precious pearl is represented as being bought without money and without price. In this market all may obtain the goods of heaven. The treasury of the jewels of truth is open to all. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door," the Lord declares, "and no man can shut it." No sword guards the way through this door. Voices from within and at the door say, Come. The Saviour's voice earnestly and lovingly invites us: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Revelation 3:8, 18.

The gospel of Christ is a blessing that all may possess. The poorest are as well able as the richest to purchase salvation; for no amount of worldly wealth can secure it. It is obtained by willing obedience, by giving ourselves to Christ as His own purchased possession. . . .

We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it.—

Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 116, 117.

To live for self is to perish. Covetousness, the desire of benefit for self's sake, cuts the soul off from life. It is the spirit of Satan to get, to draw to self. It is the spirit of Christ to give, to sacrifice self for the good of others.

There can be no self-seeking in the life of him who follows the Saviour. . . .

The true Christian works unselfishly and untiringly for the Master. He does not seek ease or self-gratification, but holds all, even life itself, subject to God's call. And to him are spoken the words, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 10:39.—*Our High Calling*, p. 287.

Monday, March 8: High Thoughts and Ways

We do not understand the greatness and majesty of God nor remember the immeasurable distance between the Creator and the creatures formed by His hand. He who sitteth in the heavens, swaying the scepter of the universe, does not judge according to our finite standard, nor reckon according to our computation. We are in error if we think that that which is great to us must be great to God, and that which is small to us must be small to Him. He would be no more exalted than ourselves if He possessed only the same faculties.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 337.

Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.

Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing—"the counsel of peace" (Zechariah 6:13) for the fallen sons of men. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. . . . Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which "passeth knowledge"? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. But do not be discouraged. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you, and your indifference and unconcern are passing away. . . .

God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion. "He will abundantly pardon." He says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions." . . .

Look up, you who are tried, tempted, and discouraged, look up. . . . The hand of the Infinite is reaching over the battlements of heaven to grasp yours in its strong embrace. The mighty Helper is nigh to bless, lift up, and encourage the most erring, the most sinful, if they will look to Him by faith. But the sinner must look up.—*Our High Calling*, p. 27.

Tuesday, March 9: Fast Friends

On the Day of Atonement two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, "one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." The goat upon which the first lot fell was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat. "And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." Not until the goat had been thus sent away did the people regard themselves as freed from the burden of their sins. Every man was to afflict his soul while the work of atonement was going forward. All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 355.

All [God's] gifts are to be used in blessing humanity, in relieving the suffering and the needy. We are to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to care for the widow and the fatherless, to minister to the distressed and downtrodden. God never meant that the widespread misery in the world should exist. He never

meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life, while the children of others should cry for bread. The means over and above the actual necessities of life are entrusted to man to do good, to bless humanity. The Lord says, . . . “Loose the bands of wickedness,” “undo the heavy burdens,” “let the oppressed go free,” “break every yoke.” “Deal thy bread to the hungry,” “bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.” “When thou seest the naked, . . . cover him.” “Satisfy the afflicted soul.” Isaiah 58:6, 7, 10. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15. These are the Lord’s commands. Are the great body of professed Christians doing this work?—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 370, 371.

Wednesday, March 10: Fast Fight

The fast which God can accept is . . . to deal thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poor which are cast out to thy house. Wait not for them to come to you. The labor rests not on them to hunt you up and entreat of you a home for themselves. You are to search for them and bring them to your house. You are to draw out your soul after them. You are with one hand to reach up and by faith take hold of the mighty arm which brings salvation, while with the other hand of love you reach the oppressed and relieve them. It is impossible for you to fasten upon the arm of God with one hand while the other is employed in ministering to your own pleasure.

If you engage in this work of mercy and love, will the work prove too hard for you? Will you fail and be crushed under the burden, and your family be deprived of your assistance and influence? Oh, no; God has carefully removed all doubts upon this question, by a pledge to you on condition of your obedience. This promise covers all that the most exacting, the most hesitating, could crave. “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily.” Only believe that He is faithful that hath promised. God can renew the physical strength. And more, He says He will do it.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 34, 35.

Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection. Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expression of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. And every word and deed of such service is recorded in the books of heaven as done to Christ. . . . Live in the sunshine of Christ’s love. Then your influence will bless the world.

The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike

loveliness to the character and brings peace and happiness to its possessor.

Every duty performed, every sacrifice made in the name of Jesus brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives His blessing.—*My Life Today*, p. 165.

Jesus says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” . . .

The love and sympathy which Jesus would have us give to others does not savor of sentimentalism, which is a snare to the soul; it is a love that is of heavenly extraction, which Jesus exemplifies by both precept and example. . . .

The love of Jesus is an active principle, uniting heart with heart in bonds of Christian fellowship. Every one who enters heaven will on earth have been perfected in love; for in heaven the Redeemer and the redeemed will be objects of our interest.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 147.

Thursday, March 11: A Time for Us

In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the work of those who worship God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is specified: “They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations” (Isaiah 58:12). God’s memorial, His seventh-day Sabbath, will be uplifted. “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 [no longer trample it under your feet], from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 58:12-14). —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 106.

The Sabbath . . . is to be remembered and observed as the memorial of the Creator’s work. Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it distinguishes the true God from all false gods. All who keep the seventh day signify by this act that they are worshipers of Jehovah. Thus the Sabbath is the sign of man’s allegiance to God as long as there are any upon the earth to serve Him. The fourth commandment is the only one of all the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It is the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God, affixed to His law as evidence of its authenticity and binding force.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath?

In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.— *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 206, 207.

Friday, March 12: For Further Reading

My Life Today, "Clothe the Naked," p. 241;

My Life Today, "One With God Through Faith," p. 11.

Desire of Nations

Sabbath Afternoon, March 13

I address the people of God who today are holding fast their confidence, who will not depart from the faith once delivered unto the saints, who stand amid the moral darkness of these days of corruption. The word of the Lord to you is: "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people." Can we not here see the paternal love of God expressed to those who hold fast to the faith in righteousness? The closest relationship exists between God and His people. Not only are we objects of His sparing mercy, His pardoning love; we are more than this. The Lord rejoices over His people. He delights in them. He is their surety. He will beautify all who are serving Him with a whole heart with the spirit of holiness. He clothes them with righteousness. He loves those who do His will, who express His image. All who are true and faithful are conformed to the image of His Son. In their mouth is found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 414, 415.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7. . . .

What assurance here, of God's willingness to receive the repenting sinner! Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your substance spent, your life-plans thwarted, and your hopes dead, do you sit alone and desolate? . . .

Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better; until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then, you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of Jesus, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 205, 206.

We know not what is before us; but we know that we have the privilege of committing our souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator. Let us thank God that we have a refuge in trial. Let us remember that Christ is a present help in every time of need. The promises of God's Word are rich and full and free. God is with us; He cares for us. . . .

It is our privilege to open our hearts and let the Saviour in. Let us praise Him for the brightness of His presence. Let us carry the sunshine of His love on our countenances and bring it into our words. Then His joy will be in us, and our joy will be full.—*The Upward Look*, p. 142.

Sunday, March 14: The Effects of Sin

Many complain that Jesus seems a long way off. Who has placed Him a long way off? Has it not been your own course of action that has separated you from Jesus? He has not forsaken you, but you have forsaken Him for other lovers. . . . It is when you wander from His side, and are charmed with the voice of the seducer, and fasten your affections upon some trifling thing, that you are in danger of losing your peace and trust and confidence in God. . . . Then it is that Satan presents to you the thought that Jesus has forsaken you; but is it not that you have forsaken Jesus? We dare not let His name languish on our lips, and His love and memory die out of our hearts.—*Our High Calling*, p. 30.

It is not because He is unwilling to forgive that [God] turns from the transgressor; it is because the sinner refuses to make use of the abundant provisions of grace, that God is unable to deliver from sin. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." Isaiah 59:1, 2. . . .

. . . Isaiah called the attention of the people to the weakness of their position among the nations of earth, and he showed that this was the result of wickedness in high places. . . . "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord." Isaiah 3:1-4, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 323, 324.

The eyes of Adam and Eve were indeed opened, but to what? To see their own shame and ruin, to realize that the garments of heavenly light which had been their protection were no longer around them as their safeguard. Their eyes were opened to see that nakedness was the fruit of transgression. As they heard God in the garden, they hid themselves from Him; for they anticipated that which till their fall they had not known,—the condemnation of God. . . .

After the fall Christ became Adam's instructor. He acted in God's stead toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon him the office of mediator. Adam and Eve were given a probation in which to return to their allegiance, and in this plan all their posterity were embraced.

Without the atonement of the Son of God there could have been no

communication of blessing or salvation from God to man. God was jealous for the honor of His law. The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 20.

Monday, March 15: Who Is Forgiven?

The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. . . .

The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised."—*The Faith I Live By*, pp. 111, 112.

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But Christ gave His life to save the sinner from the death sentence. He died that we might live. . . . By His death He brought salvation within the reach of all. . . .

Today angels are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, to help them to escape from the thralldom of Satan's power. . . . Each human being is given the freedom of choice. It is his to decide whether he will stand under the black banner of rebellion or under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. With deep solicitude Heaven watches the conflict between good and evil. None but the obedient can enter the gates of the city of God. Upon those who choose to continue in transgression the death sentence must at last be pronounced. The earth will be purified from their misdoings, their defiance of God.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 361.

Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety. But while he is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed.

Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love. Christ is the great depository of justifying righteousness and sanctifying grace.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 398.

Tuesday, March 16: Universal Appeal

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 419, 420.

The Lord in compassion is seeking to enlighten the understanding of those who are now groping in the darkness of error. He is delaying His judgments upon an impenitent world, in order that His light bearers may seek and save that which is lost. He is now calling upon His church on the earth to awake from the lethargy that Satan has sought to bring upon them, and fulfill their heaven-appointed work of enlightening the world. His message to His church at this time is, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." To meet the conditions existing at the time when darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, the church of God has been commissioned to cooperate with God in shedding abroad the light of Bible truth. To those who seek to do their part faithfully as bearers of precious light, is given the assurance: "The Lord shall rise 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 world today is in crying need of a revelation of Christ Jesus in the person of

His saints. God desires that His people shall stand before the world a holy people. Why?—because there is a world to be saved by the light of gospel truth; and as the message of truth that is to call men out of darkness into God’s marvelous light is given by the church, the lives of its members, sanctified by the Spirit of truth, are to bear witness to the verity of the messages proclaimed.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 458.

Wednesday, March 17: “The Year of the Lord’s Favor”

Patriarchs and prophets [had] predicted the coming of a distinguished Teacher, whose words were to be clothed with invincible power and authority. He was to preach the gospel to the poor, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He was to set judgment in the earth; the isles were to wait for His law; the Gentiles were to come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising. He was “the messenger of the covenant,” and “the Sun of righteousness.” . . .

And “when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son.” . . . The heavenly Teacher had come. Who was He? No less a being than the Son of God Himself. He appeared as God, and at the same time as the Elder Brother of the human race.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 16.

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean.

Many are deceived today in the same way as were the Jews. . . . Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive divine enlightenment. He will understand the Scriptures. “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 7:17, R. V.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 458, 459.

The ear of the Lord is open to the cries of those who are in His service. He has promised: “I will guide thee with Mine eye.” Psalm 32:8. Walk humbly with God, and ask Him to make your course of duty plain. When He speaks to His representatives and asks them to be laborers together with Him, they will do the same kind of work that Jesus announced as His work when He stood up to read in the synagogue at Nazareth. . . .

. . . In presenting to the sinner a personal, sin-pardoning Saviour, we reach a hand of sympathy and Christlike love to grasp the hand of one fallen, and, laying hold of the hand of Christ by faith, we form a link of union between the sinner and the Saviour.

The end is near, and every soul is now to walk carefully, humbly, meekly with Christ Jesus. . . . He says: "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. We need to look to Jesus constantly in order that He may impress upon us His own lovely image. We are to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Then we shall reveal Christ to our fellow men.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 202, 203.

Thursday, March 18: "The Day of Vengeance of Our God"

Explaining the words He had read, [Jesus] spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth. His impressive manner and the wonderful import of His words thrilled the hearers with a power they had never felt before. The tide of divine influence broke every barrier down; like Moses, they beheld the Invisible. As their hearts were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, they responded with fervent amens and praises to the Lord.

But when Jesus announced, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," they were suddenly recalled to think of themselves, and of the claims of Him who had been addressing them. They, Israelites, children of Abraham, had been represented as in bondage. They had been addressed as prisoners to be delivered from the power of evil; as in darkness, and needing the light of truth. Their pride was offended, and their fears were roused. The words of Jesus indicated that His work for them was to be altogether different from what they desired. Their deeds might be investigated too closely. Notwithstanding their exactness in outward ceremonies, they shrank from inspection by those clear, searching eyes.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 237.

God has a storehouse of retributive judgments, which He permits to fall upon those who have continued in sin in the face of great light. I have seen the most costly structures in buildings erected and supposed to be fireproof. And just as Sodom perished in the flames of God's vengeance, so will these proud structures become ashes. . . . Man's pride will be buried with the treasures he has accumulated by fraud. God will avenge the widows and orphans who in hunger and nakedness have cried to Him for help from oppression and abuse.

The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The flattering monuments of men's greatness will be crumbled in

the dust, even before the last great destruction comes upon the world.

Only by being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness can we escape the judgments that are coming upon the earth.—*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 418, 419.

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there, . . . could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, [then] mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? . . . No, no. . . . A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 542, 543.

Friday, March 19: For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, "The Day of Final Settlement," p. 359;

God's Amazing Grace, "Matchless Condescension," p. 161.

Rebirth of Planet Earth

Sabbath Afternoon, March 20

Fellow pilgrim, we are still amid the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities; but soon our Saviour is to appear to bring deliverance and rest. Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. . . .

Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 731, 732.

The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory.

There are homes for the pilgrims of earth. There are robes for the righteous, with crowns of glory and palms of victory. All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 286.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love,

reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

Sunday, March 21: New Heavens and a New Earth

In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called “a country.” Hebrews 11:14-16. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.

“My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” “They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: . . . Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Isaiah 32:18; 60:18; Isaiah 65:21, 22.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. . . .

Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.—*Maranatha*, p. 360.

There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar

through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” what a field will be open to our study! There the student of science may read the records of creation and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature’s voices and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting—in the vast universe behold “God’s name writ large,” and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining.—*Maranatha*, p. 367.

Monday, March 22: Divine “Magnet”

Heaven’s plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world. God longs to breathe into prostrate humanity the breath of life. And He will not permit any soul to be disappointed who is sincere in his longing for something higher and nobler than anything the world can offer. Constantly He is sending His angels to those who, while surrounded by circumstances the most discouraging, pray in faith for some power higher than themselves to take possession of them and bring deliverance and peace. In various ways God will reveal Himself to them and will place them in touch with providences that will establish their confidence in the One who has given Himself a ransom for all, “that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” Psalm 78:7. . . .

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God!” Psalm 146:5. “Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope!” Zechariah 9:12. Unto all the honest in heart in heathen lands—“the upright” in the sight of Heaven—“there ariseth light in the darkness.” Psalm 112:4. God hath spoken: “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” Isaiah 42:16.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 377, 378.

Christ delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased and through whom he has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes His children His agents in the accomplishment of this work, and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward.

But what is this compared with the joy that will be theirs in the great day of final revealing? “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face;” now we know in part, but then we shall know even as also we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12.

It is the reward of Christ's workers to enter into His joy. That joy, to which Christ Himself looks forward with eager desire, is presented in His request to His Father: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 308, 309.

Tuesday, March 23: Missionaries and Worship Leaders

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 409.

Christ does not acknowledge any caste, color, or grade as necessary to become a subject of His kingdom. Admittance to His kingdom does not depend upon wealth or a superior heredity. But those who are born of the Spirit are the subjects of His kingdom. Spiritual character is that which will be recognized by Christ. His kingdom is not of this world. His subjects are those who are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And this grace is given them of God. Christ does not find His subjects fitted for His kingdom, but He qualifies them by His divine power. . . .

Christ draws them to Himself by an unseen power. He is the light of life, and He imbues them with His own Spirit. . . . As a servant looks to his master, and as a maid looks to her mistress, so these souls, drawn by the cords of love to Christ, constantly look unto Him who is the Author and Finisher of their faith. By beholding Jesus, by obeying His requirements, they increase in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Thus they become changed into His image from character to character until they are distinguished from the world, and it can be written of them: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained

mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9, 10).—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 52.

It is not the will of God that we should be gloomy or impatient, nor that we should be light and trifling. It is Satan's studied plan to push persons from one extreme to the other. As children of the light, God would have us cultivate a cheerful, happy spirit, that we may show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.—*The Adventist Home*, p. 432.

Wednesday, March 24: Community of Faith

It was God's purpose that His grace should be revealed among the Gentiles as well as among the Israelites. This had been plainly outlined in Old Testament prophecies. . . .

Paul likens the remnant in Israel to a noble olive tree, some of whose branches have been broken off. He compares the Gentiles to branches from a wild olive tree, grafted into the parent stock. "If some of the branches be broken off," he writes to the Gentile believers, "and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. . . . Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven's purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God. But the branches that had been separated from the parent stock God was able to reunite with the true stock of Israel—the remnant who had remained true to the God of their fathers.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 376–378.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26-28.

The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus. With God there is no respect of persons. . . .

All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, . . . that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 99.

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life.

He passed no human being by as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. . . . He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them the children of God.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 191.

Thursday, March 25: So Shall Your Seed and Your Name Remain

There is the New Jerusalem, the metropolis of the glorified new earth, “a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” “Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” “The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” Saith the Lord: “I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.”

In the City of God “there shall be no night.” None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning and shall ever be far from its close. “And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.” The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the Holy City with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day.—*Maranatha*, p. 356.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” Revelation 5:13.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation.

From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7.

The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” Matthew 5:18. So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. “From one sabbath to another” the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall . . . “worship before me, saith the Lord.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 37.

Friday, March 26: For Further Reading

The Faith I Live By, “The Knowledge of God Covers the Earth,” p. 371;

Our High Calling, “A Superficial Experience Not Enough,” p. 330.

