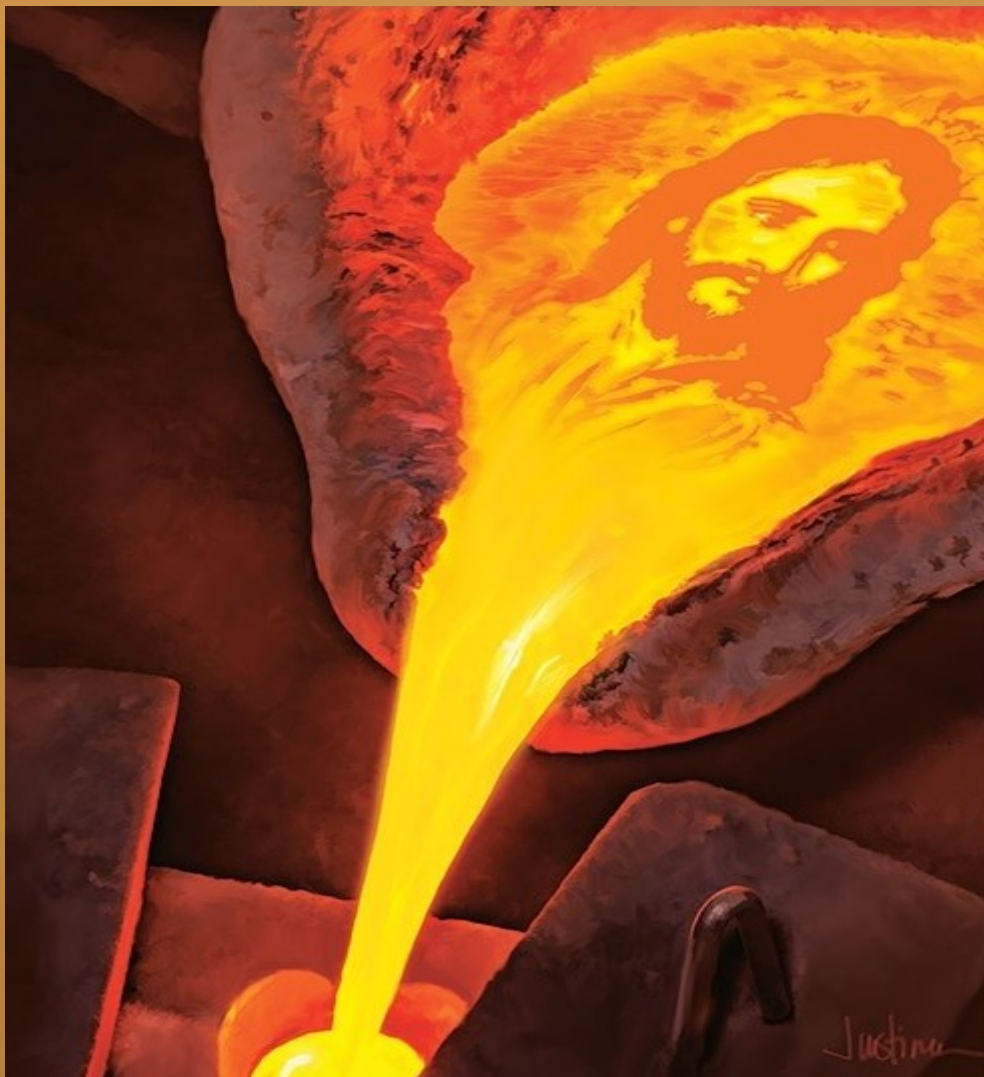


Adult
Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide

July | Aug | Sept 2022



IN THE CRUCIBLE WITH CHRIST



LESSON STUDY HELPS

INDEX

Lesson 1 — Lift Him Up, “Brought Back by the Shepherd,” p. 214	3
— Sons and Daughters of God, “God’s Goodness and Mercy Inspire Courage,” p. 198	4
Lesson 2 — That I May Know Him, “How to Resist Satan,” p. 245	5
— Signs of the Times, “Effectual Prayer,” November 18, 1903	6
Lesson 3 — The Desire of Ages, “The Temptation,” pp. 114–123	8
— This Day With God, “Light Out of Darkness,” p. 348	12
Lesson 4 — Sons and Daughters of God, “God Promises Us a New Heart of Flesh,” p. 100	13
— Testimonies for the Church, “Press Together,” vol. 6, p. 292	14
Lesson 5 — My Life Today, “In Christ There Is Strength,” p. 316	15
— Sons and Daughters of God, “We Are to Labour With Love,” p. 268	16
Lesson 6 — The Upward Look, “Follow Christ’s Example of Sacrifice,” p. 235	17
— Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Night of Wrestling,” pp. 195–203	18
Lesson 7 — This Day With God, “Rejoice in the Lord,” p. 156	21
— Education, “The School of the Hereafter,” pp. 301–309	22
Lesson 8 — That I May Know Him, “I Pray for Guidance,” p. 266	26
— Reflecting Christ, “Prayer Is Appropriate Anytime, Anywhere,” p. 122	27
Lesson 9 — Sons and Daughters of God, “Be Strong, for God Is With Us,” p. 202	28
— Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Fall of Jericho,” pp. 487–498	29
Lesson 10 — Reflecting Christ, “Christ a Perfect Example for All,” p. 37	33
— Evangelism, “The Worker and His Qualifications,” p. 630	34
Lesson 11 — In Heavenly Places, “Graces to Cherish,” p. 244	35
— Testimonies for the Church, “Christian Forbearance,” vol. 5, pp. 331–336	36
Lesson 12 — Testimonies to Ministers & Gospel Workers, “The Lord Has a Controversy With His People,” p. 374	38
— Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Presumption of Saul,” pp. 616–626	39
Lesson 13 — Lift Him Up, “Conqueror Over the Power of Darkness,” p. 235	43
— In Heavenly Places, “No Exemption From Sorrow,” p. 268	44

Lift Him Up, Chapter 7, page 214**“LIFT HIM UP AS THE CHIEF SHEPHERD”****July 19th****Brought Back by the Shepherd**

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Ezekiel 34:12. {LHU 214.1}

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God. {LHU 214.2}

The shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, "I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in." No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When he is sure that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine within the fold, and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd's anxiety and the more earnest his search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep. {LHU 214.3}

With what relief he hears in the distance its first faint cry. Following the sound, he climbs the steepest heights, he goes to the very edge of the precipice, at the risk of his own life. Thus he searches, while the cry, growing fainter, tells him that his sheep is ready to die. At last his effort is rewarded; the lost is found. Then he does not scold it because it has caused him so much trouble. He does not drive it with a whip. He does not even try to lead it home. In his joy he takes the trembling creature upon his shoulders; if it is bruised and wounded, he gathers it in his arms, pressing it close to his bosom, that the warmth of his own heart may give it life. With gratitude that his search has not been in vain, he bears it back to the fold. {LHU 214.4}

Thank God, He has presented to our imagination no picture of a sorrowful shepherd returning without the sheep. The parable does not speak of failure but of success and joy in the recovery. Here is the divine guarantee that not even one of the straying sheep of God's fold is overlooked, not one is left unsuccored. Every one that will submit to be ransomed, Christ will rescue from the pit of corruption and from the briers of sin (Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 187, 188). {LHU 214.5}

Sons and Daughters of God, Chapter 7, page 198**“WE FACE THE FUTURE WITH COURAGE”****July 13th****God's Goodness and Mercy Inspire Courage**

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Psalm 23:6. {SD 198.1}

Christ has given us no assurance that to attain to perfection of character is an easy matter. It is a conflict, a battle and a march, day by day. It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. In order to share with Christ in His glory we must share in His suffering. . . . He has overcome for us. Shall we, then, be timid and cowardly because of the trials that we meet as we advance? . . . {SD 198.2}

When we have a deeper appreciation of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, we shall praise Him, instead of complaining. We shall talk of the loving watchcare of the Lord, of the tender compassion of the Good Shepherd. The language of the heart will not be selfish murmuring and repining. Praise, like a clear, flowing stream, will come from God's truly believing ones. They will say, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." . . . {SD 198.3}

Why not awake the voice of spiritual song in the days of our pilgrimage? . . . We need to study God's Word, to meditate and pray. Then we shall have spiritual eyesight to discern the inner courts of the celestial temple. We shall catch the notes of thanksgiving sung by the heavenly choir around the throne. When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating, and songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assembly of the saints. Little disappointments and difficulties will be lost sight of. {SD 198.4}

The Lord is our helper. . . . No one ever trusted God in vain. He never disappoints those who put their dependence on Him. If we would only do the work that the Lord would have us do, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, our hearts would become sacred harps, every chord of which would send forth praise and thanksgiving to the One sent by God to take away the sin of the world. {SD 198.5}

That I May Know Him, Chapter 239, page 245**“HOW TO RESIST SATAN”****August 27th**

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7. {TMK 245.1}

Our work is to "resist the devil," not harbor his doubts; and if we do this, the promise is "he will flee from you." {TMK 245.2}

But the question is often asked, How can I resist Satan? There is only one way by which you can do this, and that is by faith, taking Christ as your helper and pleading with Him for strength. When Satan suggests doubt to your soul, when he tells you that you are too unworthy, too sinful, to realize the blessing of God, present Christ before him as your Advocate and Saviour. Tell him you know that you are a sinner, but that Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). {TMK 245.3}

Repeat His promises: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). . . . "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:5). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). Be simplehearted enough to believe these promises of God. When Satan comes to you, and tells you that because you are unhappy, perplexed, and troubled you are not a child of God, do not become discouraged for one moment, but gird up the loins of your mind. Let your heart repose in God. He has promised that if you come to Him, you shall find rest to your soul; and if you have done this, rest assured that He will fulfill His word in you.... {TMK 245.4}

Many pass long years in darkness and doubt because they do not feel as they desire. But feeling has nothing to do with faith. That faith which works by love and purifies the soul is not a matter of impulse. It ventures out upon the promises of God, firmly believing that what He has said, He is able also to perform. Our souls may be trained to believe, taught to rely upon the Word of God. That Word declares that "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), not by feeling. {TMK 245.5}

Friday, July 8th, 2022

Signs of the Times, November 18, 1903

“EFFECTUAL PRAYER”

Prayer is not an expiation for sin. It is not a penance. We need not come to God as condemned criminals; for Christ has paid the penalty of our transgression. He has made an atonement for us. His blood cleanses from sin. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 1}

Our prayers are as letters sent from earth, directed to our Father in heaven. The petitions that ascend from sincere, humble hearts will surely reach Him. He can discern the sincerity of His adopted children. He pities our weakness, and strengthens our infirmities. He has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 2}

Many of the human family know not what they should ask for as they ought. But the Lord is kind and tender. He helps their infirmities by giving them words to speak. He who comes with sanctified desire has access through Christ to the Father. Christ is our Intercessor. The prayers that are placed in the golden censer of the Saviour's merits are accepted by the Father. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 3}

Every promise in the Word of God is for us. In your prayers, present the pledged word of Jehovah, and by faith claim His promises. His word is the assurance that if you ask in faith, you will receive all spiritual blessings. Continue to ask, and you will receive exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. Educate yourself to have unlimited confidence in God. Cast all your care upon Him. Wait patiently for Him, and He will bring it to pass. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 4}

We are to come to God, not in a spirit of self-justification, but with humility, repenting of our sins. He is able to help us, willing to do for us more than we ask or think. He has the abundance of heaven wherewith to supply our necessities. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." God is holy, and we must pray, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 5}

We are to pray in the name of Christ, our Mediator. Our petitions are of value only as they are offered in His name. He has bridged the gulf that sin has made. By His atoning sacrifice, He has bound to Himself and His Father those who believe in Him. His is the only name under heaven whereby we may be saved. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 6}

God is our King, and we are His subjects. A mere knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking, by obeying His law, to co-operate with Him in answering the prayers offered. Thus His kingdom is established in our hearts. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 7}

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let them return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." We are to seek "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." We are to be ready to receive the blessing which God will bestow upon those who seek Him with the whole heart, in sincerity and truth. We must keep the heart open, if we would receive of the grace of Christ. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 8}

In our prayers we are not to preach a sermon to the Lord. We need not tell him the history of our lives. We can tell Him nothing with which He is unacquainted. He knows our inmost thoughts. Every secret is open before Him. Nothing can be hid from Him. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 9}

High-flown language is inappropriate in prayer, whether the prayer be offered in the pulpit, in the family circle, or in secret. Especially should one use simple language when offering public prayer, that others may understand what he says, and unite with his petition. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 10}

God hears the prayers that are offered in the family circle, if they come from devoted hearts. Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 11}

Do not neglect secret prayer. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in

secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 12}

We are not to be so overwhelmed with the thought of our sins and errors that we shall cease to pray. Some realize their great weakness and sin, and become discouraged. Satan casts his dark shadow between them and the Lord Jesus, their atoning sacrifice. They say, It is useless for me to pray. My prayers are so mingled with evil thoughts that the Lord will not hear them. These suggestions are from Satan. In His humanity, Christ met and resisted this temptation, and He knows how to succor those who are thus tempted. In our behalf, He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 13}

Many, not understanding that their doubts come from Satan, become faint-hearted, and are defeated in the conflict. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 14}

Do not, because your thoughts are evil, cease to pray. If we could in our own wisdom and strength pray aright, we could also live aright, and would need no atoning sacrifice. But imperfection is upon all humanity. Educate and train the mind that you may in simplicity tell the Lord what you need. As you offer your petitions to God, seeking for forgiveness for sin, a purer and holier atmosphere will surround your soul. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 15}

When you pray for temporal blessings, remember that the Lord may see that it is not for your good or for His glory to give you just what you desire. But He will answer your prayer, giving you just what is best for you. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 16}

When Paul prayed that the thorn in his flesh might be removed, the Lord answered his prayer, not by removing the thorn, but by giving him grace to bear the trial. "My grace," He said, "is sufficient for thee." Paul rejoiced at this answer to his prayer, declaring. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." When the sick pray for the recovery of health, the Lord does not always answer their prayer in just the way they desire. But even tho they may not be immediately healed, He will give them that which is of far more value,--grace to bear their sickness. {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 17}

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." - {ST, November 18, 1903 par. 18}

The Desire of Ages, Chapter 12, page 114–123

“THE TEMPTATION”

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." The words of Mark are still more significant. He says, "Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts." "And in those days He did eat nothing." {DA 114.1}

When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him. {DA 114.2}

Mighty issues for the world were at stake in the conflict between the Prince of light and the leader of the kingdom of darkness. After tempting man to sin, Satan claimed the earth as his, and styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he thought to establish here his empire. He declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign. Through his control of men, he held dominion over the world. Christ had come to disprove Satan's claim. As the Son of man, Christ would stand loyal to God. Thus it would be shown that Satan had not gained complete control of the human race, and that his claim to the world was false. All who desired deliverance from his power would be set free. The dominion that Adam had lost through sin would be recovered. {DA 114.3}

Since the announcement to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan had known that he did not hold absolute sway over the world. There was seen in men the working of a power that withstood his dominion. With intense interest he watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour. Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath. Satan excited the evil passions of men, in order to fasten his rule upon them. When God's written word was given, Satan studied the prophecies of the Saviour's advent. From generation to generation he worked to blind the people to these prophecies, that they might reject Christ at His coming. {DA 115.1}

At the birth of Jesus, Satan knew that One had come with a divine commission to dispute his dominion. He trembled at the angel's message attesting the authority of the newborn King. Satan well knew the position that Christ had held in heaven as the Beloved of the Father. That the Son of God should come to this earth as a man filled him with amazement and with apprehension. He could not fathom the mystery of this great sacrifice. His selfish soul could not understand such love for the deceived race. The glory and peace of heaven, and the joy of communion with God, were but dimly comprehended by men; but they were well known to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Since he had lost heaven, he was determined to find revenge by causing others to share his fall. This he would do by causing them to undervalue heavenly things, and to set the heart upon things of earth. {DA 115.2}

Not without hindrance was the Commander of heaven to win the souls of men to His kingdom. From the time when He was a babe in Bethlehem, He was continually assailed by the evil one. The image of God was manifest in Christ, and in the councils of Satan it was determined that He should be overcome. No human being had come into the world and escaped the power of the deceiver. The forces of the confederacy of evil were set upon His track to engage in warfare against Him, and if possible to prevail over Him. {DA 116.1}

At the Saviour's baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father's glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity in Christ. Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored. {DA 116.2}

Satan saw that he must either conquer or be conquered. The issues of the conflict involved too much to be entrusted to his confederate angels. He must personally conduct the warfare. All the energies of apostasy were rallied against the Son of God. Christ was made the mark of every weapon of hell. {DA 116.3}

Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. Never does one leave the ranks of evil for the service of God without encountering the assaults of Satan. The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours. With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test upon

appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us. {DA 116.4}

Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation. {DA 117.1}

Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam's position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured. {DA 117.2}

With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome. "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." {DA 117.3}

From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness. {DA 117.4}

When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah 52:14. Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ. {DA 118.1}

There came to the Saviour, as if in answer to His prayers, one in the guise of an angel from heaven. He claimed to have a commission from God to declare that Christ's fast was at an end. As God had sent an angel to stay the hand of Abraham from offering Isaac, so, satisfied with Christ's willingness to enter the bloodstained path, the Father had sent an angel to deliver Him; this was the message brought to Jesus. The Saviour was faint from hunger, He was craving for food, when Satan came suddenly upon Him. Pointing to the stones which strewed the desert, and which had the appearance of loaves, the tempter said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." {DA 118.2}

Though he appears as an angel of light, these first words betray his character. "If Thou be the Son of God." Here is the insinuation of distrust. Should Jesus do what Satan suggests, it would be an acceptance of the doubt. The tempter plans to overthrow Christ by the same means that were so successful with the human race in the beginning. How artfully had Satan approached Eve in Eden! "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1. Thus far the tempter's words were truth; but in his manner of speaking them there was a disguised contempt for the words of God. There was a covert negative, a doubt of the divine truthfulness. Satan sought to instill into the mind of Eve the thought that God would not do as He had said; that the withholding of such beautiful fruit was a contradiction of His love and compassion for man. So now the tempter seeks to inspire Christ with his own sentiments. "If Thou be the Son of God." The words rankle with bitterness in his mind. In the tones of his voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus? Would He leave Him in the desert with wild beasts, without food, without companions, without comfort? He insinuates that God never meant His Son to be in such a state as this. "If Thou be the Son of God," show Thy power by relieving Thyself of this pressing hunger. Command that this stone be made bread. {DA 118.3}

The words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), were still sounding in the ears of Satan. But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this testimony. The word of God was Christ's assurance of His divine mission. He had come to live as a man among men, and it was the word that declared His connection with heaven. It was Satan's purpose to cause Him to doubt that word. If Christ's confidence in God could be shaken, Satan knew that the victory in the whole controversy would be his. He could overcome Jesus. He hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in His Father, and work a miracle in His own behalf. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken. {DA 119.1}

When Satan and the Son of God first met in conflict, Christ was the commander of the heavenly hosts; and Satan, the leader of revolt in heaven, was cast out. Now their condition is apparently reversed, and Satan makes the most of his supposed advantage. One of the most powerful of the angels, he says, has been banished from heaven. The appearance of Jesus indicates that He is that fallen angel, forsaken by God, and deserted by man. A divine being would be able to

sustain his claim by working a miracle; "if Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." Such an act of creative power, urges the tempter, would be conclusive evidence of divinity. It would bring the controversy to an end. {DA 119.2}

Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch-deceiver. But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan, or to explain the reason of His humiliation. By conceding to the demands of the rebel, nothing for the good of man or the glory of God would be gained. Had Christ complied with the suggestion of the enemy, Satan would still have said, Show me a sign that I may believe you to be the Son of God. Evidence would have been worthless to break the power of rebellion in his heart. And Christ was not to exercise divine power for His own benefit. He had come to bear trial as we must do, leaving us an example of faith and submission. Neither here nor at any subsequent time in His earthly life did He work a miracle in His own behalf. His wonderful works were all for the good of others. Though Jesus recognized Satan from the beginning, He was not provoked to enter into controversy with him. Strengthened with the memory of the voice from heaven, He rested in His Father's love. He would not parley with temptation. {DA 119.3}

Jesus met Satan with the words of Scripture. "It is written," He said. In every temptation the weapon of His warfare was the word of God. Satan demanded of Christ a miracle as a sign of His divinity. But that which is greater than all miracles, a firm reliance upon a "Thus saith the Lord," was a sign that could not be controverted. So long as Christ held to this position, the tempter could gain no advantage. {DA 120.1}

It was in the time of greatest weakness that Christ was assailed by the fiercest temptations. Thus Satan thought to prevail. By this policy he had gained the victory over men. When strength failed, and the will power weakened, and faith ceased to repose in God, then those who had stood long and valiantly for the right were overcome. Moses was wearied with the forty years' wandering of Israel, when for the moment his faith let go its hold upon infinite power. He failed just upon the borders of the Promised Land. So with Elijah, who had stood undaunted before King Ahab, who had faced the whole nation of Israel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal at their head. After that terrible day upon Carmel, when the false prophets had been slain, and the people had declared their allegiance to God, Elijah fled for his life before the threats of the idolatrous Jezebel. Thus Satan has taken advantage of the weakness of humanity. And he will still work in the same way. Whenever one is encompassed with clouds, perplexed by circumstances, or afflicted by poverty or distress, Satan is at hand to tempt and annoy. He attacks our weak points of character. He seeks to shake our confidence in God, who suffers such a condition of things to exist. We are tempted to distrust God, to question His love. Often the tempter comes to us as he came to Christ, arraying before us our weakness and infirmities. He hopes to discourage the soul, and to break our hold on God. Then he is sure of his prey. If we would meet him as Jesus did, we should escape many a defeat. By parleying with the enemy, we give him an advantage. {DA 120.2}

When Christ said to the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," He repeated the words that, more than fourteen hundred years before, He had spoken to Israel: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness. . . . And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Deuteronomy 8:2, 3. In the wilderness, when all means of sustenance failed, God sent His people manna from heaven; and a sufficient and constant supply was given. This provision was to teach them that while they trusted in God and walked in His ways He would not forsake them. The Saviour now practiced the lesson He had taught to Israel. By the word of God succor had been given to the Hebrew host, and by the same word it would be given to Jesus. He awaited God's time to bring relief. He was in the wilderness in obedience to God, and He would not obtain food by following the suggestions of Satan. In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from the will of God. {DA 121.1}

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other. {DA 121.2}

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11-17. But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19. To that time of distress the prophet Habakkuk looked forward, and his words express the faith of the church: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17, 18. {DA 121.3}

Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral

powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God. {DA 122.1}

The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God. {DA 122.2}

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world." John 16:33. {DA 122.3}

Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, "I thirst." He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours. {DA 123.1}

Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, "The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: . . . and I know that I shall not be ashamed. . . . Behold, the Lord God will help Me." Pointing to His own example, He says to us, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Isaiah 50:7-10. {DA 123.2}

"The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character. {DA 123.3}

And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. "It is written," He said. And unto us are given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God's word is ours. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 119:11; 17:4. {DA 123.4}

This Day With God, Chapter 340, page 348
“LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS”

December 5th

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. **Isaiah 48:10.** {TDG 348.1}

All the words of consolation I may give you [LETTER WRITTEN TO ELDER J. N. ANDREWS, LABORING IN EUROPE, SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS DAUGHTER, MARY.] will not amount to much. You know the Source of your strength and your consolation. You are not a stranger to Jesus and His love. You are among many to whom life is a long conflict of pain and weariness and disappointment. Hope deferred has made the heart sad, but this world is the scene of our trials, our griefs, our sorrows. We are here to bear the test of God. The fire of the furnace is to kindle till our dross is consumed and we come forth as gold purified in the furnace of affliction. You may, my dear brother, ponder upon the mysterious providence of God that has taken from you the light of your eyes. {TDG 348.2}

You feel that had it not been for this great loss you would be a comparatively happy man. But it may be that the very loss of your child here will be to you, and not to you only but to many in Switzerland, for the saving of souls. Light will come out of this darkness which to you at times seems incomprehensible. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Let this be the language of your heart. The cloud of mercy is hovering over you and will break over your head even in the darkest hour. God's benefits to us are as numerous as the drops of rain falling from the clouds upon the parched earth, to water and refresh it. The mercy of God is over you. . . . {TDG 348.3}

The Lord loves you, my dear brother. He loves you. "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" (Isaiah 54:10). "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love and could you hear His voice, it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest for you, the weary.--Letter 71, Dec. 5, 1878, to J. N. Andrews. {TDG 348.4}

Sons and Daughters of God, Chapter 4, page 100**“WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY GOD'S GRACE”****April 3rd****God Promises Us a New Heart of Flesh**

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26. {SD 100.1}

The youth especially stumble over this phrase, "A new heart." They do not know what it means. They look for a special change to take place in their feelings. This they term conversion. Over this error thousands have stumbled to ruin, not understanding the expression, "Ye must be born again." . . . When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?--a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride. {SD 100.2}

Then a spirit of kindness will be manifested, not by fits and starts, but continually. There will be a decided change in attitude, in deportment, in words and actions toward all with whom you are in any way connected. You will not magnify their infirmities, you will not place them in an unfavorable light. You will work in Christ's lines. . . . {SD 100.3}

Instead of exposing and publishing one's faults to others, you will put forth the most patient efforts to heal and bind up. . . . A harsh-spirited man is unrefined, coarse; he is not spiritual; he has not a heart of flesh, but a heart as unimpressible as a stone. His only help is to fall on the Rock, and be broken. The Lord will place all such in the crucible, and try them in fire, as gold is tried. When He can see His own image reflected in them He will remove them. . . . The religion of Christ is to take possession of the whole being, and give force and power to all our faculties, renovating, cleansing, and refining. It manifests itself without parade, and high-sounding words, but is shown in an upright and unselfish life. {SD 100.4}

God's power alone can change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. {SD 100.5}

Testimonies for the Church, Section 4, Volume 6, page 292

“MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK”**"Press Together"**

The Lord's work is one, and His people are to be one. He has not directed that any one feature of the message should be carried on independently or become all-absorbing. In all His labors He united the medical missionary work with the ministry of the word. He sent out the twelve apostles, and afterward the seventy, to preach the gospel to the people, and He gave them power also to heal the sick and to cast out devils in His name. Thus should the Lord's messengers enter His work today. Today the message comes to us: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." John 20:21, 22. {6T 292.1}

Satan will invent every possible scheme to separate those whom God is seeking to make one. But we must not be misled by his devices. If the medical missionary work is carried on as a part of the gospel, worldlings will see the good that is being done; they will be convicted of its genuineness and will give it their support. {6T 292.2}

We are nearing the end of this earth's history, and God calls upon all to lift the standard bearing the inscription: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." He calls upon His people to work in perfect harmony. He calls upon those engaged in our medical work to unite with the ministry; He calls upon the ministry to co-operate with the medical missionary workers; and He calls upon the church to take up their appointed duty, holding up the standard of true reform in their own territory, leaving the trained and experienced workers to press on into new fields. No word is to be spoken to discourage any, for this grieves the heart of Christ and greatly pleases the adversary. All need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit; all should refrain from censuring and disparaging remarks, and draw near to Christ, that they may appreciate the heavy responsibilities which the co-workers with Him are carrying. "Press together; press together," are the words of our divine Instructor. Unity is strength; disunion is weakness and defeat.— {6T 292.3}

In our work for the poor and unfortunate, we shall need to be guarded, lest we gather responsibilities which we shall not be able to carry. Before adopting plans and methods that require a large outlay of means, we are to consider whether they bear the divine signature. God does not sanction the pushing forward of one line of work without regard to other lines. He designs that the medical missionary work shall prepare the way for the presentation of the saving truth for this time, the proclamation of the third angel's message. If this design is met, the message will not be eclipsed nor its progress hindered. -{6T 293.1}

It is not numerous institutions, large buildings, or great display that God requires, but the harmonious action of a peculiar people, a people chosen by God and precious. Every man is to stand in his lot and place, thinking, speaking, and acting in harmony with the Spirit of God. Then, and not till then, will the work be a complete, symmetrical whole. (294) {6T 293.2}

My Life Today, Chapter 11, page 316

“A VICTORIOUS LIFE”

November 8th

In Christ There is Strength

Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. Isaiah 27:5 {ML 316.1}

The enemy cannot overcome the humble learner of Christ, the one who walks prayerfully before the Lord. Christ interposes Himself as a shelter, a retreat, from the assaults of the wicked one. The promise is given, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." . . . {ML 316.2}

Satan was permitted to tempt the too-confident Peter, as he had been permitted to tempt Job; but when that work was done he had to retire. Had Satan been suffered to have his way, there would have been no hope for Peter. He would have made complete shipwreck of faith. But the enemy dare not go one hairbreadth beyond his appointed sphere. There is no power in the whole satanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God. {ML 316.3}

Christ is our tower of strength, and Satan can have no power over the soul that walks with God in humility of mind. The promise, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." In Christ there is perfect and complete help for every tempted soul. Dangers beset every path, but the whole universe of heaven is standing on guard, that none may be tempted above that which he is able to bear. Some have strong traits of character, that will need to be constantly repressed. If kept under the control of the Spirit of God, these traits will be a blessing; but if not, they will prove a curse. . . . If we will give ourselves unselfishly to the work, never swerving in the least from principle, the Lord will throw about us the everlasting arms, and will prove a mighty helper. If we will look to Jesus as the One in whom we may trust, He will never fail us in any emergency. {ML 316.4}

Sons and Daughters of God, Chapter 9, page 268

“WE ARE LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD”

September 18th

We are to Labour With Love

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35. {SD 268.1}

May God help us to understand that we must be laborers together with Him. Let us begin right here to be co-workers with heaven. . . . Will you not unite in labor for your families and for your friends and acquaintances? {SD 268.2}

Let every one of our young disciples of Christ have an unselfish love for all other disciples of Christ. . . . See if there is not a poor child who is not a favorite, to whom no special kindnesses are shown, and make this one the object of your unselfish attention. Those who are especially attractive will be at no loss for friends; while those who are less pleasing in appearance, who are timid and hard to become acquainted with, may have choice traits of character, and they are the purchase of the blood of Christ. {SD 268.3}

We need to realize daily what a helper we have in Jesus. Let all understand that they can be co-workers with Jesus Christ. It is your privilege to receive grace from Christ that will enable you to comfort others with the same comfort wherewith you yourselves are comforted of God. . . . Let each one seek to do his work as he will wish he had done when the end of all things shall come. Let each try to help the next one. Thus you may have a little heaven here below, and angels of God will work through you to make right impressions. . . . Christ wants to use you as His servants. Seek to help wherever you can. Cultivate the best dispositions that the grace of God may rest richly upon you. {SD 268.4}

Young and old may learn to look to God as the One who will heal, as One who sympathizes, who understands their necessities and who will never make a mistake. Your humanity may lay hold of the divinity of Christ by living faith, and you may learn to carry out . . . the principles of heaven. This will make you a blessing to all. {SD 268.5}

The Upward Look, Chapter 221, page 235

“FOLLOW CHRIST’S EXAMPLE OF SACRIFICE”

August 23rd

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29. {UL 235.1}

Those who would at last be received into heaven as members of the royal family must here give themselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of Him who paid the price of their redemption. All that we have and are belongs to the Lord. "Ye are not your own," the apostle declares. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). . . . {UL 235.2}

Have you consecrated yourself wholly to the Lord? Can He use you as a vessel unto honor? Are you faithfully acting your part in His cause? To every man God has given his work. He expects every believer to cooperate with Him in the work of soul-saving. When His cause is suffering for means, how can anyone set a price on his services, refusing to take up the cross daily, and practice self-denial for Christ's sake? {UL 235.3}

The fulfillment of the promise that we shall be joint-heirs with Christ rests upon our willingness to deny self. When Christ takes possession of His kingdom, it will be those who on this earth have followed Him in self-denial and sacrifice who will receive the reward of everlasting life. {UL 235.4}

Christ's call to sacrifice and unreserved surrender means crucifixion of self. In order to obey this call, we must have unquestioning faith in Him as the perfect Example, and we must have a clear realization that we are to represent Him to the world. Those who work for Christ are to work in His lines. They are to live His life. His call to unreserved surrender is to be to them supreme. They are to allow no earthly tie or interest to prevent them from giving Him the homage of their hearts and the service of their lives. Earnestly and untiringly they are to labor with God to save perishing souls from the power of the tempter. {UL 235.5}

Those who are thus connected with Christ learn constantly of Him, passing through the successive stages of progress in Christian experience. Difficulty and perplexity come to them, that they may learn more perfectly the will and way of Christ. But they pray and believe, and by exercise their faith increases. {UL 235.6}

"Take my yoke upon you," Christ said, as in human nature He lived and worked upon this earth. Constantly He wore the yoke of submission, meeting the difficulties that human beings must meet, bearing the trials that they must bear. The enemy will continually assault us as he assaulted Christ, bringing against us strong temptation. But for everyone there is a way of escape.--Manuscript 88, Aug. 9, 1903, "Be Not Weary in Well-doing." {UL 235.7}

Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 18 page 195–203

“THE NIGHT OF WRESTLING”

Though Jacob had left Padan-aram in obedience to the divine direction, it was not without many misgivings that he retraced the road which he had trodden as a fugitive twenty years before. His sin in the deception of his father was ever before him. He knew that his long exile was the direct result of that sin, and he pondered over these things day and night, the reproaches of an accusing conscience making his journey very sad. As the hills of his native land appeared before him in the distance, the heart of the patriarch was deeply moved. All the past rose vividly before him. With the memory of his sin came also the thought of God's favor toward him, and the promises of divine help and guidance. {PP 195.1}

As he drew nearer his journey's end, the thought of Esau brought many a troubled foreboding. After the flight of Jacob, Esau had regarded himself as the sole heir of their father's possessions. The news of Jacob's return would excite the fear that he was coming to claim the inheritance. Esau was now able to do his brother great injury, if so disposed, and he might be moved to violence against him, not only by the desire for revenge, but in order to secure undisturbed possession of the wealth which he had so long looked upon as his own. {PP 195.2}

Again the Lord granted Jacob a token of the divine care. As he traveled southward from Mount Gilead, two hosts of heavenly angels seemed to encompass him behind and before, advancing with his company, as if for their protection. Jacob remembered the vision at Bethel so long before, and his burdened heart grew lighter at this evidence that the divine messengers who had brought him hope and courage at his flight from Canaan were to be the guardians of his return. And he said, "This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim"--"two hosts, or, camps." {PP 195.3}

Yet Jacob felt that he had something to do to secure his own safety. He therefore dispatched messengers with a conciliatory greeting to his brother. He instructed them as to the exact words in which they were to address Esau. It had been foretold before the birth of the two brothers that the elder should serve the younger, and, lest the memory of this should be a cause of bitterness, Jacob told the servants they were sent to "my lord Esau;" when brought before him, they were to refer to their master as "thy servant Jacob;" and to remove the fear that he was returning, a destitute wanderer, to claim the paternal inheritance, Jacob was careful to state in his message, "I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight." {PP 195.4}

But the servants returned with the tidings that Esau was approaching with four hundred men, and no response was sent to the friendly message. It appeared certain that he was coming to seek revenge. Terror pervaded the camp. "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." He could not go back, and he feared to advance. His company, unarmed and defenseless, were wholly unprepared for a hostile encounter. He accordingly divided them into two bands, so that if one should be attacked, the other might have an opportunity to escape. He sent from his vast flocks generous presents to Esau, with a friendly message. He did all in his power to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger, and then in humiliation and repentance he pleaded for divine protection: Thou "saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." {PP 196.1}

They had now reached the river Jabbok, and as night came on, Jacob sent his family across the ford of the river, while he alone remained behind. He had decided to spend the night in prayer, and he desired to be alone with God. God could soften the heart of Esau. In Him was the patriarch's only hope. {PP 196.2}

It was in a lonely, mountainous region, the haunt of wild beasts and the lurking place of robbers and murderers. Solitary and unprotected, Jacob bowed in deep distress upon the earth. It was midnight. All that made life dear to him were at a distance, exposed to danger and death. Bitterest of all was the thought that it was his own sin which had brought this peril upon the innocent. With earnest cries and tears he made his prayer before God. Suddenly a strong hand was laid upon him. He thought that an enemy was seeking his life, and he endeavored to wrest himself from the grasp of his assailant. In the darkness the two struggled for the mastery. Not a word was spoken, but Jacob put forth all his strength, and did not relax his efforts for a moment. While he was thus battling for his life, the sense of his guilt pressed upon his soul; his sins rose up before him, to shut him out from God. But in his terrible extremity he remembered God's promises, and his whole heart went out in entreaty for His mercy. The struggle continued until near the break of day, when the stranger placed his finger upon Jacob's thigh, and he was crippled instantly. The patriarch now discerned the character of his antagonist. He knew that he had been in conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this was why his almost superhuman effort had not gained the victory. It was Christ, "the Angel of the covenant," who had revealed Himself to Jacob. The patriarch was now disabled and suffering the keenest pain, but he would not loosen his hold. All penitent and broken, he clung to the Angel; "he wept, and made supplication" (Hosea 12:4), pleading for a blessing. He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned. Physical pain was not sufficient to divert his mind from this object.

His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release Himself; He urged, "Let Me go, for the day breaketh;" but Jacob answered, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God. {PP 196.3}

Jacob "had power over the Angel, and prevailed." Hosea 12:4. Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea. {PP 197.1}

The error that had led to Jacob's sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now clearly set before him. He had not trusted God's promises, but had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God would have accomplished in His own time and way. As an evidence that he had been forgiven, his name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory. "Thy name," said the Angel, "shall be called no more Jacob [the supplanter], but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." {PP 197.2}

Jacob had received the blessing for which his soul had longed. His sin as a supplanter and deceiver had been pardoned. The crisis in his life was past. Doubt, perplexity, and remorse had embittered his existence, but now all was changed; and sweet was the peace of reconciliation with God. Jacob no longer feared to meet his brother. God, who had forgiven his sin, could move the heart of Esau also to accept his humiliation and repentance. {PP 198.1}

While Jacob was wrestling with the Angel, another heavenly messenger was sent to Esau. In a dream, Esau beheld his brother for twenty years an exile from his father's house; he witnessed his grief at finding his mother dead; he saw him encompassed by the hosts of God. This dream was related by Esau to his soldiers, with the charge not to harm Jacob, for the God of his father was with him. {PP 198.2}

The two companies at last approached each other, the desert chief leading his men of war, and Jacob with his wives and children, attended by shepherds and handmaidens, and followed by long lines of flocks and herds. Leaning upon his staff, the patriarch went forward to meet the band of soldiers. He was pale and disabled from his recent conflict, and he walked slowly and painfully, halting at every step; but his countenance was lighted up with joy and peace. {PP 198.3}

At sight of that crippled sufferer, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." As they looked upon the scene, even the hearts of Esau's rude soldiers were touched. Notwithstanding he had told them of his dream, they could not account for the change that had come over their captain. Though they beheld the patriarch's infirmity, they little thought that this his weakness had been made his strength. {PP 198.4}

In his night of anguish beside the Jabbok, when destruction seemed just before him, Jacob had been taught how vain is the help of man, how groundless is all trust in human power. He saw that his only help must come from Him against whom he had so grievously sinned. Helpless and unworthy, he pleaded God's promise of mercy to the repentant sinner. That promise was his assurance that God would pardon and accept him. Sooner might heaven and earth pass than that word could fail; and it was this that sustained him through that fearful conflict. {PP 198.5}

Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming. The prophet Jeremiah, in holy vision looking down to this time, said, "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:5-7. {PP 201.1}

When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. When Jesus leaves His position as man's intercessor before God, the solemn announcement is made, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them. {PP 201.2}

Satan had accused Jacob before the angels of God, claiming the right to destroy him because of his sin; he had moved upon Esau to march against him; and during the patriarch's long night of wrestling, Satan endeavored to force upon him a sense of his guilt, in order to discourage him, and break his hold upon God. When in his distress Jacob laid hold of the Angel, and made supplication with tears, the heavenly Messenger, in order to try his faith, also reminded him of his sin, and endeavored to escape from him. But Jacob would not be turned away. He had learned that God is merciful, and he cast himself upon His mercy. He pointed back to his repentance for his sin, and pleaded for deliverance. As he reviewed his life, he was driven almost to despair; but he held fast the Angel, and with earnest, agonizing cries urged his petition until he prevailed. {PP 201.3}

Such will be the experience of God's people in their final struggle with the powers of evil. God will test their faith, their perseverance, their confidence in His power to deliver them. Satan will endeavor to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless; that their sins have been too great to receive pardon. They will have a deep sense of their shortcomings, and as they review their lives their hopes will sink. But remembering the greatness of God's mercy, and their own sincere repentance, they will plead His promises made through Christ to helpless, repenting sinners. Their faith will not fail because their prayers are not immediately answered. They will lay hold of the strength of God, as

Jacob laid hold of the Angel, and the language of their souls will be, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." {PP 202.1}

Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God could not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins will have been blotted out by the atoning blood of Christ, and they cannot bring them to remembrance. {PP 202.2}

Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealing with Jacob that He can in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession, and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God, and the more certain the triumph of the great adversary. {PP 202.3}

Yet Jacob's history is an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. It was by self-surrender and confiding faith that Jacob gained what he had failed to gain by conflict in his own strength. God thus taught His servant that divine power and grace alone could give him the blessing he craved. Thus it will be with those who live in the last days. As dangers surround them, and despair seizes upon the soul, they must depend solely upon the merits of the atonement. We can do nothing of ourselves. In all our helpless unworthiness we must trust in the merits of the crucified and risen Saviour. None will ever perish while they do this. The long, black catalogue of our delinquencies is before the eye of the Infinite. The register is complete; none of our offenses are forgotten. But He who listened to the cries of His servants of old, will hear the prayer of faith and pardon our transgressions. He has promised, and He will fulfill His word. {PP 202.4}

Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His experience testifies to the power of importunate prayer. It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith. The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power. {PP 203.1}

Those who are unwilling to forsake every sin and to seek earnestly for God's blessing, will not obtain it. But all who will lay hold of God's promises as did Jacob, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:7, 8. {PP 203.2}

,

*Friday, August 12th, 2022***This Day With God, Chapter 148, page 156****“REJOICE IN THE LORD”****June 4th**

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7. {TDG 156.1}

My head is weary this morning. Mist and clouds hang over my mind; but the suggestions of the enemy to distrust the Lord shall not be cherished. Now is my time to fight the good fight of faith. Now is the very occasion that needs the steady faith that works by love and purifies my soul. I seek the Lord more earnestly. {TDG 156.2}

In 1 Chronicles 28:9 David gives his charge to Solomon. . . . {TDG 156.3}

The message was brought to Asa by the Lord's prophet: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chronicles 15:2; cf. Jeremiah 29:11-13). My heart goes out in faith. Faith is not feeling; faith is not sight. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). {TDG 156.4}

I spoke in the Rechabite's hall at 3:00 P.M. from Philippians 4:4-7: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." I believe the promise is for me, and I appropriate the same personally. The promise itself is of no value unless I fully believe that He that has made the promise is abundantly able to fulfill, and infinite in power to do all that He has said. {TDG 156.5}

The message the Lord gave me was a message of faith. We cannot dishonor God more than in distrusting His Word. Feeling is not at all reliable. A religion fed and kept alive by emotions is valueless. God's Word is the foundation upon which our hopes may safely rest, and in the confidence we have in the Word of God we are established, strengthened, settled, riveted to the Eternal Rock. Then the prayer of Paul will be answered: {TDG 156.6}

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9, 10).--Manuscript 80, May 27, 1893, diary. {TDG 156.7}

Education, Chapter 35, page 301–309

“THE SCHOOL OF THE HEREAFTER”

Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe; its teacher, the Infinite One. A branch of this school was established in Eden; and, the plan of redemption accomplished, education will again be taken up in the Eden school. {Ed 301.1}

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Only through His word can a knowledge of these things be gained; and even this affords but a partial revelation. {Ed 301.2}

The prophet of Patmos thus describes the location of the school of the hereafter: {Ed 301.3}

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21:1, 2. {Ed 301.4}

"The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Revelation 21:23. {Ed 301.5}

Between the school established in Eden at the beginning and the school of the hereafter there lies the whole compass of this world's history--the history of human transgression and suffering, of divine sacrifice, and of victory over death and sin. Not all the conditions of that first school of Eden will be found in the school of the future life. No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong. Every character has withstood the testing of evil, and none are longer susceptible to its power. {Ed 301.6}

"To him that overcometh," Christ says, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Revelation 2:7. The giving of the tree of life in Eden was conditional, and it was finally withdrawn. But the gifts of the future life are absolute and eternal. {Ed 302.1}

The prophet beholds the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 22:1; 22:2, R.V.; 21:4.

"Thy people also shall be all righteous:

They shall inherit the land forever,

The branch of My planting,

The work of My hands,

That I may be glorified." Isaiah 60:21. {Ed 302.2}

Restored to His presence, man will again, as at the beginning, be taught of God: "My people shall know My name: . . . they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I." Isaiah 52:6. {Ed 302.3}

"The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:3. {Ed 302.4}

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Revelation 7:14-17. {Ed 303.1}

"Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face:" now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12. {Ed 303.2}

"They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4. {Ed 303.3}

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. {Ed 303.4}

There the Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. "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: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:21, 22. {Ed 303.5}

There shall be nothing to "hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord." Isaiah 65:25. There man will be restored to his lost kingship, and the lower order of beings will again recognize his sway; the fierce will become gentle, and the timid trustful. {Ed 304.1}

There will be open to the student, history of infinite scope and of wealth inexpressible. Here, from the vantage ground of God's word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly. {Ed 304.2}

Then will be opened before him the course of the great conflict that had its birth before time began, and that ends only when time shall cease. The history of the inception of sin; of fatal falsehood in its crooked working; of truth that, swerving not from its own straight lines, has met and conquered error--all will be made manifest. The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed. {Ed 304.3}

Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men, in the garb of wayfarers. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes; they have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have thwarted the spoiler's purpose and turned aside the stroke of the destroyer. {Ed 304.4}

Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them. Human ears have listened to their appeals. In the council hall the court of justice, heavenly messengers have pleaded the cause of the persecuted and oppressed. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have brought wrong and suffering to God's children. To the students in the heavenly school, all this will be unfolded. {Ed 305.1}

Every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting place, who was the first to

greet him in the resurrection morning--what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity! {Ed 305.2}

All the perplexities of life's experience will then be made plain. Where to us have appeared only confusion and disappointment, broken purposes and thwarted plans, will be seen a grand, overruling, victorious purpose, a divine harmony. {Ed 305.3}

There all who have wrought with unselfish spirit will behold the fruit of their labors. The outworking of every right principle and noble deed will be seen. Something of this we see here. But how little of the result of the world's noblest work is in this life manifest to the doer! How many toil unselfishly and unweariedly for those who pass beyond their reach and knowledge! Parents and teachers lie down in their last sleep, their lifework seeming to have been wrought in vain; they know not that their faithfulness has unsealed springs of blessing that can never cease to flow; only by faith they see the children they have trained become a benediction and an inspiration to their fellow men, and the influence repeat itself a thousandfold. Many a worker sends out into the world messages of strength and hope and courage, words that carry blessing to hearts in every land; but of the results he, toiling in loneliness and obscurity, knows little. So gifts are bestowed, burdens are borne, labor is done. Men sow the seed from which, above their graves, others reap blessed harvests. They plant trees, that others may eat the fruit. They are content here to know that they have set in motion agencies for good. In the hereafter the action and reaction of all these will be seen. {Ed 305.4}

Of every gift that God has bestowed, leading men to unselfish effort, a record is kept in heaven. To trace this in its wide-spreading lines, to look upon those who by our efforts have been uplifted and ennobled, to behold in their history the outworking of true principles--this will be one of the studies and rewards of the heavenly school. {Ed 306.1}

There we shall know even as also we are known. There the loves and sympathies that God has planted in the soul will find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, the sacred fellowship that binds together "the whole family in heaven and earth"--all are among the experiences of the hereafter. {Ed 306.2}

There will be music there, and song, such music and song as, save in the visions of God, no mortal ear has heard or mind conceived. {Ed 307.1}

"As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." Psalm 87:7. "They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord." Isaiah 24:14. {Ed 307.2}

"For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Isaiah 51:3. {Ed 307.3}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be 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 body and mind and soul. {Ed 307.4}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}

"His servants shall serve Him." Revelation 22:3. The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be. {Ed 307.6}

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Matthew 20:28. Christ's work below is His work above, and our reward for working with Him in this world will be the greater power and wider privilege of working with Him in the world to come. {Ed 308.1}

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." Isaiah 43:12. This also we shall be in eternity. {Ed 308.2}

For what was the great controversy permitted to continue throughout the ages? Why was it that Satan's existence was not cut short at the outset of his rebellion? It was that the universe might be convinced of God's justice in His dealing with evil; that sin might receive eternal condemnation. In the plan of redemption there are heights and depths that eternity itself can never exhaust, marvels into which the angels desire to look. The redeemed only, of all created beings, have in their own experience known the actual conflict with sin; they have wrought with Christ, and, as even the angels could not do, have entered into the fellowship of His sufferings; will they have no testimony as to the science of redemption --nothing that will be of worth to unfallen beings? {Ed 308.3}

Even now, "unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" is "made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." And He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places: . . . that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 3:10, R.V.; 2:6, 7. {Ed 308.4}

"In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory" (Psalm 29:9), and the song which the ransomed ones will sing--the song of their experience--will declare the glory of God: "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy." Revelation 15:3, 4, R.V. {Ed 308.5}

In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found--witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew "the riches of the glory of this mystery," "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. {Ed 309.1}

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. {Ed 309.2}

Then, in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. In that great multitude which no man could number, presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24), He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us, "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53:11. {Ed 309.3}

Friday, August 19th, 2022

That I May Know Him, Chapter 260, page 266

“I PRAY FOR GUIDANCE”**September 23rd**

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 40:31. {TMK 266.1}

Friday, Feb. 14, 1896. I awake at half past two, and seek the Lord, as is my practice, for wisdom and grace, mingling my prayers with thanksgiving for His tender, loving compassion toward us. The words of Isaiah 40:28-31 seem appropriate and impressed upon my mind. . . . {TMK 266.2}

My prayer is, Help me, O my heavenly Father, to trust wholly in Thy wisdom and not to lean to my own understanding. Guide Thou my pen and direct my speech that I shall not sin against Thee with voice or pen. I must have grace. I plead, Teach me Thy truth, that I shall not err from Thy way. O my Lord, I am weakness itself, but Thou art strength, fortitude, and courage to Thy people if they will only diligently make Thee their trust. . . . {TMK 266.3}

Sabbath, Feb. 15, 1896. The Lord is good and merciful. I want my gratitude offering constantly ascending to God. I long to have a deeper sense of His goodness and of His changeless love. I long daily for the waters of life. . . . I must continually have my strength in God. My dependence must not waver. No human agency must come between my soul and my God. The Lord is our only hope. In Him I trust, and He will never, no never, fail me. He hath hitherto helped me when under great discouragement. . . . {TMK 266.4}

I will thank the Lord and praise His holy name. I will praise the Lord that in Him I can trust at all times. He is the health of my countenance and my strong tower into which I can run and be safe. He understands my necessities and He will give me the light of His countenance that I may reflect light upon others. I will not fail nor be discouraged. I look to Thee, my heavenly Father, to give strength and grace. . . . I will praise the Lord at all times and not wait for a happy flight of feeling. Then praise the Lord, for He is good, and His mercies will attend me morning, noon, and night. A happy flight of feeling is not evidence; His Word is my assurance. {TMK 266.5}

Friday, August 19th, 2022

Reflecting Christ, Chapter 108, page 122

“PRAYER IS APPROPRIATE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE”**May 2nd**

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. John 14:14. {RC 122.1}

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul. {RC 122.2}

Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven. {RC 122.3}

We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God's children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things. {RC 122.4}

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. {RC 122.5}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds. He rules over all the affairs of the universe. {RC 122.6}

Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. . . . The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.--Steps to Christ, pp. 99, 100. {RC 122.7}

Sons and Daughters of God, Chapter 7, page 202**“WE FACE THE FUTURE WITH COURAGE”****July 14th****Be Strong, for God is With Us**

Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. Haggai 2:4. {SD 202.1}

Our Lord is cognizant of the conflict of His people in these last days with the satanic agencies combined with evil men who neglect and refuse their great salvation. With the greatest simplicity and candor, our Saviour, the mighty General of the armies of heaven, does not conceal the stern conflict which they will experience. He points out the dangers, He shows us the plan of the battle, and the hard and hazardous work to be done, and then lifts His voice before entering the conflict to count the cost while at the same time He encourages all to take up the weapons of their warfare and expect the heavenly host to compose the armies to war in defense of truth and righteousness. Men's weakness shall find supernatural strength and help in every stern conflict to do the deeds of Omnipotence, and perseverance in faith and perfect trust in God will ensure success. {SD 202.2}

While the past confederacy of evil is arrayed against them He bids them to be brave and strong and fight valiantly for they have a heaven to win, and they have more than an angel in their ranks, the mighty General of armies leads on the armies of heaven. As on the occasion of the taking of Jericho, not one of the armies of Israel could boast of exercising their finite strength to overthrow the walls of the city, but the Captain of the Lord's host planned the battle in the greatest simplicity, that the Lord alone should receive the glory and man should not be exalted. God has promised us all power; for the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call. {SD 202.3}

Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp. {SD 202.4}

Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 45, pp. 487–498

“THE FALL OF JERICHO”

The Hebrews had entered Canaan, but they had not subdued it; and to human appearance the struggle to gain possession of the land must be long and difficult. It was inhabited by a powerful race, who stood ready to oppose the invasion of their territory. The various tribes were bound together by the fear of a common danger. Their horses and iron battle chariots, their knowledge of the country, and their training in war, would give them great advantage. Furthermore, the country was guarded by fortresses—"cities great and fenced up to heaven." Deuteronomy 9:1. Only in the assurance of a strength not their own could the Israelites hope for success in the impending conflict. {PP 487.1}

One of the strongest fortresses in the land--the large and wealthy city of Jericho--lay just before them, but a little distance from their camp at Gilgal. On the border of a fertile plain abounding with the rich and varied productions of the tropics, its palaces and temples the abode of luxury and vice, this proud city, behind its massive battlements, offered defiance to the God of Israel. Jericho was one of the principal seats of idol worship, being especially devoted to Ashtaroth, the goddess of the moon. Here centered all that was vilest and most degrading in the religion of the Canaanites. The people of Israel, in whose minds were fresh the fearful results of their sin at Beth-peor, could look upon this heathen city only with disgust and horror. {PP 487.2}

To reduce Jericho was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan. But first of all he sought an assurance of divine guidance, and it was granted him. Withdrawing from the encampment to meditate and to pray that the God of Israel would go before His people, he beheld an armed warrior, of lofty stature and commanding presence, "with his sword drawn in his hand." To Joshua's challenge, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" the answer was given, "As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." The same command given to Moses in Horeb, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy," revealed the true character of the mysterious stranger. It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel. Awe-stricken, Joshua fell upon his face and worshiped, and heard the assurance, "I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor," and he received instruction for the capture of the city. {PP 487.3}

In obedience to the divine command Joshua marshaled the armies of Israel. No assault was to be made. They were simply to make the circuit of the city, bearing the ark of God and blowing upon trumpets. First came the warriors, a body of chosen men, not now to conquer by their own skill and prowess, but by obedience to the directions given them from God. Seven priests with trumpets followed. Then the ark of God, surrounded by a halo of divine glory, was borne by priests clad in the dress denoting their sacred office. The army of Israel followed, each tribe under its standard. Such was the procession that compassed the doomed city. No sound was heard but the tread of that mighty host and the solemn peal of the trumpets, echoing among the hills and resounding through the streets of Jericho. The circuit completed, the army returned in silence to their tents, and the ark was restored to its place in the tabernacle. {PP 488.1}

With wonder and alarm the watchmen of the city marked every move, and reported to those in authority. They knew not the meaning of all this display; but when they beheld that mighty host marching around their city once each day, with the sacred ark and the attendant priests, the mystery of the scene struck terror to the hearts of priest and people. Again they would inspect their strong defenses, feeling certain they could successfully resist the most powerful attack. Many ridiculed the thought that any harm could come to them through these singular demonstrations. Others were awed as they beheld the procession that each day wound about the city. They remembered that the Red Sea had once parted before this people, and that a passage had just been opened for them through the river Jordan. They knew not what further wonders God might work for them. {PP 488.2}

For six days the host of Israel made the circuit of the city. The seventh day came, and with the first dawn of light, Joshua marshaled the armies of the Lord. Now they were directed to march seven times around Jericho, and at a mighty peal from the trumpets to shout with a loud voice, for God had given them the city. {PP 488.3}

The vast army marched solemnly around the devoted walls. All was silent, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional sound of the trumpet, breaking the stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone seemed to defy the siege of men. The watchers on the walls looked on with rising fear, as, the first circuit ended, there followed a second, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. What could be the object of these mysterious movements? What mighty event was impending? They had not long to wait. As the seventh circuit was completed, the long procession paused. The trumpets, which for an interval had been silent, now broke forth in a blast that shook the very earth. The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city. {PP 491.1}

The Israelites had not gained the victory by their own power; the conquest had been wholly the Lord's; and as the first fruits of the land, the city, with all that it contained, was to be devoted as a sacrifice to God. It was to be impressed upon Israel that in the conquest of Canaan they were not to fight for themselves, but simply as instruments to execute the

will of God; not to seek for riches or self-exaltation, but the glory of Jehovah their King. Before the capture the command had been given, "The city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein." "Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed . . . and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it." {PP 491.2}

All the inhabitants of the city, with every living thing that it contained, "both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass," were put to the sword. Only faithful Rahab, with her household, was spared, in fulfillment of the promise of the spies. The city itself was burned; its palaces and temples, its magnificent dwellings with all their luxurious appointments, the rich draperies and the costly garments, were given to the flames. That which could not be destroyed by fire, "the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron," was to be devoted to the service of the tabernacle. The very site of the city was accursed; Jericho was never to be rebuilt as a stronghold; judgments were threatened upon anyone who should presume to restore the walls that divine power had cast down. The solemn declaration was made in the presence of all Israel, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." {PP 491.3}

The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them." Deuteronomy 7:2. "Of the cities of these people, . . . thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." Deuteronomy 20:16. To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. God was about to establish Israel in Canaan, to develop among them a nation and government that should be a manifestation of His kingdom upon the earth. They were not only to be inheritors of the true religion, but to disseminate its principles throughout the world. The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism, and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes. {PP 492.1}

The inhabitants of Canaan had been granted ample opportunity for repentance. Forty years before, the opening of the Red Sea and the judgments upon Egypt had testified to the supreme power of the God of Israel. And now the overthrow of the kings of Midian, of Gilead and Bashan, had further shown that Jehovah was above all gods. The holiness of His character and His abhorrence of impurity had been evinced in the judgments visited upon Israel for their participation in the abominable rites of Baalpeor. All these events were known to the inhabitants of Jericho, and there were many who shared Rahab's conviction, though they refused to obey it, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, "is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath." Like the men before the Flood, the Canaanites lived only to blaspheme Heaven and defile the earth. And both love and justice demanded the prompt execution of these rebels against God and foes to man. {PP 492.2}

How easily the armies of heaven brought down the walls of Jericho, that proud city whose bulwarks, forty years before, had struck terror to the unbelieving spies! The Mighty One of Israel had said, "I have given into thine hand Jericho." Against that word human strength was powerless. {PP 492.3}

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Hebrews 11:30. The Captain of the Lord's host communicated only with Joshua; He did not reveal Himself to all the congregation, and it rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to obey the commands given by him in the name of the Lord, or to deny his authority. They could not see the host of angels who attended them under the leadership of the Son of God. They might have reasoned: "What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns. This can have no effect upon those towering fortifications." But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader. {PP 493.1}

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him. {PP 493.2}

Soon after the fall of Jericho, Joshua determined to attack Ai, a small town among the ravines a few miles to the west of the Jordan Valley. Spies sent to this place brought back the report that the inhabitants were but few, and that only a small force would be needed to overthrow it. {PP 493.3}

The great victory that God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because He had promised them the land of Canaan they felt secure, and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God. {PP 493.4}

The Israelites had begun to exalt their own strength and to look with contempt upon their foes. An easy victory was expected, and three thousand men were thought sufficient to take the place. These rushed to the attack without the assurance that God would be with them. They advanced nearly to the gate of the city, only to encounter the most determined resistance. Panic-stricken at the numbers and thorough preparation of their enemies, they fled in confusion down the steep descent. The Canaanites were in hot pursuit; "they chased them from before the gate, . . . and smote them in the going down." Though the loss was small as to numbers--but thirty-six men being slain--the defeat was disheartening to the whole congregation. "The hearts of the people melted, and became as water." This was the first time they had met the Canaanites in actual battle, and if put to flight before the defenders of this little town, what would be

the result in the greater conflicts before them? Joshua looked upon their ill success as an expression of God's displeasure, and in distress and apprehension he "rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads." {PP 493.5}

"Alas, O Lord God," he cried, "wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? . . . O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" {PP 494.1}

The answer from Jehovah was, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath . . . transgressed My covenant which I commanded them." It was a time for prompt and decided action, and not for despair and lamentation. There was secret sin in the camp, and it must be searched out and put away before the presence and blessing of the Lord could be with His people. "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." {PP 494.2}

God's command had been disregarded by one of those appointed to execute His judgments. And the nation was held accountable for the guilt of the transgressor: "They have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also." Instruction was given to Joshua for the discovery and punishment of the criminal. The lot was to be employed for the detection of the guilty. The sinner was not directly pointed out, the matter being left in doubt for a time, that the people might feel their responsibility for the sins existing among them, and thus be led to searching of heart and humiliation before God. {PP 494.3}

Early in the morning, Joshua gathered the people together by their tribes, and the solemn and impressive ceremony began. Step by step the investigation went on. Closer and still closer came the fearful test. First the tribe, then the family, then the household, then the man was taken, and Achan the son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah, was pointed out by the finger of God as the troubler of Israel. {PP 495.1}

To establish his guilt beyond all question, leaving no ground for the charge that he had been unjustly condemned, Joshua solemnly adjured Achan to acknowledge the truth. The wretched man made full confession of his crime: "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. . . . When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekel's weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent." Messengers were immediately dispatched to the tent, where they removed the earth at the place specified, and "behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, . . . and laid them out before the Lord." {PP 495.2}

Sentence was pronounced and immediately executed. "Why hast thou troubled us?" said Joshua, "the Lord shall trouble thee this day." As the people had been held responsible for Achan's sin, and had suffered from its consequences, they were, through their representatives, to take part in its punishment. "All Israel stoned him with stones." {PP 495.3}

Then there was raised over him a great pile of stones--a witness to the sin and its punishment. "Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor," that is, "trouble." In the book of Chronicles his memorial is written-- "Achar, the troubler of Israel." 1 Chronicles 2:7. {PP 495.4}

Achan's sin was committed in defiance of the most direct and solemn warnings and the most mighty manifestations of God's power. "Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed," had been the proclamation to all Israel. The command was given immediately after the miraculous passage of the Jordan, and the recognition of God's covenant by the circumcision of the people--after the observance of the Passover, and the appearance of the Angel of the covenant, the Captain of the Lord's host. It had been followed by the overthrow of Jericho, giving evidence of the destruction which will surely overtake all transgressors of God's law. The fact that divine power alone had given the victory to Israel, that they had not come into possession of Jericho by their own strength, gave solemn weight to the command prohibiting them from partaking of the spoils. God, by the might of His own word, had overthrown this stronghold; the conquest was His, and to Him alone the city with all that it contained was to be devoted. {PP 495.5}

Of the millions of Israel there was but one man who, in that solemn hour of triumph and of judgment, had dared to transgress the command of God. Achan's covetousness was excited by the sight of that costly robe of Shinar; even when it had brought him face to face with death he called it "a goodly Babylonish garment." One sin had led to another, and he appropriated the gold and silver devoted to the treasury of the Lord--he robbed God of the first fruits of the land of Canaan. {PP 496.1}

The deadly sin that led to Achan's ruin had its root in covetousness, of all sins one of the most common and the most lightly regarded. While other offenses meet with detection and punishment, how rarely does the violation of the tenth commandment so much as call forth censure. The enormity of this sin, and its terrible results, are the lessons of Achan's history. {PP 496.2}

Covetousness is an evil of gradual development. Achan had cherished greed of gain until it became a habit, binding him in fetters well-nigh impossible to break. While fostering this evil, he would have been filled with horror at the thought of bringing disaster upon Israel; but his perceptions were deadened by sin, and when temptation came, he fell an easy prey. {PP 496.3}

Are not similar sins still committed, in the face of warnings as solemn and explicit? We are as directly forbidden to indulge covetousness as was Achan to appropriate the spoils of Jericho. God has declared it to be idolatry. We are

warned, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Luke 12:15. "Let it not be once named among you." Ephesians 5:3. We have before us the fearful doom of Achan, of Judas, of Ananias and Sapphira. Back of all these we have that of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," who, coveting a higher state, forfeited forever the brightness and bliss of heaven. And yet, notwithstanding all these warnings, covetousness abounds. {PP 496.4}

Everywhere its slimy track is seen. It creates discontent and dissension in families; it excites envy and hatred in the poor against the rich; it prompts the grinding oppression of the rich toward the poor. And this evil exists not in the world alone, but in the church. How common even here to find selfishness, avarice, overreaching, neglect of charities, and robbery of God "in tithes and offerings." Among church members "in good and regular standing" there are, alas! many Achans. Many a man comes stately to church, and sits at the table of the Lord, while among his possessions are hidden unlawful gains, the things that God has cursed. For a goodly Babylonish garment, multitudes sacrifice the approval of conscience and their hope of heaven. Multitudes barter their integrity, and their capabilities for usefulness, for a bag of silver shekels. The cries of the suffering poor are unheeded; the gospel light is hindered in its course; the scorn of worldlings is kindled by practices that give the lie to the Christian profession; and yet the covetous professor continues to heap up treasures. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me" (Malachi 3:8), saith the Lord. {PP 497.1}

Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away. The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people. {PP 497.2}

When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, instead of folding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members inquire if there is not an Achan in the camp. With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God's presence. {PP 497.3}

Achan acknowledged his guilt, but when it was too late for the confession to benefit himself. He had seen the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He had seen Joshua and the elders of Israel bowed to the earth in grief too great for words. Had he then made confession, he would have given some proof of true penitence; but he still kept silence. He had listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed, and had even heard its character definitely stated. But his lips were sealed. Then came the solemn investigation. How his soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him. Then, when his sin could no longer be concealed, he admitted the truth. How often are similar confessions made. There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they have been proved and confessing sins known only to ourselves and to God. Achan would not have confessed had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. But his confession only served to show that his punishment was just. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no change of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. {PP 497.4}

So confessions will be made by the guilty when they stand before the bar of God, after every case has been decided for life or death. The consequences to result to himself will draw from each an acknowledgment of his sin. It will be forced from the soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. But such confessions cannot save the sinner. {PP 498.1}

So long as they can conceal their transgressions from their fellow men, many, like Achan, feel secure, and flatter themselves that God will not be strict to mark iniquity. All too late their sins will find them out in that day when they shall not be purged with sacrifice or offering forever. When the records of heaven shall be opened, the Judge will not in words declare to man his guilt, but will cast one penetrating, convicting glance, and every deed, every transaction of life, will be vividly impressed upon the memory of the wrongdoer. The person will not, as in Joshua's day, need to be hunted out from tribe to family, but his own lips will confess his shame. The sins hidden from the knowledge of men will then be proclaimed to the whole world. {PP 498.2}

Reflecting Christ, Chapter 23, page 37**“CHRIST, A PERFECT EXAMPLE FOR ALL”****February 6th**

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Luke 2:52. {RC 37.1}

Man has fallen. God's image in him is defaced. By disobedience he is depraved in inclination and weakened in power, unable, apparently, to look forward to anything but tribulation and wrath. But God, through Christ, has wrought out a way of escape, and He says to everyone, "Be ye therefore perfect." It is His purpose that man shall stand before Him upright and noble, and He will not be defeated. He sent His Son to this world to bear the penalty of sin, and to show man how to live a sinless life. {RC 37.2}

Christ is our ideal. He has left a perfect example for childhood, youth, and manhood. He came to this earth, and passed through the different phases of human experience. In His life sin found no place. From the beginning to the close of His earthly life, He preserved unsullied His loyalty to God. The Word says of Him, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." {RC 37.3}

The Saviour lived not to please Himself. . . . He had no home in this world, only as the kindness of His friends provided Him one, yet it was heaven to be in His presence. Day by day He met trials and temptations, yet He did not fail or become discouraged. He was always patient and cheerful, and the afflicted hailed Him as a messenger of life and peace and health. His life held nothing that was not pure and noble. . . . {RC 37.4}

God's promise is, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." Holiness is the reflection of God's glory. But in order to reflect this glory, we must cooperate with God. Heart and mind must be emptied of all that leads to wrong. The Word of God must be read and studied with a sincere desire to gain from it spiritual strength. This Word is the Bread of heaven. Those who receive it, and make it a part of their lives, grow strong in the strength of God. Our sanctification is God's object in all His dealing with us. He has chosen us from eternity, that we may be holy. Christ declares, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Is it your will, also, that your desires and inclinations shall be brought into conformity to the divine will? . . . {RC 37.5}

Living the life of the Saviour, overcoming every selfish desire, fulfilling bravely and cheerfully our duty to God and to those around us--this makes us more than conquerors. This prepares us to stand before the great white throne free from spot or wrinkle, having washed our robes of character, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.--Signs of the Times, March 30, 1904. {RC 37.6}

Friday, September 2nd, 2022

Evangelism, Chapter 19, page 630

“THE WORKER AND HIS QUALIFICATIONS”

Without Praise.--We must do our work purely and faithfully even though there is no one in the world to say, "It is well done." Our lives must be just what God designs they shall be--faithful in good words, in kind and thoughtful deeds, in the expression of meekness, purity, and love. Thus we represent Christ to the world. . . . {Ev 630.1}

The toilworn men, who are now first and foremost in the great work of saving souls, are the ones whom God will honor.--Letter 120, 1898. {Ev 630.2}

Danger of Flattery.--Keep the eye fixed on Christ. Do not fix your attention on some favorite minister, copying his example and imitating his gestures; in short, becoming his shadow. Let no man put his mold upon you. . . . {Ev 630.3}

Praise no man; flatter no man; and permit no man to praise or flatter you. Satan will do enough of this work. Lose sight of the instrument, and think of Jesus. Praise the Lord. Give glory to God. Make melody to God in your hearts. Talk of the truth. Talk of the Christian's hope, the Christian's heaven. --Manuscript 8a, 1888. {Ev 630.4}

Feelings Not Easily Wounded.--We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls, we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit.--Ministry of Healing, p. 485. (1905) {Ev 630.5}

Cheerful and Joyful Spirit.--When we have an assurance, which is bright and clear, of our own salvation, we shall exhibit cheerfulness and joyfulness, which becomes every follower of Jesus Christ. The softening, subduing influence of the love of God brought into practical lives will make impressions upon minds that will be a savor of life unto life. But a harsh denunciatory spirit, if manifested, will turn many souls away from the truth into the ranks of the enemy. Solemn thought! To deal patiently with the tempted requires us to battle with self.--Letter 1a, 1894. {Ev 630.6}

In Heavenly Places, Chapter 238 page 244**“GRACES TO CHERISH”****August 31st**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22, 23. {HP 244.1}

Here is held out the very thing for which we are to labor: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." If we have the love of Christ in our souls it will be a natural consequence for us to have all the other graces--joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and "against such there is no law." The law of God does not condemn and hold in bondage those who have these graces, because they are obeying the requirements of the law of God. They are law keepers, and . . . are not under the bondage of the law. . . . {HP 244.2}

We are to have love, and connected with this are joy, peace, long-suffering, patience. We see the restlessness of the world, their dissatisfied condition. They want something they have not. They want something to keep up an excitement or something for amusement. But for the Christian there is joy, there is peace, there is long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, and patience; and to these things we want to open the door of our heart, cherishing the heavenly graces of the Spirit of God. . . . One cannot do it for another. You may set to work and obtain the graces of the Spirit, but that will not answer for me. . . . Each one individually must do the work, and determine through personal efforts to have the grace of God in the heart. I cannot form a character for you nor can you for me. It is a burden that rests upon every one individually, young or old. {HP 244.3}

Christ says: "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12). How? By the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith. We want the living faith that will grasp the strong arm of Jehovah. . . . We all need the graces of the Spirit of God in the heart. {HP 244.4}

When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. The holy influence it reflects through the character will be manifest to all. Christ will be formed within, "the hope of glory." {HP 244.5}

Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, Chapter 38, page 331–336

“CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE”

Dear Brother and Sister H: In regard to your present relations with the church I would advise that you do all that can be done on your part to come into harmony with your brethren. Cultivate a kind, conciliatory spirit, and let no feeling of retaliation come into your minds and hearts. We have but a little time in this world, and let us work for time and for eternity. Be diligent to make your calling and election sure. See that you make no mistake in regard to your title to a home in Christ's kingdom. If your name is registered in the Lamb's book of life, then all will be well with you. Be ready and anxious to confess your faults and forsake them, that your mistakes and sins may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out. {5T 331.3}

I believe that you are making improvement; but let the work be deeper, more thorough, more earnest. Leave nothing undone that you can do. Walk humbly with God, set your heart in order, overcome self, and watch to avoid every device of Satan. When the heart is in harmony with Jesus, when in words, in spirit, and in deportment, you copy the Pattern, the manners will be refined and elevated, convincing all that there has been in you a radical change. You will then be numbered among the virtuous, God-fearing followers of Jesus. {5T 331.4}

My brother, you have a very spotted record. God and your own soul know this. But no one will be more rejoiced than I to see you setting your feet in the way that Christ has walked, and to meet you in the kingdom of God. It is difficult for us to understand ourselves, to have a correct knowledge of our own characters. The word of God is plain, but often there is an error in applying it to one's self. There is liability to self-deception and to think its warnings and reproofs do not mean me. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Self-flattery may be construed into Christian emotion and zeal. Self-love and confidence may give us assurance that we are right when we are far from meeting the requirements of God's word. {5T 332.1}

The Bible is full, clear, and explicit; the character of the true disciple of Christ is marked out with exactness. We must search the Scriptures with humble hearts, trembling at the word of the Lord, if we would not be in any way deceived in regard to our true character. There must be persevering effort to overcome selfishness and self-confidence. Self-examination must be thorough, that there be no danger of self-deception. A little catechizing of self on special occasions is not sufficient. Daily examine the foundation of your hope, and see whether you are indeed in the love of Christ. Deal truly with your own hearts, for you cannot afford to run any risk here. Count the cost of being a wholehearted Christian, and then gird on the armor. Study the Pattern; look to Jesus, and be like Him. Your peace of mind, your hope of eternal salvation, depend on faithfulness in this work. As Christians we are less thorough in self-examination than in anything else; it is no wonder, then, that we make such slow advancement in understanding self. {5T 332.2}

I am writing these things to you because I want you to be saved. I do not want to discourage you, but to urge you to more earnest, vigorous effort. Self-love will prompt you to make a superficial work of self-examination; but let no vain confidence cheat you out of eternal life. Do not build yourself up on the mistakes and errors of others, but between God and your own soul settle the important question upon which hangs your eternal destiny. {5T 333.1}

"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. He 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." Submit your heart to be refined and purified; then you will become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then you will "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The peace of Christ will be yours. Your name will stand registered in the book of life; your title to the heavenly inheritance will bear the royal signet, which none on earth dare question. No one can bar your way to the portals of the city of God, but you will have free access to the royal presence and to the temple of God on high. {5T 333.2}

A few words more press upon my mind. I want you to be united with the church, not because I regard all the church members perfect nor because I regard you perfect. God has precious ones in His church; there are also men and women who are as tares among the wheat. But the Lord does not give you or anyone else the office of saying who are tares and who are wheat. We may see and condemn the faults of others, while we have greater faults which we have never realized, but which are distinctly seen by others. God requires you to give to the world and the church a good example, a life that represents Jesus. There are duties to be performed and responsibilities to be borne. The world has not enough true Christians; the church has need of them; society cannot spare them. Christ's prayer for His disciples was: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Jesus knows we are in the world, exposed to its temptations, but He loves us and will give us grace to triumph over its corrupting influences. He would have us perfect in character, that our waywardness may not occasion moral deformity in others. {5T 333.3}

You see that your brethren do not come up to the Bible standard, that there are defects in them; and you dwell upon these defects. You feed upon them instead of feeding upon Christ, and by beholding you become changed into the same image. But criticize no one; do not contrast your own exact course with the deficiencies of others. You may be in danger of wanting to correct others and make them feel their wrongs. Do not do this. This is not the work God has given you to do. He has not made you a church tinker. There are many things which you view in the light of the Bible. But though you may be in the right on some points, do not get the impression that your positions are always correct; for on many points your ideas are distorted and will not bear criticism. {5T 334.1}

Do not seek to exalt self, but learn in the school of Christ meekness and lowliness of heart. You know what Peter's character was, how strikingly his peculiar traits were developed. Before his great fall he was always forward and dictatorial, speaking unadvisedly from the impulse of the moment. He was always ready to correct others and to express his mind before he had a clear comprehension of himself or of what he had to say. But Peter was converted, and the converted Peter was very different from the rash, impetuous Peter. While he retained his former fervor, the grace of Christ regulated his zeal. Instead of being impetuous, self-confident, and self-exalted, he was calm, self-possessed, and teachable. He could then feed the lambs as well as the sheep of Christ's flock. {5T 334.2}

You, my brother, have a great work to do for yourself day by day. You must make constant effort to curb bad tempers and evil propensities. These have grown with your growth, and Jesus alone can strengthen you to fully overcome them. You should regard yourself as a servant of Christ and seek to be like Him in character. Try to make yourself agreeable to others. Even in your business relations, be courteous, kind, and forbearing, showing the meekness of Jesus and that His spirit is ruling you. You are related to humanity, and you must be patient, kind, and pitiful. You need to cherish thoughtfulness and subdue selfishness. Let your inquiry be: "What can I do to bless others?" If your heart is yearning to do them good, even at inconvenience to yourself, you will have the blessing of God. Love, lifted out of the realm of passion and impulse, becomes spiritualized and is revealed in words and acts. A Christian must have a sanctified tenderness and love, in which there is no impatience or fretfulness; the rude, harsh manners must be softened by the grace of Christ. {5T 335.1}

O my brother, my sister, educate yourselves in the school of Christ. Let the spirit of controversy cease at home and in the church. Let your hearts be drawn out in love for the people of God. Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never get very far apart. Religion is love, and a Christian home is one where love reigns and finds expression in words and acts of thoughtful kindness and gentle courtesy. Let no harsh words be spoken. Let the family worship be made pleasant and interesting. Be a Christian gentleman, my brother; for the very same principles that characterize the home life will be carried into the church. A lack of courtesy, a moment of petulance, a single rough, thoughtless word, will mar your reputation and may close the door to hearts so that you can never reach them. {5T 335.2}

Now I have set before you your dangers, and I tell you there are precious victories that you may gain. We can never see the kingdom of heaven unless we have the mind and spirit of Christ. Then copy the pattern at home, at your work, and in the church. Do not try to teach others nor to see how widely you can differ from your brethren, but try to see how near you can come to them, how fully you can be in harmony with them. While doing all that you can on your part to perfect Christian character, give your heart to God for Him to mold according to His pleasure. He will help you; I know He will. May God bless you and your dear children; and may I meet you all around the great white throne, is my prayer. - {5T 336.1}

*Friday, September 16th, 2022***Testimonies to Ministers & Gospel Workers, Chapter 14, page 374****“APPEALS FOR TRUTH AND LOYALTY”****The Lord Has a Controversy With His People****[SPECIAL TESTIMONIES TO MINISTERS AND WORKERS (SERIES A, NO. 9, 1897), PAGES 37-50.]****Cooranbong, Australia, July 5, 1896.**

Care should be given to teach every man his dependence upon God; for He is the source of all wisdom and power and efficiency. I have been shown that it is a mistake to suppose that the men in positions of special responsibility at Battle Creek have wisdom which is far superior to that of ordinary men. Those who think that they have, supposing them to have divine enlightenment, rely upon the human judgment of these men, taking their counsel as the voice of God. [SEE APPENDIX.] But this is not safe; for unless men are wholly consecrated to God, Satan will work through them to impart that knowledge which will not be for the present and eternal good of those who hear. {TM 374.1}

Many have educated themselves to write or ask for counsel and advice when brought into difficult places. But it is a mistake for those who are placed in responsible positions in our different institutions to depend upon the men who have all too many burdens and responsibilities to bear. A weak, sickly experience will be the lot of those who are educated to depend wholly upon others. Those upon whom they depend may have less of the fear of God than they themselves have; and not more mental power and talent than it is their privilege to possess if they will but realize that they are not to be children, but firm, brave men, seeking to gain more ability by exercising that which they already have, by trading upon the talent God has lent them. We are individually responsible for the use of the talents God has given us. Our intellect must be cultivated. Close, hard thinking must be given to the solution of difficulties. {TM 374.2}

The Lord has given to every man his appointed work, and if He places men in positions of responsibility, He will communicate His Holy Spirit to them, giving them efficiency for their work. But the men who are called upon to take long and expensive journeys in order to help others to devise and plan are not themselves in close connection with the God of all wisdom if they put confidence in their own strength and wisdom. If they have not been willing to bear the yoke of Christ, or to learn in His school to be meek and lowly in heart as He was; if they have not learned to lift the burdens God has given them, and to follow wherever He may lead them, what will their expensive trips amount to? What is their wisdom worth? Is it not accounted foolishness with God? {TM 375.1}

Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 60, page 616–626**“THE PRESUMPTION OF SAUL”**

After the assembly at Gilgal, Saul disbanded the army that had at his call arisen to overthrow the Ammonites, reserving only two thousand men to be stationed under his command at Michmash and one thousand to attend his son Jonathan at Gibeah. Here was a serious error. His army was filled with hope and courage by the recent victory; and had he proceeded at once against other enemies of Israel, a telling blow might have been struck for the liberties of the nation. {PP 616.1}

Meanwhile their warlike neighbors, the Philistines, were active. After the defeat at Ebenezer they had still retained possession of some hill fortresses in the land of Israel, and now they established themselves in the very heart of the country. In facilities, arms, and equipments the Philistines had great advantage over Israel. During the long period of their oppressive rule they had endeavored to strengthen their power by forbidding the Israelites to practice the trade of smiths, lest they should make weapons of war. After the conclusion of peace the Hebrews had still resorted to the Philistine garrisons for such work as needed to be done. Controlled by love of ease and the abject spirit induced by long oppression, the men of Israel had, to a great extent, neglected to provide themselves with weapons of war. Bows and slings were used in warfare, and these the Israelites could obtain; but there were none among them, except Saul and his son Jonathan, who possessed a spear or a sword. {PP 616.2}

It was not until the second year of Saul's reign that an attempt was made to subdue the Philistines. The first blow was struck by Jonathan, the king's son, who attacked and overcame their garrison at Geba. The Philistines, exasperated by this defeat, made ready for a speedy attack upon Israel. Saul now caused war to be proclaimed by the sound of the trumpet throughout the land, calling upon all the men of war, including the tribes across the Jordan, to assemble at Gilgal. This summons was obeyed. {PP 616.3}

The Philistines had gathered an immense force at Michmash—"thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude." When the tidings reached Saul and his army at Gilgal, the people were appalled at thought of the mighty forces they would have to encounter in battle. They were not prepared to meet the enemy, and many were so terrified that they dared not come to the test of an encounter. Some crossed the Jordan, while others hid themselves in caves and pits and amid the rocks that abounded in that region. As the time for the encounter drew near, the number of desertions rapidly increased, and those who did not withdraw from the ranks were filled with foreboding and terror. {PP 617.1}

When Saul was first anointed king of Israel, he had received from Samuel explicit directions concerning the course to be pursued at this time. "Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal," said the prophet; "and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do." 1 Samuel 10:8. {PP 617.2}

Day after day Saul tarried, but without making decided efforts toward encouraging the people and inspiring confidence in God. Before the time appointed by the prophet had fully expired, he became impatient at the delay and allowed himself to be discouraged by the trying circumstances that surrounded him. Instead of faithfully seeking to prepare the people for the service that Samuel was coming to perform, he indulged in unbelief and foreboding. The work of seeking God by sacrifice was a most solemn and important work; and God required that His people should search their hearts and repent of their sins, that the offering might be made with acceptance before Him, and that His blessing might attend their efforts to conquer the enemy. But Saul had grown restless; and the people, instead of trusting in God for help, were looking to the king whom they had chosen, to lead and direct them. {PP 617.3}

Yet the Lord still cared for them and did not give them up to the disasters that would have come upon them if the frail arm of flesh had become their only support. He brought them into close places, that they might be convicted of the folly of depending on man, and that they might turn to Him as their only help. The time for the proving of Saul had come. He

was now to show whether or not he would depend on God and patiently wait according to His command, thus revealing himself as one whom God could trust in trying places as the ruler of His people, or whether he would be vacillating and unworthy of the sacred responsibility that had devolved upon him. Would the king whom Israel had chosen, listen to the Ruler of all kings? Would he turn the attention of his fainthearted soldiers to the One in whom is everlasting strength and deliverance? {PP 618.1}

With growing impatience he awaited the arrival of Samuel and attributed the confusion and distress and desertion of his army to the absence of the prophet. The appointed time came, but the man of God did not immediately appear. God's providence had detained His servant. But Saul's restless, impulsive spirit would no longer be restrained. Feeling that something must be done to calm the fears of the people, he determined to summon an assembly for religious service, and by sacrifice entreat the divine aid. God had directed that only those consecrated to the office should present sacrifices before Him. But Saul commanded, "Bring hither a burnt offering;" and, equipped as he was with armor and weapons of war, he approached the altar and offered sacrifice before God. {PP 618.2}

"And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him." Samuel saw at once that Saul had gone contrary to the express directions that had been given him. The Lord had spoken by His prophet that at this time He would reveal what Israel must do in this crisis. If Saul had fulfilled the conditions upon which divine help was promised, the Lord would have wrought a marvelous deliverance for Israel, with the few who were loyal to the king. But Saul was so well satisfied with himself and his work that he went out to meet the prophet as one who should be commended rather than disapproved. {PP 618.3}

Samuel's countenance was full of anxiety and trouble; but to his inquiry, "What hast thou done?" Saul offered excuses for his presumptuous act. He said: "I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. {PP 621.1}

"And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people. . . . And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin." {PP 621.2}

Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principle upon which the monarchy was founded must be maintained, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, if the will of the human and earthly were held in subjection to the will of God, He would continue to be the Ruler of Israel. So long as the king and the people would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long He could be their defense. But in Israel no monarchy could prosper that did not in all things acknowledge the supreme authority of God. {PP 621.3}

If Saul had shown a regard for the requirements of God in this time of trial, God could have worked His will through him. His failure now proved him unfit to be the vicegerent of God to His people. He would mislead Israel. His will, rather than the will of God, would be the controlling power. If Saul had been faithful, his kingdom would have been established forever; but since he had failed, the purpose of God must be accomplished by another. The government of Israel must be committed to one who would rule the people according to the will of Heaven. {PP 621.4}

We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honor His name, and bless His people. {PP 621.5}

Saul was in disfavor with God, and yet unwilling to humble his heart in penitence. What he lacked in real piety he would try to make up by his zeal in the forms of religion. Saul was not ignorant of Israel's defeat when the ark of God was brought into the camp by Hophni and Phinehas; and yet, knowing all this, he determined to send for the sacred chest and its attendant priest. Could he by this means inspire confidence in the people, he hoped to reassemble his scattered army and give battle to the Philistines. He would now dispense with Samuel's presence and support, and thus free him-

self from the prophet's unwelcome criticisms and reproofs. {PP 622.1}

The Holy Spirit had been granted to Saul to enlighten his understanding and soften his heart. He had received faithful instruction and reproof from the prophet of God. And yet how great was his perversity! The history of Israel's first king presents a sad example of the power of early wrong habits. In his youth Saul did not love and fear God; and that impetuous spirit, not early trained to submission, was ever ready to rebel against divine authority. Those who in their youth cherish a sacred regard for the will of God, and who faithfully perform the duties of their position, will be prepared for higher service in afterlife. But men cannot for years pervert the powers that God has given them, and then, when they choose to change, find these powers fresh and free for an entirely opposite course. {PP 622.2}

Saul's efforts to arouse the people proved unavailing. Finding his force reduced to six hundred men, he left Gilgal and retired to the fortress at Geba, lately taken from the Philistines. This stronghold was on the south side of a deep, rugged valley, or gorge, a few miles north of the site of Jerusalem. On the north side of the same valley, at Michmash, the Philistine force lay encamped while detachments of troops went out in different directions to ravage the country. {PP 622.3}

God had permitted matters to be thus brought to a crisis that He might rebuke the perversity of Saul and teach His people a lesson of humility and faith. Because of Saul's sin in his presumptuous offering, the Lord would not give him the honor of vanquishing the Philistines. Jonathan, the king's son, a man who feared the Lord, was chosen as the instrument to deliver Israel. Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy's camp. "It may be," he urged, "that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." {PP 623.1}

The armor-bearer, who also was a man of faith and prayer, encouraged the design, and together they withdrew from the camp, secretly, lest their purpose should be opposed. With earnest prayer to the Guide of their fathers, they agreed upon a sign by which they might determine how to proceed. Then passing down into the gorge separating the two armies, they silently threaded their way, under the shadow of the cliff, and partially concealed by the mounds and ridges of the valley. Approaching the Philistine fortress, they were revealed to the view of their enemies, who said, tauntingly, "Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves," then challenged them, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing," meaning that they would punish the two Israelites for their daring. This challenge was the token that Jonathan and his companion had agreed to accept as evidence that the Lord would prosper their undertaking. Passing now from the sight of the Philistines, and choosing a secret and difficult path, the warriors made their way to the summit of a cliff that had been deemed inaccessible, and was not very strongly guarded. Thus they penetrated the enemy's camp and slew the sentinels, who, overcome with surprise and fear, offered no resistance. {PP 623.2}

Angels of heaven shielded Jonathan and his attendant, angels fought by their side, and the Philistines fell before them. The earth trembled as though a great multitude with horsemen and chariots were approaching. Jonathan recognized the tokens of divine aid, and even the Philistines knew that God was working for the deliverance of Israel. Great fear seized upon the host, both in the field and in the garrison. In the confusion, mistaking their own soldiers for enemies, the Philistines began to slay one another {PP 623.3}

Soon the noise of the battle was heard in the camp of Israel. The king's sentinels reported that there was great confusion among the Philistines, and that their numbers were decreasing. Yet it was not known that any part of the Hebrew army had left the camp. Upon inquiry it was found that none were absent except Jonathan and his armor-bearer. But seeing that the Philistines were meeting with a repulse, Saul led his army to join the assault. The Hebrews who had deserted to the enemy now turned against them; great numbers also came out of their hiding places, and as the Philistines fled, discomfited, Saul's army committed terrible havoc upon the fugitives. {PP 624.1}

Determined to make the most of his advantage, the king rashly forbade his soldiers to partake of food for the entire day, enforcing his command by the solemn imprecation, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies." The victory had already been gained, without Saul's knowledge or co-operation, but he hoped to distinguish himself by the utter destruction of the vanquished army. The command to refrain from food was prompted by selfish ambition, and it showed the king to be indifferent to the needs of his people when these conflicted with his desire for self-exaltation. To confirm his prohibition by a solemn oath showed Saul to be both rash and profane. The very words of the curse give evidence that Saul's zeal was for himself, and not for the honor of God. He declared his object to be, not "that the Lord may be avenged on His enemies," but "that I may be avenged on mine enemies." {PP 624.2}

The prohibition resulted in leading the people to transgress the command of God. They had been engaged in warfare all day, and were faint for want of food; and as soon as the hours of restriction were over, they fell upon the spoil and devoured the flesh with the blood, thus violating the law that forbade the eating of blood. {PP 624.3}

During the day's battle Jonathan, who had not heard of the king's command, unwittingly offended by eating a little honey as he passed through a wood. Saul learned of this at evening. He had declared that the violation of his edict should be punished with death; and though Jonathan had not been guilty of a willful sin, though God had miraculously preserved his life and had wrought deliverance through him, the king declared that the sentence must be executed. To spare the life of his son would have been an acknowledgment on the part of Saul that he had sinned in making so rash a vow. This would have been humiliating to his pride. "God do so, and more also," was his terrible sentence: "thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." {PP 624.4}

Saul could not claim the honor of the victory, but he hoped to be honored for his zeal in maintaining the sacredness of his oath. Even at the sacrifice of his son, he would impress upon his subjects the fact that the royal authority must be maintained. At Gilgal, but a short time before, Saul had presumed to officiate as priest, contrary to the command of God. When reproved by Samuel, he had stubbornly justified himself. Now, when his own command was disobeyed--though the command was unreasonable and had been violated through ignorance--the king and father sentenced his son to death. {PP 625.1}

The people refused to allow the sentence to be executed. Braving the anger of the king, they declared, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." The proud monarch dared not disregard this unanimous verdict, and the life of Jonathan was preserved. {PP 625.2}

Saul could not but feel that his son was preferred before him, both by the people and by the Lord. Jonathan's deliverance was a severe reproof to the king's rashness. He felt a presentiment that his curses would return upon his own head. He did not longer continue the war with the Philistines, but returned to his home, moody and dissatisfied. {PP 625.3}

Those who are most ready to excuse or justify themselves in sin are often most severe in judging and condemning others. Many, like Saul, bring upon themselves the displeasure of God, but they reject counsel and despise reproof. Even when convinced that the Lord is not with them, they refuse to see in themselves the cause of their trouble. They cherish a proud, boastful spirit, while they indulge in cruel judgment or severe rebuke of others who are better than they. Well would it be for such self-constituted judges to ponder those words of Christ: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2. {PP 625.4}

Often those who are seeking to exalt themselves are brought into positions where their true character is revealed. So it was in the case of Saul. His own course convinced the people that kingly honor and authority were dearer to him than justice, mercy, or benevolence. Thus the people were led to see their error in rejecting the government that God had given them. They had exchanged the pious prophet, whose prayers had brought down blessings, for a king who in his blind zeal had prayed for a curse upon them. {PP 625.5}

Had not the men of Israel interposed to save the life of Jonathan, their deliverer would have perished by the king's decree. With what misgivings must that people afterward have followed Saul's guidance! How bitter the thought that he had been placed upon the throne by their own act! The Lord bears long with the waywardness of men, and to all He grants opportunity to see and forsake their sins; but while He may seem to prosper those who disregard His will and despise His warnings, He will, in His own time, surely make manifest their folly. {PP 626.1}

Lift Him Up, Chapter 8, page 235

“Lift Him Up as the Crucified One”

August 9th

Conqueror Over the Power of Darkness

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6:14. {LHU 235.1}

Christ left His position in the heavenly courts, and came to this earth to live the life of human beings. This sacrifice He made in order to show that Satan's charge against God is false--that it is possible for man to obey the laws of God's kingdom. Equal with the Father, honored and adored by the angels, in our behalf Christ humbled Himself, and came to this earth to live a life of lowliness and poverty--to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yet the stamp of divinity was upon His humanity. He came as a divine Teacher, to uplift human beings, to increase their physical, mental, and spiritual efficiency. {LHU 235.2}

There is no one who can explain the mystery of the incarnation of Christ. Yet we know that He came to this earth and lived as a man among men. The man Christ Jesus was not the Lord God Almighty, yet Christ and the Father are one. The Deity did not sink under the agonizing torture of Calvary, yet it is nonetheless true that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {LHU 235.3}

In every possible way Satan sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from the work He had come to this earth to do. From the desert to Calvary the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more merciless it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path (The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 5, p. 1129, 1130). {LHU 235.4}

Christ was crucified, and in His death the powers of hell seemed to prevail. But even when on the cross the Saviour cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was conqueror over the power of darkness. When the words, "It is finished," came from His pale, trembling lips, darkness like the darkness of midnight hid His dying agony from the eyes of the spectators. Through long hours of agony He had been gazed upon by the jesting multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God. {LHU 235.5}

At His death, there was a violent earthquake. The people were shaken together in heaps. The wildest confusion and consternation ensued. . . . Creation seemed to be shivering to atoms. It was as if nature itself were protesting against the murder of the Son of God. {LHU 235.6}

Christ's death on the cross paid the ransom for every human being. All may overcome, because Christ has made an atonement for the sins of the whole world. To all He offers the power of redeeming grace (manuscript 140, 1903). {LHU 235.7}

In Heavenly Places, Chapter 262, page 268**“No Exemption From Sorrow”****September 25th**

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10. {HP 268.1}

Christianity promises no exemption from sorrow. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Faith is needed, strong, trusting faith, which believes that God will bring His children into no temptation greater than they are able to bear. What such faith has power to do is told by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. Speaking of those who in the face of persecution and death had maintained an unshaken trust in God, he says: {HP 268.2}

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Hebrews 11:33-37). {HP 268.3}

In this world these heroes of faith were counted unworthy of life; but in heaven they are enrolled as sons of God, worthy of the highest honor. "They shall walk with me in white," Christ declares: "for they are worthy" (Revelation 3:4). In the courts of heaven there awaits them an "eternal weight of glory." "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1). "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18). {HP 268.4}



The Seventh-Day Resource Centre Hamilton, Victoria, Australia
<http://seventhdayresourcecentre.org>