

WHY GOD PERMITS TRIALS

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Trials & The Perilous Times to Come - AA 524-525

Looking forward with prophetic vision to the perilous times into which the church of Christ was to enter, the apostle exhorted the believers to steadfastness in the face of trial and suffering. "Beloved," he wrote, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you."

Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their weaknesses better than they themselves can know them. He sees that some have qualifications which, if rightly directed, could be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these souls into different positions and varied circumstances, that they may discover the defects that are concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to overcome these defects and to fit themselves for service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to burn, that they may be purified.

God's care for His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon His children but such as is essential for their present and eternal good. He will purify His church, even as Christ purified the temple during His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon His people in test and trial comes that they may gain deeper piety and greater strength to carry forward the triumphs of the cross.

There had been a time in Peter's experience when he was unwilling to see the cross in the work of Christ. When the Saviour made known to the disciples His impending sufferings and death, Peter exclaimed, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Matthew 16:22. Self-pity, which shrank from fellowship with Christ in suffering, prompted Peter's remonstrance. It was to the disciple a bitter lesson, and one which he learned but slowly, that the path of Christ on earth lay through agony and humiliation. But in the heat of the furnace fire he was to learn its lesson. Now, when his once active form was bowed with the burden of years and labors, he could write, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of

Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." - AA 524-525

**"Bring Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us From the Evil One."
- ST Nov. 4, 1903**

This prayer is itself a promise. If we commit ourselves to God, we have the assurance, He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may leave Him, and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice. The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend. Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." - ST November 4, 1903

Trials, The Appointed Means of God - 3T 115

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," says Christ; but in Me ye shall have peace. The trials to which Christians are subjected in sorrow, adversity, and reproach are the means appointed of God to separate the chaff from the wheat. Our pride, selfishness, evil passions, and love of worldly pleasure must all be overcome; therefore God sends us afflictions to test and prove us, and show us that these evils exist in our characters. We must overcome through His strength and grace, that we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. "For our light affliction," says Paul, "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." Afflictions, crosses,

temptations, adversity, and our varied trials are God's workmen to refine us, sanctify us, and fit us for the heavenly garner. - 3T 115

The Discipline of Trial - MH 470-473

The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. To live such a life, to exert such an influence, costs at every step effort, self-sacrifice, discipline. It is because they do not understand this that many are so easily discouraged in the Christian life. Many who sincerely consecrate their lives to God's service are surprised and disappointed to find themselves, as never before, confronted by obstacles and beset by trials and perplexities. They pray for Christlikeness of character, for a fitness for the Lord's work, and they are placed in circumstances that seem to call forth all the evil of their nature. Faults are revealed of which they did not even suspect the existence. Like Israel of old they question, "If God is leading us, why do all these things come upon us?"

It is because God is leading them that these things come upon them. Trials and obstacles are the Lord's chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have powers and susceptibilities which, rightly directed, might be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to assail them that they may be purified.

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction to prove what temper they are of and whether they can be fashioned for His work.

The potter takes the clay and molds it according to his will. He kneads it and works it. He tears it apart and presses it together. He wets it and then dries it. He lets it lie for a while without touching it. When it is perfectly pliable, he continues the work of making of it a vessel. He forms it into shape and on the wheel trims and polishes it. He

dries it in the sun and bakes it in the oven. Thus it becomes a vessel fit for use. So the great Master Worker desires to mold and fashion us. And as the clay is in the hands of the potter, so are we to be in His hands. We are not to try to do the work of the potter. Our part is to yield ourselves to be molded by the Master Worker.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

In the full light of day, and in hearing of the music of other voices, the caged bird will not sing the song that his master seeks to teach him. He learns a snatch of this, a trill of that, but never a separate and entire melody. But the master covers the cage, and places it where the bird will listen to the one song he is to sing. In the dark, he tries and tries again to sing that song until it is learned, and he breaks forth in perfect melody. Then the bird is brought forth, and ever after he can sing that song in the light. Thus God deals with His children. He has a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the shadows of affliction we can sing it ever afterward. - MH 470-472

Faith and Courage - 7T 210-214

The Lord directed Moses to recount to the children of Israel His dealings with them in their deliverance from Egypt and their wonderful preservation in the wilderness. He was to call to mind their unbelief and murmuring when brought into trial, and the Lord’s great mercy and loving-kindness, which had never forsaken them. This would stimulate their faith and strengthen their courage. While they would be led to realize their own sin and weakness, they would realize also that God was their righteousness and strength.

It is just as essential that the people of God in this day should bear in mind how and when they have been tested, and where their faith has failed; where they have imperiled His cause by their unbelief and also by their self-confidence. God’s mercy, His sustaining providence, His never-to-be-forgotten deliverances, are to be recounted, step by step. As God’s people thus review the past, they should see that the Lord is ever repeating His dealings. They should understand the warnings given, and should beware not to repeat their mistakes. Renouncing all self-dependence, they are to trust in Him to save them from again dishonoring His name. In every victory that Satan gains, souls are imperiled. Some become the subjects of his temptations, never to recover themselves.

Then let those who have made mistakes walk carefully, at every step praying: “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.” Psalm 17:5.

God sends trials to prove who will stand faithful under temptation. He brings all into trying positions to see if they will trust in a power out of and above themselves. Everyone has undiscovered traits of character that must come to light through trial. God allows those who are self-sufficient to be sorely tempted, that they may understand their helplessness.

When trials come to us; when we can see before us, not an increase of prosperity, but a pressure necessitating sacrifice on the part of all, how shall we receive Satan's insinuation that we are to have a very hard time? If we listen to his suggestions, unbelief in God will spring up. At such a time we should remember that God has always had a care for His institutions. We should look at the work He has done, the reforms He has wrought. We should gather up the evidences of Heaven's blessings, the tokens for good, saying: Lord, we believe in Thee, in Thy servants, and in Thy work. We will trust in Thee. The publishing house is Thine own instrumentality, and we will not fail or be discouraged. Thou hast honored us by connecting us with Thy center. We will keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. We will act our part by being true to the work of God.”

If we lack faith where we are when difficulties present themselves we would lack faith in any place...

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial proves that the Lord Jesus sees in us something very precious, which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name He would not spend time in refining us. We do not take special pains in pruning brambles. Christ does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He tests.

The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction in order that He may see what temper they are of and whether He can mold and fashion them for His work. - 7T 210-214

God Permits Trails - PP 129-130

God permits trials to assail His people, that by their constancy and obedience they themselves may be spiritually enriched, and that their example may be a source of strength to others. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord,

thoughts of peace, and not of evil.” Jeremiah 29:11. The very trials that task our faith most severely and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us closer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at His feet and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange.

God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heat of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test; He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of His love. It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him; for He is their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is attained. They are educated, trained, and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them. When God calls them to action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite with them in the work to be accomplished on the earth. - PP 129-130

The Furnace of Fire Is Needful - GC 621

The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord’s eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God’s love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected. - GC 621

Life Is Disciplinary - 5T 344-345

Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the living Vine is flowing to the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart; and in the day of final accounts we shall

see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life. If well endured, they develop the Christlike in the character and distinguish the Christian from the worldling.

There is a high standard to which we are to attain if we would be children of God, noble, pure, holy, and undefiled; and a pruning process is necessary if we would reach this standard. How would this pruning be accomplished if there were no difficulties to meet, no obstacles to surmount, nothing to call out patience and endurance? These trials are not the smallest blessings in our experience. They are designed to nerve us to determination to succeed. We are to use them as God's means to gain decided victories over self instead of allowing them to hinder, oppress, and destroy us.

Character will be tested. Christ will be revealed in us if we are indeed branches of the living Vine. We shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without continual help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Each must win his own way through struggles and discouragements. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory. No one, not even God, can carry us to heaven unless we make the necessary effort on our part. We must put features of beauty into our lives. We must expel the unlovely natural traits that make us unlike Jesus. While God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we must work in harmony with Him. The religion of Christ transforms the heart. It makes the worldly-minded man heavenly-minded. Under its influence the selfish man becomes unselfish because this is the character of Christ. The dishonest, scheming man becomes upright, so that it is second nature to him to do unto others as he would have others do unto him. The profligate is changed from impurity to purity. He forms correct habits, for the gospel of Christ has become to him a savor of life unto life. - 5T 344-345

The Testing Process - 4T 84-89

Our heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and He knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have susceptibilities and powers, which, directed in the right channel, might be used to His glory to aid in the advancement of His work. He puts these persons on trial and in His wise providence

brings them into different positions and under a variety of circumstances, testing them that they may reveal what is in their hearts and the weak points in their characters which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunities to correct these weaknesses, to polish off the rough corners of their natures, and to fit themselves for His service, that when He calls them to action they will be ready, and that angels of heaven may unite their labor with human effort in the work that must be done upon the earth. To men whom God designs shall fill responsible positions, He in mercy reveals their hidden defects, that they may look within and examine critically the complicated emotions and exercises of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong; thus they may modify their dispositions and refine their manners. The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong. God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified. "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3:2-3.

The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble? If prosperity or adversity discover falseness, pride, or selfishness in our hearts, what shall we do when God tries every man's work as by fire, and lays bare the secrets of all hearts?

True grace is willing to be tried; if we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is serious indeed. God is the refiner and purifier of souls; in the heat of the furnace the dross is separated forever from the true silver and gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test. He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal that it may reflect the radiance of His divine love.

God brings His people near Him by close, testing trials, by showing them their own weakness and inability, and by teaching them to lean upon Him as their only help and safeguard. Then His object is accomplished. They are prepared to be used in every emergency, to fill important positions of trust, and to accomplish the grand purposes

for which their powers were given them. God takes men upon trial; He proves them on the right hand and on the left, and thus they are educated, trained, disciplined. Jesus, our Redeemer, man's representative and head, endured this testing process. He suffered more than we can be called upon to suffer. He bore our infirmities and was in all points tempted as we are. He did not suffer thus on His own account, but because of our sins; and now, relying on the merits of our Overcomer, we may become victors in His name.

God's work of refining and purifying must go on until His servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that, when called into active service, their eye will be single to His glory. He will then accept their efforts; they will not move rashly, from impulse; they will not rush on and imperil the Lord's cause, being slaves to temptations and passions and followers of their own carnal minds set on fire by Satan. Oh, how fearfully is the cause of God marred by man's perverse will and unsubdued temper! How much suffering he brings upon himself by following his own headstrong passions! God brings men over the ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility and a transformation of character bring them into harmony with Christ and the spirit of heaven, and they are victors over themselves.

God has called men from different states, and has been testing and proving them to see what characters they would develop, to see if they could be trusted to keep the fort at ----, and to see whether or not they would supply the deficiencies of the men already there, and, seeing the failures that these men have made, would shun the example of those who are not fit to engage in the most sacred work of God. He has followed men at ---- with continual warnings, reproof, and counsel. He has poured great light about those who officiate in His cause there, that the way may be plain before them. But if they prefer to follow after their own wisdom, scorning the light, as did Saul, they will surely go astray and involve the cause in perplexity. Light and darkness have been set before them, but they have too often chosen the darkness.

The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal. God signified that He wanted men at the great heart of the work to correct the state of things existing there and to stand like faithful sentinels at their post of duty. He has given them light at every point, to instruct, encourage, and confirm them, as the case required. But notwithstanding all this, those who should be faithful and true, fervent in Christian zeal, of gracious temper, knowing and loving Jesus earnestly, are found aiding the enemy to weaken and discourage those whom God is using to build up the work. The

term “lukewarm” is applicable to this class. They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith.

The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease. They are neither cold nor hot; they occupy a neutral position, and at the same time flatter themselves that they are in need of nothing. The True Witness hates this lukewarmness. He loathes the indifference of this class of persons. Said He: “I would thou wert cold or hot.” Like lukewarm water, they are nauseous to His taste. They are neither unconcerned nor selfishly stubborn. They do not engage thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests; but they hold aloof and are ready to leave their posts when their worldly personal interests demand it. The internal work of grace is wanting in their hearts; of such it is said: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

Faith and love are the true riches, the pure gold which the True Witness counsels the lukewarm to buy. However rich we may be in earthly treasure, all our wealth will not enable us to buy the precious remedies that cure the disease of the soul called lukewarmness. Intellect and earthly riches were powerless to remove the defects of the Laodicean church, or to remedy their deplorable condition. They were blind, yet felt that they were well off. The Spirit of God did not illumine their minds, and they did not perceive their sinfulness; therefore they did not feel the necessity of help.

To be without the graces of the Spirit of God is sad indeed; but it is a more terrible condition to be thus destitute of spirituality and of Christ, and yet try to justify ourselves by telling those who are alarmed for us that we need not their fears and pity. Fearful is the power of self-deception on the human mind! What blindness! setting light for darkness and darkness for light! The True Witness counsels us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eyesalve. The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His

church eyes which He requires them to anoint with wisdom, that they may see clearly; but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could; for they would not have their deeds come to the light, lest they should be reprov'd. The divine eyesalve will impart clearness to the understanding. Christ is the depository of all graces. He says: "Buy of Me." - 4T 84-89

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 5:10 - MB 29-31

Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches, and of having a life free from trial, but He presents to them the privilege of walking with their Master in the paths of self-denial and reproach, because the world knows them not.

He who came to redeem the lost world was opposed by the united forces of the adversaries of God and man. In an un pitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. Though His every word and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity. So it is with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.

As men seek to come into harmony with God, they will find that the offense of the cross has not ceased. Principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places are arrayed against all who yield obedience to the law of heaven. Therefore, so far from causing grief, persecution should bring joy to the disciples of Christ, for it is an evidence that they are following in the steps of their Master.

While the Lord has not promised His people exemption from trials, He has promised that which is far better. He has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Deuteronomy 33:25; 2 Corinthians 12:9. If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in

Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet.

In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They revealed in their steadfast faith a mightier One than Satan. Satan could torture and kill the body, but he could not touch the life that was hid with Christ in God. He could incarcerate in prison walls, but he could not bind the spirit. They could look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17.

Through trials and persecution, the glory—character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ’s sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the triumph of the people of God. He says, “I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory, ... stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.” Revelation 15:2, 3; 7:14, 15. - MB 29-31

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.” - Matthew 5:11 - MB
31-35**

Ever since his fall, Satan has worked by means of deception. As he has misrepresented God, so, through his agents, he misrepresents the children of God. The Saviour says, “The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me.” Psalm 69:9. In like manner they fall upon His disciples.

There was never one who walked among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of man. He was derided and mocked because of His unswerving obedience to the principles of God's holy law. They hated Him without a cause. Yet He stood calmly before His enemies, declaring that reproach is a part of the Christian's legacy, counseling His followers how to meet the arrows of malice, bidding them not to faint under persecution.

While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God's keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as "seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27); looking "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Christ is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misrepresented by men. His children can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels.

"When men shall revile you, and persecute you," said Jesus, "rejoice, and be exceeding glad." And He pointed His hearers to the prophets who had spoken in the name of the Lord, as "an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." James 5:10. Abel, the very first Christian of Adam's children, died a martyr. Enoch walked with God, and the world knew him not. Noah was mocked as a fanatic and an alarmist. "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." Hebrews 11:36, 35.

In every age God's chosen messengers have been reviled and persecuted, yet through their affliction the knowledge of God has been spread abroad. Every disciple of Christ is to step into the ranks and carry forward the same work, knowing that its foes can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God means that truth shall be brought to the front and become the subject of examination and discussion, even through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God's means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.

How often this result has been seen in the history of God's messengers! When the noble and eloquent Stephen was stoned to death at the instigation of the Sanhedrin council, there was no loss to the cause of the gospel. The light of heaven that glorified his face, the divine compassion breathed in his dying prayer, were as a sharp arrow of conviction to the bigoted Sanhedrist who stood by, and Saul, the persecuting Pharisee, became a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. And long afterward Paul the aged wrote from his prison house at Rome: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife: ... not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.... Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached." Philippians 1:15-18. Through Paul's imprisonment the gospel was spread abroad, and souls were won for Christ in the very palace of the Caesars. By the efforts of Satan to destroy it, the "incorruptible" seed of the word of God, "which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1:23), is sown in the hearts of men; through the reproach and persecution of His children the name of Christ is magnified and souls are saved.

Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach. While the people are looking for earthly good, Jesus points them to a heavenly reward. But He does not place it all in the future life; it begins here. The Lord appeared of old time to Abraham and said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Genesis 15:1. This is the reward of all who follow Christ. Jehovah Immanuel—He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:3, 9)—to be brought into sympathy with Him, to know Him, to possess Him, as the heart opens more and more to receive His attributes; to know His love and power, to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, to comprehend more and more "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18, 19)—"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17.

It was this joy that filled the hearts of Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. Christ was beside them there, and the light of His presence irradiated the gloom with the glory of the courts above. From Rome, Paul wrote, unmindful of his fetters as he saw the spread of the gospel, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Philippians 1:18. And the very words of Christ upon the mount are re-echoed in Paul's message to the Philippian church, in

the midst of their persecutions, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”
Philippians 4:4. - MB 31-35

The Lord Permits Trials - COL 174-175

Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan’s power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. When His purpose in the affliction is accomplished, “He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” Psalm 37:6. - COL 174-175

A Lesson of Wonderful Strength & Comfort - AA 574-576

In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plottings of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty. Often the gospel laborer carries on his work amid storms of persecution, bitter opposition, and unjust reproach. At such times let him remember that the experience to be gained in the furnace of trial and affliction is worth all the pain it costs. Thus God brings His children near to Him, that He may show them their weakness and His strength. He teaches them to lean on Him. Thus He prepares them to meet emergencies, to fill positions of trust, and to accomplish the great purpose for which their powers were given them.

In all ages God’s appointed witnesses have exposed themselves to reproach and persecution for the truth’s sake. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, the chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true to his allegiance to heaven. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions, and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends; yet he maintained his integrity. Jeremiah could not be deterred from speaking the words that God had given him to speak; and his testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit. Stephen was stoned because he preached Christ and Him crucified. Paul

was imprisoned, beaten with rods, stoned, and finally put to death because he was a faithful messenger for God to the Gentiles. And John was banished to the Isle of Patmos “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

These examples of human steadfastness bear witness to the faithfulness of God’s promises—of His abiding presence and sustaining grace. They testify to the power of faith to withstand the powers of the world. It is the work of faith to rest in God in the darkest hour, to feel, however sorely tried and tempest-tossed, that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time to estimate aright the worth of the eternal riches.

Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches, of living a life free from trial. Instead He calls upon them to follow Him in the path of self-denial and reproach. He who came to redeem the world was opposed by the united forces of evil. In an unpitiful confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. His every word and act revealed divine compassion, and His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility.

So it will be with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.

In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They bore witness to the power of One mightier than Satan. Wicked men may torture and kill the body, but they cannot touch the life that is hid with Christ in God. They can incarcerate men and women in prison walls, but they cannot bind the spirit.

Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The believers in Christ, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. On earth they walk in narrow paths; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but thus they learn the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they can look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18. - AA 574-576

No Fault Of Their Own - CG 445

There are those who are pure-minded and conscientious who are sufferers from different causes over which they have no control. - CG 445

Jesus Watches the Test - PP 129-130

The Lord in His providence had brought this trial upon Abraham to teach him lessons of submission, patience, and faith—lessons that were to be placed on record for the benefit of all who should afterward be called to endure affliction. God leads His children by a way that they know not, but He does not forget or cast off those who put their trust in Him. He permitted affliction to come upon Job, but He did not forsake him. He allowed the beloved John to be exiled to lonely Patmos, but the Son of God met him there, and his vision was filled with scenes of immortal glory. God permits trials to assail His people, that by their constancy and obedience they themselves may be spiritually enriched, and that their example may be a source of strength to others. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil.” Jeremiah 29:11. The very trials that task our faith most severely and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us closer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at His feet and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange.

God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heat of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test; He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of His love. It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him; for He is their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is attained. They are educated, trained, and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them. When God calls them to action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite with them in the work to be accomplished on the earth. - PP 129-130

The Reason For Our Suffering - COL 388

Christ permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character—compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God. By rejecting it, we reject His instruction, and choose eternal separation from His presence. - COL 388

“Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Matthew 6:13, R.V. - MB 116-119

Temptation is enticement to sin, and this does not proceed from God, but from Satan and from the evil of our own hearts. “God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man.” James 1:13, R.V.

Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our characters may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own. In the symbolic prophecy of Zechariah, Satan is seen standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord, accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in filthy garments, and resisting the work that the Angel desires to do for him. This represents the attitude of Satan toward every soul whom Christ is seeking to draw unto Himself. The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God. But “the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” And unto Joshua He said, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” Zechariah 3:1-4.

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.

But while we are not to be dismayed by trial, bitter though it be, we should pray that God will not permit us to be brought where we shall be drawn away by the desires of our own evil hearts. In offering the prayer that Christ has given, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us; we shall listen to His voice, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isaiah 30:21.

It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us.

The prayer, "Bring us not into temptation," is itself a promise. If we commit ourselves to God we have the assurance, He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.

Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice. The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend.

To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:31, 32. Thank God, we are not left alone. He who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will not desert us in the battle with the adversary of God and man. "Behold," He says, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke 10:19.

Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Proverbs 18:10.
- MB 116-119

ST February 5, 1902 - Through Trial to Perfect Trust

"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3:3. The refining process is hard for human nature to endure; but only by it can the dross be purged from the character. In the furnace of trial we are purified from the dross that prevents us from reflecting the image of Christ. God measures every trial; He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul.

Through trial God leads His children to perfect trust. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," Christ says; "but in Me ye shall have peace." It is through much tribulation that we are to enter the kingdom of God. The followers of Christ will often be sorely tried and afflicted. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he was determined to preserve his virtue and integrity. David, God's chosen messenger, was hunted like a beast of prey by wicked enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he would not yield his allegiance to God. Jeremiah spoke the word that God gave him, and his plain testimony so enraged the king and the princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit. Stephen was stoned for preaching Christ and Him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, and finally put to death, because he obeyed Christ's command to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. John, the beloved disciple, was banished to the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

No cross, no crown. How can we be strong in the Lord without trial? To have physical strength, we must have exercise. To have strong faith, we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be tried. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience, and advances us in the work of character building. Our Saviour was tried in every way, yet He triumphed in God constantly. It is our privilege under all circumstances to be strong in the strength of God, and to glory in the cross of Christ.

Through affliction God reveals to us the plague-spots in our characters, that by His grace we may overcome our faults. Unknown chapters in regard to ourselves are opened to us, and the test comes, whether we will accept the reproof and the counsel of

God. When brought into trial, we are not to fret and worry. We should not rebel, or worry ourselves out of the hand of Christ. We are to humble the soul before God. The ways of the Lord are obscure to him who desires to see things in a light pleasing to himself. They appear dark and joyless to our human nature. But God's ways are ways of mercy, and the end is salvation. Elijah knew not what he was doing when in the desert he said that he had had enough of life, and prayed that he might die. The Lord in His mercy did not take him at his word. There was yet a great work for Elijah to do; and when his work was done, he was not to perish in discouragement and solitude in the wilderness. Not for him the descent into the dust of earth, but the ascent in glory, with the convoy of celestial chariots to the throne on high.

Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." Lament. 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him.

The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.

But when tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob. We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending,—the Angel of the covenant; and, weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him.

"Happy is the man whom God correcteth.... He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Job 5:17-19. To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealings of His presence.

Each fiery trial is God's agent for our refining. Each is fitting us for our work as co-laborers with Him. "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 Cor. 4:17-18. - ST February 5, 1902

RH April 10, 1894 - The Meaning of Trials - 1 / 2

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Mal. 3:1-4.

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set his hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to his will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. God's work of refining and purifying the soul must go on until his servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that when called into active service, they may have an eye single to the glory of God. Then they will not move rashly from impulse, and imperil the Lord's cause because they are slaves to temptation and passion, because they follow their carnal desires; but they will move from principle and in view of the glory of God. The Lord brings his children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven.

The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. God permits the fire of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, in order that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. God is the refiner and purifier of

souls. He places us in the heat of the furnace, that the dross may be forever separated from the true gold of Christian character. Jesus watches the test. He knows just what fire of temptation and trial is needed to purify the precious metal, in order that the radiance of divine love may be reflected.

It is by close, testing trials that God brings his people near to himself; for in trial and temptation he discovers to them their weakness, and teaches them to lean upon him as their only help and safeguard. When this result is attained, his object is accomplished, and his tried servants are prepared to be used in every emergency, to fill important positions of trust, and to accomplish the grand purposes for which their powers were given them. God takes men upon trial, and he proves them upon the right hand and upon the left, until they are educated, trained, and disciplined for his use.

Trials will come upon us that are originated by the prince of evil. The enemy will contend for the life or the usefulness of the servants of God, and will seek to mar their peace as long as they remain in the world. But his power is limited. He may cause the furnace to be heated, but Jesus and holy angels watch the precious ore; and to the trusting Christian, grace will be found sufficient, and nothing but the worthless dross will be consumed. The fire kindled by the enemy can have no power to destroy the true gold. At times the powers of darkness gather about the soul and shut Jesus from our sight, and we wait in sorrow and amazement until the cloud passes over. While under the trial, these seasons are terrible. Hope seems to fail, and despair seizes upon us. But in these dreadful hours we must learn to trust, to depend wholly upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, and cast our souls in their helplessness and unworthiness upon him who is mighty to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him. We shall never perish while we do this, never.

We need not be astonished at trial. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Jesus says: "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." There is a constant tendency among the trees of the Lord to be more profuse in foliage than in fruit. Just as the strength and nourishment of the grape-vine are taken up in abundant foliage, and the fruit is not brought to perfection unless the vine is pruned, so the strength of the Christian will fail of its true end, unless the heavenly husbandman prunes away the useless growth. In

prosperity the followers of Jesus often turn their thoughts and energies toward gratifying themselves, to securing worldly treasure, to the enjoyment of ease and pleasure and luxury, and they bring forth little fruit to the glory of God; then the heavenly husbandman, in order to promote the fruitfulness of the branches, comes with the pruning-knife of disappointment, loss, or bereavement, and cuts away the hindering growth.

One evening a gentleman who was much depressed because of deep affliction, was walking in a garden, where he observed a pomegranate-tree nearly cut through the stem. Greatly wondering, he asked the gardener why the tree was in this condition, and he received an answer that explained to his satisfaction the wounds of his own bleeding heart. "Sir," said the gardener, "this tree used to shoot out so strong that it bore nothing but leaves. I was obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, it began to bear fruit."

Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good. Every blow that destroys an idol, every providence that weakens our hold upon earth and fastens our affections more firmly upon God, is a blessing. The pruning may be painful for a time, but afterward it "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." We should receive with gratitude whatever will quicken the conscience, elevate the thoughts, and ennoble the life. The fruitless branches are cut off and cast into the fire. Let us be thankful that through painful pruning, we may retain a connection with the living Vine; for if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him. The very trial that taxes our faith the most severely and makes it seem as though God had forsaken us, is to lead us more closely to him, that we may lay all our burdens at the feet of Christ, and experience the peace which he will give us in exchange. Let no Christian feel that he is forsaken when the hour of trial comes upon him. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father's notice. God loves and cares for the feeblest of his creatures, and we cannot dishonor him more than by doubting his love to us. O let us cultivate that living faith that will trust him in the hour of darkness and trial! Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry men through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial, and the form of the Fourth will be with them in the furnace, however fierce its heat; and they will come forth from its flame with not even the smell of the fire on their garments.

Joseph was sold into Egypt. He was put into prison. The enemy strove to overwhelm him in darkness. The darkness was so great that it seemed every ray of hope was extinguished; but his faith took hold on God, and it was rewarded. God

brought him out of the dungeon, and made him a light to the world. Our heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and he knows their characters better than they do themselves. He sees that some have capabilities which are not directed in the right way, but that if they could be turned into the right channel, they would bring glory to his name by advancing the cause of truth in the world. He places these persons on trial, and in his wise providence brings them into different positions, into a variety of circumstances, where they are tested in order that they may reveal what is in their hearts and make manifest the weak points of their characters, which have been hidden from their own eyes. God gives them opportunities to correct these defects, to polish off the rough corners of their natures, and to fit themselves for his service. If they do this work, then when he calls them into active service, they are ready so that the angels of heaven co-operate with them in their labors, and the purpose is fulfilled for which God called them to his service.

It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong, and modify their dispositions, and refine their manners. God would have his servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, he permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified. The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. Then as we pass through trial, as the fire of affliction kindles upon us, shall we not keep our eyes fixed upon the things that are unseen, on the eternal inheritance, the immortal life, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? and while we do this, the fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine. - RH April 10, 1894

RH April 17, 1894 - The Meaning of Trials - 2 / 2

This world is not the Christian's heaven. It is the place in which to fit up for heaven. It is the scene of our life-battles, our conflicts and sorrows. While here we must, if we would be successful, have a firm grasp of the better world, where, when the warfare is ended, will be found peace and everlasting joy.

Through all our trials, which have never been fully revealed to others, we have had an unfailing Friend, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." While upon the earth, Jesus was

ever touched with human woe, and although he is now ascended to his Father, and is adored by angels who swiftly speed to obey his commands, yet his heart, which loved, pitied, and sympathized with men, knows no change. It remains a heart of unchangeable tenderness still. "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are." Jesus is acquainted with all our trials, and he does not leave us to struggle alone with temptations, to battle alone with sin, and to be finally crushed with burden and sorrow. Through his angels he whispers to you, "Fear not; for I am with thee." "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." "I know your sorrows; I have endured them. I am acquainted with your struggles; I have experienced them. I know your temptations; I have encountered them. I have seen your tears; I also have wept. Your earthly hopes are crushed, but let the eye of faith be uplifted, and penetrate the vail, and there anchor your hopes. The everlasting assurance shall be yours that you have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

God has always tried his people in the furnace of affliction, in order to prove them firm and true, to purge from them all dross and unrighteousness. It was after Abraham and his son Isaac had borne the severest test that could be brought upon them, that God spoke through his angel to Abraham, and said: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

The work of pruning and purifying the people of God for heaven is a great work, and it will not be accomplished without great suffering on the part of the servants of God, because it will cost them something to bring their wills into harmony with the will of Christ. We must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross, and we are purified so that we reflect the divine image. Those who follow inclination, and judge from appearances, are not good judges of what God is doing. They are filled with discontent. They see failure where there is indeed triumph, a great loss where there is only gain; and like Jacob, they are ready to exclaim, when trial comes upon them, "All these things are against me!" when the fact is, that the very things of which they complained, were working for their good.

"No cross, no crown." One cannot be strong in the Lord and never experience trial. To have strength, we must have exercise. To have strong faith we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be called forth. Just before his martyrdom, the apostle Paul said to Timothy: "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. Our Saviour was tried in every possible way, and yet he triumphed

continually in God. It is our privilege under all circumstances to be strong in the strength of God and to glory in the cross of Christ.

Every follower of Christ will have a cross to bear; and when he takes it up resolutely, though in weakness and trembling, he will find that that which seemed so terrible to him is a source of strength and blessing and courage. It will be a staff to him to help him on in his weary pilgrimage through this earth. Then shall the professed follower of Christ drop his cross, and seek to please those who are deriding his Lord? Shall he, for fear he will not receive honor of men, reject and despise the cross of Christ?

What if you do suffer, dear fellow-Christian? The Master of the house suffered before you. Jesus, our Redeemer, representative and head, endured the testing process. He suffered more than we can be called upon to suffer. He bore our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. He did not suffer thus on his own account, but because of our sins, that we, relying on the merits of our Overcomer, might be victorious in his name. Christ was the exalted and glorious commander of heaven, before whom the angelic hosts bowed in adoration, yet he condescended to give up his glory that he had with the Father, that he might save a fallen race; and shall we, in our turn, refuse to deny ourselves for his sake and the gospel's? Let the words of Paul be the language of our hearts: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Christ requires all. His sacrifice was too great, too dear, to make it possible that we should give less than all, and be accepted. Our holy faith cries out, Separation. We should not be conformed to the world, or to dead, heartless professors. The Scripture says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The way to heaven is a self-denying way. But when you think the way is too strait, and there is too much self-denial in the narrow path; when you say, How hard to give up all, ask yourselves the question, What did Christ give up for me? This question puts anything that we might call self-denial in the shade. Behold him in the garden of Gethsemane. Look upon the great drops of blood that are forcing themselves from his pores while he is bearing the inexpressible agony of soul. Look upon him in the judgment hall while he is derided, mocked, and insulted by the infuriated mob. Behold him clothed in that old purple robe, and hear the coarse jest and cruel mocking. See them place the crown of thorns on that noble brow, and smite him with a reed, causing the thorns to penetrate his holy temples, so that the blood-drops trickle down his face and fall upon the ground. Hear the murderous throng eagerly crying for the blood of the Son of God. He is delivered

into their hands, and pale, and weak, and fainting, he is led away to the hill of crucifixion. They stretch his form upon the cross, and drive the nails through his tender hands and feet. Behold him hanging upon the cross through dreadful hours of agony until angels veil their faces from the scene, and the sun hides his light, refusing to shine upon the dreadful sight. Think of these things, and then ask, Is the way too strait?

O that every one might realize that Jesus has something in store for him vastly better than that which he would choose for himself! Would that all might come to understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the blessedness of righteousness! Would that all might see how powerless is all effort to contend with Omnipotence! Man is doing the greatest injury to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the mind and will of God. He is sowing to his flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by God, who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of his creatures. In order to be happy ourselves, we must live to make others happy. We must yield our possessions, our talents, and our affections, in grateful devotion to Christ, and in this way we may find happiness here and immortality hereafter.

The most trying experiences in the Christian life may be the most blessed. The special providences of the dark hours may encourage the soul in the future attacks of Satan, and equip the soul to stand most fiery trials. The trial of your faith is more precious than gold. But in order to endure the test, you must have that faith, that abiding confidence in God, that will not be disturbed by the arguments and temptations of the deceiver. Take the Lord at his word. Study the promises, and appropriate them as you have need. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Happy is the man, who, when tempted, finds his soul rich in the knowledge of the Scriptures, who finds shelter beneath the promises of God. "Thy word," said the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." We need that calm, steady faith, that undaunted moral courage, that none but Christ can give, in order that we may be braced for trial and strengthened for duty.

While on earth there will be no escape from conflicts and temptations; but in every storm we have a sure refuge. Jesus has told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The forces of Satan are marshaled against us, and we have to meet a diligent foe; but if we take heed to the admonition of Christ, we shall be safe. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." There are foes to be resisted and overcome, but Jesus is by our side, ready to strengthen us for every attack. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even

our faith.” Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love him. Faith sees the robe and the crown all prepared for the overcomer. Faith hears the song of the redeemed, and brings eternal glories near. We must come close to Jesus in loving obedience if we would see the King in his beauty. There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believe! Believe! My soul cries, Believe! Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to him, and will bring you off more than conqueror through him that has loved you.

But remember that every one who shall be found with the wedding garment on will have come out of great tribulation. The mighty surges of temptation will beat upon all. But the long night of watching, of toil, of hardship, is nearly past. Christ is soon to come. Get ready! The angels of God are seeking to attract you from yourself and from earthly things. Let them not labor in vain. Faith, living faith, is what you need; the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Remember Calvary and the awful, the infinite sacrifice there made for man. Jesus now invites you to come to him, just as you are, and make him your strength and your everlasting Friend. - RH April 17, 1894

Forbearance Under Wrong - MH 485-496

We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.

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 or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. “What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” 1 Peter 2:20.

Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23, 24.

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” Proverbs 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God’s promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises:

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” Psalm 37:5, 6.

“There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” Luke 12:2.

“Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.” Psalm 66:12.

We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” John 13:7.

Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty.

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose,

continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.

We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory, such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave His Son to die for us. If as workers for Christ you feel that you have had greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens. There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. Let the world see that life with Him is no failure.

If you do not feel lighthearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. It drives them away from Him into the nets that Satan has spread for the feet of the straying. Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ's name. Let your imagination take hold upon things unseen. Let your thoughts be directed to the evidences of the great love of God for you. Faith can endure trial, resist temptation, bear up under disappointment. Jesus lives as our advocate. All is ours that His mediation secures.

Think you not that Christ values those who live wholly for Him? Think you not that He visits those who, like the beloved John in exile, are for His sake in hard and trying places? God will not suffer one of His truehearted workers to be left alone, to struggle against great odds and be overcome. He preserves as a precious jewel everyone whose life is hid with Christ in Him. Of every such one He says: "I ... will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee." Haggai 2:23.

Then talk of the promises; talk of Jesus' willingness to bless. He does not forget us for one brief moment. When, notwithstanding disagreeable circumstances, we rest confidently in His love, and shut ourselves in with Him, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy. Of Himself Christ said: "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:28, 29.

The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord's permission. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, in short, all things work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us.

If we have a sense of the long-suffering of God toward us, we shall not be found judging or accusing others. When Christ was living on the earth, how surprised His associates would have been, if, after becoming acquainted with Him, they had heard Him speak one word of accusation, of fault-finding, or of impatience. Let us never forget that those who love Him are to represent Him in character.

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 3:9.

The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgment of the rights of every man. Men's social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration. All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God.

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit. Look at Paul when brought before rulers. His speech before Agrippa is an illustration of true courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. The gospel does not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, but the courtesy that springs from real kindness of heart.

The most careful cultivation of the outward proprieties of life is not sufficient to shut out all fretfulness, harsh judgment, and unbecoming speech. True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered as the supreme object. Love must dwell in the heart. A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart love for his Master. Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren. Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the whole being.

Life is chiefly made up, not of great sacrifices and wonderful achievements, but of little things. It is oftenest through the little things which seem so unworthy of notice that great good or evil is brought into our lives. It is through our failure to endure the tests that come to us in little things, that the habits are molded, the character misshaped; and when the greater tests come, they find us unready. Only by acting upon principle in the tests of daily life can we acquire power to stand firm and faithful in the most dangerous and most difficult positions.

We are never alone. Whether we choose Him or not, we have a companion. Remember that wherever you are, whatever you do, God is there. Nothing that is said or done or thought can escape His attention. To your every word or deed you have a witness—the holy, sin-hating God. Before you speak or act, always think of this. As a Christian, you are a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. Say no word, do no act, that shall bring dishonor upon “that worthy name by the which ye are called.” James 2:7.

Study carefully the divine-human character, and constantly inquire, “What would Jesus do were He in my place?” This should be the measurement of our duty. Do not place yourselves needlessly in the society of those who by their arts would weaken your purpose to do right, or bring a stain upon your conscience. Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil. Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with His own blood.

Always act from principle, never from impulse. Temper the natural impetuosity of your nature with meekness and gentleness. Indulge in no lightness or trifling. Let no low witticism escape your lips. Even the thoughts are not to be allowed to run riot. They must be restrained, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let them be placed upon holy things. Then, through the grace of Christ, they will be pure and true.

We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is right thinking. As a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows easy, until right thoughts and actions become habitual. If we will we may turn away from all that is cheap and inferior, and rise to a high standard; we may be respected by men and beloved of God.

Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character. Cultivate thankfulness. Praise God for His wonderful love in giving Christ to die for us. It never pays to think of our grievances. God calls upon us to think of His mercy and His matchless love, that we may be inspired with praise.

Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evilspeaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changed into the same image. But by beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us.

Instead of criticizing and condemning others, say, "I must work out my own salvation. If I co-operate with Him who desires to save my soul, I must watch myself diligently. I must put away every evil from my life. I must overcome every fault. I must become a new creature in Christ. Then, instead of weakening those who are striving against evil, I can strengthen them by encouraging words." We are too indifferent in regard to one another. Too often we forget that our fellow laborers are in need of strength and cheer. Take care to assure them of your interest and sympathy. Help them by your prayers, and let them know that you do it.

Not all who profess to be workers for Christ are true disciples. Among those who bear His name, and who are even numbered with His workers, are some who do not represent Him in character. They are not governed by His principles. These persons are often a cause of perplexity and discouragement to their fellow workers who are young in Christian experience; but none need be misled. Christ has given us a perfect example. He bids us follow Him.

Till the end of time there will be tares among the wheat. When the servants of the householder, in their zeal for his honor, asked permission to root out the tares, the master said: "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." Matthew 13:29, 30.

In His mercy and long-suffering, God bears patiently with the perverse and even the falsehearted. Among Christ's chosen apostles was Judas the traitor. Should it then be a cause of surprise or discouragement that there are falsehearted ones among His workers today? If He who reads the heart could bear with him who He knew was to be His betrayer, with what patience should we bear with those at fault.

And not all, even of those who appear most faulty, are like Judas. Peter, impetuous, hasty, and self-confident, often appeared to far greater disadvantage than Judas did. He was oftener reproved by the Saviour. But what a life of service and sacrifice was his! What a testimony does it bear to the power of God's grace! So far as we are capable, we are to be to others what Jesus was to His disciples when He walked and talked with them on the earth.

Regard yourselves as missionaries, first of all, among your fellow workers. Often it requires a vast amount of time and labor to win one soul to Christ. And when a soul turns from sin to righteousness, there is joy in the presence of the angels. Think you that the ministering spirits who watch over these souls are pleased to see how indifferently they are treated by some who claim to be Christians? Should Jesus deal with us as we too often deal with one another, who of us could be saved?

Remember that you cannot read hearts. You do not know the motives which prompted the actions that to you look wrong. There are many who have not received a right education; their characters are warped, they are hard and gnarled, and seem to be crooked in every way. But the grace of Christ can transform them. Never cast them aside, never drive them to discouragement or despair by saying, "You have disappointed me, and I will not try to help you." A few words spoken hastily under provocation—just what we think they deserve—may cut the cords of influence that should have bound their hearts to ours.

The consistent life, the patient forbearance, the spirit unruffled under provocation, is always the most conclusive argument and the most solemn appeal. If you have had opportunities and advantages that have not fallen to the lot of others, consider this, and be ever a wise, careful, gentle teacher.

In order to have the wax take a clear, strong impression of the seal, you do not dash the seal upon it in a hasty, violent way; you carefully place the seal on the plastic wax and quietly, steadily press it down until it has hardened in the mold. In like manner deal with human souls. The continuity of Christian influence is the secret of its power, and this depends on the steadfastness of your manifestation of the character of Christ.

Help those who have erred, by telling them of your experiences. Show how, when you made grave mistakes, patience, kindness, and helpfulness on the part of your fellow workers gave you courage and hope.

Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy. When we meet with ingratitude and betrayal of sacred trusts, we are roused to show our contempt or indignation. This the guilty expect; they are prepared for it. But kind forbearance takes them by surprise and often awakens their better impulses and arouses a longing for a nobler life.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1, 2.

All who profess to be children of God should bear in mind that as missionaries they will be brought into contact with all classes of minds. There are the refined and the coarse, the humble and the proud, the religious and the skeptical, the educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. These varied minds cannot be treated alike; yet all need kindness and sympathy. By mutual contact our minds should receive polish and refinement. We are dependent upon one another, closely bound together by the ties of human brotherhood.

**“Heaven forming each on other to depend,
A master or a servant or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.”**

It is through the social relations that Christianity comes in contact with the world. Every man or woman who has received the divine illumination is to shed light on the dark pathway of those who are unacquainted with the better way. Social power, sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, must be improved in bringing souls to the Saviour. Christ is not to be hid away in the heart as a coveted treasure, sacred and sweet, to be enjoyed solely by the possessor. We are to have Christ in us as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, refreshing all who come in contact with us. MH 485-496

Sermon - Thoughts on John 3 - August 2, 1891 - Ms10-1891

John 3:14-19. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

When we have a promise that is so rich and so full as this that I have read to you, I inquire, What excuse have any of us for unbelief? What excuse have you to say, I don't think the Lord hears my prayer? I wish I could believe I was a Christian, or I wish I could have the evidence that I was a child of God. Feelings are very changeable, but here are the precious words of eternal life. What is evidence? Is it a flight of feeling? Is it an emotion of the heart that gives you the evidence that you are a child of God? But here is the precious Word of eternal life and it gives us the assurance that we may lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel by living faith.

We may reach up to Jesus Christ, who is our advocate in the heavenly courts. We need a friend at court. We have been sinning, been disobedient, been transgressors, and it is of the highest consequence to us that we have a friend at court to plead our cases to the Father. He says, If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me. Well, will all be drawn? Christ draws, but will they respond to the drawing? Will they come? The invitation here in Revelation is this: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

It is not only the minister that is to say "come," but "let him that heareth say, come." Then you must hear to a purpose, and as you hear the message, you begin to talk it and you say, "come." The coming to you is everything. And as you see that you may come, the privilege is so large, so undeserving, that you feel that you want everybody to have the same privilege with yourself, so that we are laborers together with God. That is our work. God says, Come, the Spirit says, Come, the bride says, Come, and whosoever heareth says, Come. Oh that more will, with their consistent godly life and with the words of their lips say, Come. What does it do? It takes in the whole purpose of the mind. It takes in your action. It is not only by precept, but by

example, that you carry the living example with you that heaven is worth something, that Christianity is worth striving for.

We are to watch. Christ said, Watch unto prayer. 1 Peter 4:7. He does not deceive any of us; He takes us to an eminence, shows us the confederacy of evil and the strength of the powers of darkness that are arrayed against all who would have faith in Jesus Christ, and tells us to count the cost, but He does more for us, He does not leave us there without still further encouragement. He does not show us trials and conflicts and leave us without help to fight the battles. But He tells us that God has His angels that minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. Hebrews 1:14. Round about His throne are thousands and thousands and ten times ten thousands of angels. What is their work? It is to do the bidding of Jesus Christ their Master. And what do they do? They tell you that Christ chose you, that heavenly angels are with you, and they remain with you.

You can have but little strength to war against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, but here is One who points you to the help heaven sent, that for every soul however strong or weak you may be—here is the help that comes to every soul from heaven—that in this conflict they may be victors. That is why Christ was lifted up, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16. Now we have the example.

We say we do believe that Jesus Christ died, but is He your personal Saviour? Here is the faith part of it. Is He your personal Saviour? Do you grasp Him by the living hand of faith? Do you reach out your hand to Him and say, as did Peter, “Save, Lord, or I perish”? Matthew 14:30. He will save you. You remember there the disciples were toiling with the ship; and they gave up all hope of reaching the land. While in their dread peril they see One coming toward them, stepping on the foam-crest billows as He would on solid earth, and they were afraid and said, It is a spirit; but Christ says, “It is I, be not afraid.” Matthew 14:27.

Oh, how much “It is I,” means. It means everything to us when we are in trouble or perplexities. Can you not hear His voice? Can you not hear Him saying, “It is I, be not afraid”? Well, He is addressing Himself to us. Whatever your weakness or trial, Christ is near you. He says, It is I, be not afraid. The disciples were glad and welcomed Him into the ship, but Peter said, “Bid me come to you on the water;” and He said, “Come.” Matthew 14:28, 29. As He came to Jesus, as long as he fixed his eyes upon Jesus he could walk. But then he looked down upon the billows, and saw them rolling

and beating about him, and he saw right there that there was but little hope, for just as soon as he looked down he began to sink; and he threw up his arms to Jesus and said, Save, Lord, or I perish. Verse 30.

Did ever anyone lift their hands to Jesus and say, "Save, Lord, or I perish," and He pass them by? Never, never. He is a Jesus that hears the faintest cry. We need none of us faint or cry or be discouraged. We need not faint when like Peter, we may look to the darkness and trials around us. Why don't we look to Jesus? I ask you, Have you not got your eye off from Jesus and looking at the trials and troubles until you become conformed to the same image? There is the trouble. You forget you have a Helper. Now as soon as he cried to Jesus, He helped him. Why, where is your faith? He did not have faith to look right at Jesus.

By beholding we become changed. Our unbelief is exchanged for living faith, and we reflect His divine image, and we grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The Lord took the hand of Peter and he was saved. And thus we have a Saviour; and in every trial we are to trust in the Lord God of Israel and He will be our Helper.

You remember there was one who was a paralytic; he could not get to Jesus, and he had heard He was the mighty Healer. So his friends said, We will take you to Jesus that you can get into His presence. They inspired the man with hope, and the man by responding, inspired them with hope. But there was a crowd about the house, and it was a dense crowd that always followed Jesus, and they hung upon His words. As they approached the house they could not get through to Jesus. The suggestion was made that they open the roof and let the afflicted man down so he could see Jesus and Jesus could see him; and they did so, and let him down just where Jesus was; and there the pitiful, suffering one cast his eyes upon the only hope there was for him. So He wants us to do, whatever our condition. He wants us to consider we are hopeless unless we trust in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour.

Jesus knew how to help that soul, and He said, Thy sins be forgiven thee. The burden of his sins weighed upon his soul, and his case had been pronounced hopeless, but, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." The Pharisees took up the point, Who is this that forgives sins? But Jesus read their hearts like an open book, and He said, Why is it easier to heal this man or to say thy sins be forgiven thee? He said there was no difference, but that you may know that the Son of man has power to forgive sins, He said, Take up thy bed and walk. Matthew 9:2-6.

Now what if he the paralytic had just remained there and said, You just let me have evidence that I am healed and I will take up my bed very quickly and walk. He did not wait for that. No; he believed the word of the One who had spoken to him. And the joy that came into his heart, as the peace of Christ came into his soul! He fastened his faith upon Christ, and he at once had power which he exercised, and he took up his bed and walked. And there was great rejoicing; and they said, We have not seen anything like this before! The great power of God was there; the man was healed. There was God glorified.

But suppose we are in a condition of helplessness in regard to faith, and say, When you give me evidence, I will believe; but until then I cannot believe. Is that the way you talk? Is that the way you talk to your family? O, how we dishonor God. He says, They that believe on Me shall not perish but have eternal life. Have you faith? Do you believe Christ? Is He your personal Saviour? Is He cleansing you from sin because He is able? Do you believe it? Is He your Saviour, One who can save to the uttermost, who died on the cross for you? I believe it; and in the strength of the faith He has given me, I have been enabled to travel since I was seventeen years old. I have proved Him, and I have tested Him, and I know that He never fails me; He has never done it yet.

I was but a child, and I had no voice to utter a sound; yet it was God's will that I should give the message to the people. My father said, Ellen, if God wants you to go—as the physicians have said your case is hopeless—if God says, "Go," someone will come right to the door, and the way will be opened. My brother-in-law came to the door and took me and my sister, and then began my labors and my travels from place to place. I must move forth in faith, and for more than five minutes I stood; then everything broke away, and I spoke to them for two hours with a voice clear and full, and the moment I had ceased speaking my voice was gone. And thus I traveled for three months and then the voice was given to me, and I have had it ever since. From that time, I have been traveling. I believe in God, and He has never failed me.

I want you to believe in Him, and I want you to have the consolation wherewith I am comforted in believing Jesus Christ as a present Saviour and Helper, and One that can save to the uttermost. The condition does not exist in our worthiness or unworthiness; but the condition is that we believe God, and then, in that belief, take hold of the arm of Infinite Power. We cannot make ourselves perfect; but we should place ourselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, welcome them, and believe we have them, and we will say, It is for me Christ died. He died that I might have them, and I will not be deprived of one of these blessings; but I will have the help

that the children of God seek for. Then you keep urging your case. How? What does that mean when it says, “Fight the good fight of faith”? 1 Timothy 6:12. The enemy will come up with all his rays of darkness and unbelief and will endeavor to get you off of the right path.

When you sit down at the dining table in our boarding tent, it is all-important that you keep your words clean and pure, and not of that common, low, cheap sort of chit-chat, if you expect the Holy Spirit to come into your midst as you assemble together. Our Saviour dined with publicans and sinners, and He was not tainted or corrupted in the least by the society or conversation around Him; but He was all the time sowing the seed of life, in words that would take root in the soil of the heart.

Now, if Christ is abiding in the soul, there come forth from the treasure-house of the heart good things; if Christ is not abiding there, there is a satisfaction in the cheap, low, and frivolous jesting and joking which is a hindrance to you spiritually, because the angels of God cannot be with you; and you do not bring forth [from] the treasures of the heart such things that the angels of God can be with you and you can make impressions upon the minds of those who are around you. Christ is ready to diffuse light, and we must be ready, in our turn, to reflect that light. We must be ready to gather every jewel that comes from Jesus, and when we speak, let the jewels drop from the lips; then there will be nothing like commonness or cheapness in our conversation. We are children of the heavenly King, and therefore we are to be partakers with Christ of His sufferings, that we may be partakers with Him of His glory.

And when we see that our influence is to follow us, we want that influence guarded by sacred sentinels, that that influence shall not scatter in thought away from Christ. If we are members of the royal family, we want that every act of our lives shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. There is power for us if we will have it. There is grace for us if we will appreciate it. The Holy Spirit is waiting our demand if we will only demand it with that intensity of purpose which is proportionate to the value of the object we are in pursuit of. We want to know how it is with our souls. Can we say, “It is well, it is well with my soul,” because “I can read my title clear in mansions in the skies”?

I have a pledge—it is from Him that made the world. Jesus Christ was sent into the world, and He took upon Himself our nature, so that we need not say, He does not know what temptations I have to meet. “Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,” He stands as our Exemplar. Hebrews 4:15. While we are associating in the

world we will see injustice. One may complain saying, I am not treated as I ought to be; there is favoritism everywhere. I see it; but what difference is it how I am treated, so long as I have a chance for my soul? While you are thinking thus, I want you to remember He was tempted in all points like as I am. And He says He will succor those who are tempted. Hebrews 2:18. Just praise God. Let love come right into your heart, and let it swell forth in praise.

If you have Jesus, who had divinity and humanity combined in Him and erected the cross midway between divinity and humanity, thus drawing the sinner to the cross so that when the Father comes with that retinue of angels and sees that cross, He says, "It is enough; I accept the sacrifice." "I accept it"—what does that mean? Sinner, You may come. Come right along with your load of sin; come right along with your burdens; come right along with your griefs.

When the sinner comes, and looks at the cross, he says, Oh, it was there that Jesus died for me. He did not die for me because I was righteous, but because I was a sinner, that He might impute unto me His righteousness, that He might take away my sin. Then should not we be the happiest people in all the earth? I want to know why we do not hear the song of triumph and praise from human lips as we once heard it. I want to know why there is not a volume of praise ascending to God.

Do you think that you eat His flesh and drink His blood? He says, My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. John 6:55. And when the disciples were offended because they could not understand it, He said, It is my word; that is spirit and that is life. John 6:63. Then take the Word and eat it, and assimilate it, and digest it; take it, make it your own; it is your meat and your drink.

And when the devil comes up with that lot of nonsense for you to speak before others, of a low nature, of cheap, low talk, you just look into memory's hall and say, I have the promises of God; I will look at the richness of these promises; and then begin to hand forth something that Jesus has said, something a great deal brighter and more precious than can issue from you. It is something that comes from the fountain of life. "I will be in him a well of water." How? "Springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14. Oh there is truth springing from the heart that is nourished with the water of life, pure and refreshing, that will direct the thoughts of all around us to the Fountain head.

Oh that God may baptize us with His Spirit! Oh that we might, when associated together, not one of us give a cheap remark, not one give a remark that will draw out a laugh, as though he thought he were wonderfully smart. God does not call

you smart; He calls you foolish. You do not know God and Jesus Christ. But if you know God and Jesus Christ, you will have remarks to make that will be as precious as gold. Has He not given us the precious pearls, and the precious jewels of truth? Will you not unearth them? Did He not come here for that purpose, that He might reinstate them in our heart? Was not the Comforter sent to bring to our remembrance the things we have forgotten? This is the work of the Comforter. Then what we want is the power of Christ in our hearts every moment.

We read, “Young men likewise exhort to be”—frivolous minded? No, “sober minded.” Of course, if this calls on young men for sobriety, it certainly includes those of maturer age. Now it says, “But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things: that they may teach the young women to be sober, love their husbands, love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of a contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” Titus 2:1-8.

There is to be no foolishness in our life or course of action. We ought to be uplifting our souls to the Mighty One. What is the matter with us, that we do not show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light? We are to be living epistles, known and read of all men. And the reason we are not is because we choose the cheap, and not the exalted, the high, the immortal, the eternal. Jesus wants us to exalt ourselves with the banner of Jesus Christ. We want to bear it with us always. We want to strengthen every soul in God. What would I give for a minister that goes into the desk and preaches a discourse with the solemn truths that we bear at this time, and then goes out and his conversation is light, trifling and narrow? His words carry no weight. He has not been sent by Jesus Christ. He does not know his mission or his work.

And instead of sitting down in the family and jesting and joking, the true minister will say, My brethren, I want to tell you what is truth. Sit down here with me. I want to talk the truth to you. You should preach less; teach the Bible in the family; read and explain. You can do more at the family circle than in all the sermonizing. We cannot speak but that His truth will fall from our lips, showing that we have His grace in our

hearts. It will be understood by all that we are indeed walking with God; that we have talked with Him, and that we understand Him and the power of His grace. In all things show yourselves a pattern of good works wherever you are.

I am sorry that at our meeting last night there were not more out. I am sorry because I wanted the truth to be represented in this place. I wanted that there should be character given to our work. Is there anything as important as to leave a right impression upon human minds? Have you your own pleasure, your own ways, your own inclinations uppermost in your minds? And are you trying to direct your ways according to your own ideas and desires? God pity you, if you cannot, when the roll is called, answer, Here am I; Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? How shall I stand in that army as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ?

I will read further, "Sound speech, that can not be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Titus 2:8. Wonderful, is it not? "No evil thing to say of you." You may preach weeks in a place to a people as dark as midnight, and unless you reach them through God, your efforts are in vain. We must reach the people through God. Brethren, let us elevate the standard. Let us put away every trifling word, and let our spirits be in harmony with the spirit of Jesus Christ. That is what we want.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Verses 11-15. But let every one that wants to follow after our Redeemer walk as He walked, speaking not as fools but as wise. The Lord God of heaven will put His seal and His superscription upon us, and the angels of God will be around about us.

But unless you encourage the society of the heavenly angels, there may be the most solemn discourse preached, but the very moment you get out of the meeting, if you let yourself loose, you will reveal just what you are. You show whether the truth has been mingled "with faith in them that heard it" Hebrews 4:2, or whether it has gone out like water from a leaky vessel. If the truth has taken hold of your soul it is for you to show it in your conversation.

Do you think, teachers and ministers, that you can reach the people by partaking of their foolishness and by linking with them to do as they do, to act as they act? I tell you, No. While you work together you can be, not going about with a long face, but cheerful, without jesting or joking. You can be elevating your soul by drinking in the waters of salvation. As your soul is refreshed you are refreshing all around you. There will be a word here and a word there just like apples of gold in pictures of silver. You will be building up your souls in Christ.

If you are seeking to make a display of dress, you are not acting in accordance with the mind of God. Clothe yourselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. That does not mean that we should go with our eyes dropped down, so that we cannot look anyone in the face. No, but modest in your appearance, words, and dress. Your dress, however, will not recommend you to God one particle; but you hang out the colors and thus show to the world on whose side you are. We want to be a people who shall stand forth as representatives of Jesus Christ. Look at His life—a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. May the Lord God of heaven put His Spirit upon us.

We want to cultivate charity. We may cultivate that love which Christ manifested—love for every soul for whom He died. But do not show in that affection, especially for the opposite sex, a lovesick sentimentalism. Do not, I beseech of you, reveal anything of this weakness and thus cause your good to be evil spoken of. No, that will not answer. You are to love as Christ loved—pure, holy, and undefiled. It is a love that is spotless, and you are to abstain from every appearance of evil. When we do that we shall carry a weight with us in our profession. Right here on this ground, in our associations together, we should manifest this kind of love.

I remember that there was a class in the state of Maine who would get together and act like a parcel of children. They would laugh and joke and talk foolishness. They were ministers and laymen who professed the holy truth of God and to believe in Christ's soon coming. They would laugh and joke and say, "It is no time to flee when the wolves are not around." But, brethren and sisters, when we are together we should represent Christ to each other. We want a high estimation of each other.

We are sizing one another up, whether we know it or not. And if one utters a light or trifling word, and another catches it and carries it a little further, and another taking it up carries it a little further still, notwithstanding they may seem to be in harmony with the thought, and may laugh or smile, yet we are every one being sized up.

And every one is being reckoned by the heavenly intelligences. That record is exactly in accordance with your actions. But not only this, you are sized up by those around you. They weigh the weight of your character and your sincerity. They weigh you in the scales of their judgment. Although they may unite with you, apparently, you will never stand as high in their opinions again, as devout Christians.

What we want is, while together, not to push one another down hill, but to help one another climb heavenward; help one another to get into the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, for God is above the ladder. The ladder is to climb; it is not to go back a single step, but to climb heavenward. Heaven is what we want, and we want to bring all we can right into our present life, our present enjoyment. And when we enjoy Christ and the fulness of His salvation, you will see countenances here that will speak; countenances here that will tell you that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory; that Christ is there; that His life is there; that His joy is there; that His peace is there. That is a person that I can counsel with. He will cite me to God and heaven.

I implore you not to choose the society of the frivolous and the cheap, but of such ones as that, that you may be uplifted by them. If you do not uplift those with whom you associate, they will surely drag you down. God grant that we may have power divine and above ourselves, that will bring us off conquerors, and more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us. - Ms10-1891

The Test at Rephidim - ST September 10, 1896

“All the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of

Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?" Ex. 17:1-7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And to us the Scripture comes: “Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” - ST September 10, 1896

“I Will Keep Thee From the Hour of Temptation” - RH April 15, 1890 - Pt. 1 / 3

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” - Rev. 3:10

These words are important and solemn, and it would be profitable to us should we take them home with us, and search the Scriptures in reference to their true meaning. The hour of temptation is to come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth; and although we do not wish to make a time of trouble for ourselves, nor do we wish to groan over trials in the future, still we should be so closely connected with God that we shall not fall under the temptation when it does come. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

The Lord will raise up a standard for us against the enemy. We should believe that we have a helper in God, that we shall not be afraid, we shall not be filled with wonder and amazement; for we know that the God of Israel has been with his people from the very first—from the very infancy of this world God has been with his obedient children. We must show that we have confidence in God, and make it manifest to the world that we can trust him because we believe in him. His word is pledged that there shall no temptation come upon us, but that help shall be provided to sustain us. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

We should be watching unto prayer. Just as surely as we do watch and pray, we shall know who is our helper. “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.” He is ready to strengthen us; and may the Lord give you grace day by day, that you may be able to withstand the storm that is coming, for it will try your spiritual hope to the very uttermost. If your hope is in man, you are lost; if in Jesus, who is the Rock of Ages, your salvation is sure. He has said, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my name's sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they

deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” We ought to be thankful that these words are left on record. Every child of God that is brought into difficulty and trial because of his faithfulness to Jesus, may claim the promise, and will receive sufficient grace for every emergency.

We are only selfishly wise when we plan for the future, and make resolutions and bring them in, and we ourselves arrange matters, as we think in all wisdom; for in so doing we are in danger of getting in the way of the Lord. Stand out of the way with your many resolutions, and when the time comes for God to bring his people into trying places to test and prove them, he will help them, and he will not fail or be discouraged, but will be a present help in trouble.

We read in the Scriptures, “But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my name's sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.” Kings, governors, and councils are to have a knowledge of the truth through your testimony. This is the only way in which the testimony of light and truth can reach men of high authority. “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in you.” Christ stood by the side of Luther, and by the side of all the Reformers whom he commissioned to go forth and make aggressive moves to advance the message of God in our world. He did not send them forth alone. Jesus has promised to be at your right hand. What a gracious promise is this, and it will be fulfilled; for he is faithful that hath promised. Jesus is yours, and all things in heaven and earth are his, and yours because you believe in him.

We should become acquainted with the Bible. We are required to become diligent Bible students, lest we be found adopting error for truth. We want the truth as it is in Jesus. He says, “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in you.” You need not be surprised that God will flash the knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures, into your memory at the very time when it is needed. But if you let the precious moments of probationary time pass, and neglect to fill your minds and the minds of your children with the gems of truth, if you are not acquainted with

the words of Christ, if you have never tested the power of his grace in trial, you cannot expect that the Holy Spirit will bring Christ's words to your remembrance. We are to serve God daily with our undivided affection, and then trust him.

We read, "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." You must carry Christ with you to the very close of probationary time, and let no man take your crown; keep an eye single to the glory of God, and stand as did Paul, believing that God has power to keep that which has been committed to his trust against that day. In believing that God will keep that which has been committed to his trust, we show confidence in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But we desire you to understand what you are to do at the present time. You are to keep your eye single to the glory of God. There is too much talk and too little prayer. A great deal more is spoken of things that we think we know and understand, than should be spoken, because our knowledge is only superficial. There should be more humble trust and confidence in our Saviour. We should have the simplicity of Christ; we want to be like him, having our lives hid with Christ in God, that "when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

We expect trials to come in these last days; we are not looking for anything else; but may God give us grace that we may endure the trials when they do come, and not faint under persecution. We do not desire to be in a position where we shall have no strength at that time. Then let us become acquainted with God now. Many in this congregation are ignorant of God's grace and power and matchless love, because they have allowed the enemy to do just what he designed to do—to intercept himself between them and their God.

There will be an effort made to unsettle the faith of every believer in present truth. Since Satan fell from heaven, he has been trampling underfoot the word of God, and putting something of his own devising in its place. His work has been accepted as the work of God. When the legislature frames laws which exalt the first day of the week, and put it in the place of the seventh day, the device of Satan will be perfected.

If man had always kept the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, there never would have been an atheist or an infidel in the world. Through the fourth commandment, the attention of men is called to the power of the infinite hand that placed the stars in the firmament. If they had obeyed this commandment, they would have worshiped God, as they looked at the sun that rules the day, and the moon which

rules the night. Everything in nature,—the tints and coloring that he has given to every opening bud and every blooming flower, the lofty tree, the grass that clothes the earth in its green mantle, would have spoken to the soul, bidding us to remember God and the commandment in which he says that he created all these in six days and rested on the seventh day, and hallowed the Sabbath day which he had made. He blessed man, and gave the Sabbath to him to be observed as a memorial of his creative power. But Satan has come in, and shown himself the decided enemy of man, and he seeks to make of none effect the work of God, and get in every conceivable thing of human origination, to hide God and his glory from our sight. The man of sin, it is declared in Daniel, “shall think to change times and laws,” And is not this very work done now? Is he not seeking to change times and laws?

He cannot do this, because God’s holy law is as unchangeable as his throne, and is from everlasting to everlasting. Christ has said, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” But the question of Sabbath and Sunday observance is to be agitated everywhere, and the deceptions of Satan will flood the world. The man of sin has instituted a spurious sabbath, and the Protestant world has taken this child of the papacy and cradled and nurtured it. Satan means to make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of the fornication of Babylon. Men are binding themselves together in bonds of union to show their disloyalty to the God of heaven. The first day of the week is to be exalted and presented to all for observance. Shall we be partakers of this cup of abomination? Shall we bow to the authorities of earth and despise God? The powers of darkness have been gathering their forces to bring this crisis about in the world, so that the man of sin may exalt himself above God. God does not force the conscience of any man, but the powers of darkness have been trying to compel the consciences of men ever since Abel fell under the murderous blow from the hand of pitiless Cain because Abel’s works were righteous and his own were sinful. God had respect unto the offering of Abel, but he had no respect for Cain’s offering, and this made Cain very angry, and the Lord said, “Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” God was not at fault that Cain’s offering was not respected. It was valueless because it was destitute of the thing that gave it virtue, and that was the blood that was to be shed for the sins of the world,—the blood of Jesus Christ.

Satan is ever seeking to bring about a state of things in which righteousness may be termed unrighteousness, and unrighteousness righteousness. What are we to do?—We are to keep in living connection with the God of heaven, ranking in his army

and under his banner, and we cannot afford to be in such gross blindness that we cannot discern truth from error. We want to know what is truth. Many say, "The whole world is keeping the first day of the week, and do you think that all the great and good men are in error?" God is going to bring around a condition of things where the good men and the men in authority will have an opportunity to know what is truth indeed. And because a people will not bow the knee to the image, and receive the mark of the beast in the hand or the forehead, but will stand to the truth because it is truth, there will be oppression, and an attempt to compel the conscience; but those who have known the truth will be afraid to yield to the powers of darkness. God has a people who will not receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or in their forehead. God has a place for his people to fill in this world, to reflect light. You are God's sentinels. Christ says of his people, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." We are to stand the trial and test of persecution because of allegiance to the truth. Not a move has been made in exalting the idol sabbath, in bringing around Sunday observance through legislation, but Satan has been behind it, and has been the chief worker; but the conscience should not be compelled even for the observance of the genuine Sabbath, for God will accept only willing service. The question is asked, Shall we not obey the powers that be?—Yes, when they are in harmony with the higher powers that be. God made his law for all the universe. He created man, he gives the bounteous provisions of nature, holds our breath and life in his hand. He is to be recognized, his law honored, before all the great men and the highest earthly powers. - RH April 15, 1890

**"I Will Keep Thee From the Hour of Temptation" - RH April 22,
1890 - Pt. 2 / 3**

After the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the Jews, the priests, and the rulers of this world expected to see the disciples of Christ cast down and discouraged, because their Lord had been put to death. The disciples might have reasoned that they were in danger, and that they would better go out of Jerusalem; some might have said, "Do not stay there, but if you do stay, do not mention the name of Christ; for he is regarded as an impostor." But Christ had said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye are endued with power from on high." After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they were to begin their work in Jerusalem, and let it extend from this city to the uttermost parts of the earth. Did any one lose his life in exalting Jesus before the people? Was any one killed?—Yes, Stephen was killed. Their enemies expected that terror would come upon the disciples, and that they would be afraid to speak the message of God. But hear

what Peter says: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by wonders and miracles and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know: him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

God wants his witnesses to present the genuine in contrast to that which is false. There were many converted under Peter's preaching, and it greatly disturbed the people; and as they spake to the people, the Sadducees came upon them. The disciples remembered the falsehood which these great, and supposedly good men had so zealously circulated,—that the disciples had stolen him away by night while the Roman guard slept. Can you be surprised that the Sadducees were grieved because those who believed, preached the resurrection of the man they had murdered, when the number of those who believed was about five thousand? The seed that Christ had been sowing while he was on earth, sprang up. Many were waiting for this God-given testimony to come from the disciples in reference to Christ and his resurrection, and they believed when they heard it; for it revived the testimony they had heard from the lips of Jesus, and they took their stand in the ranks of those who believed the gospel of Christ.

We have on record another testimony that proves the boldness of the disciples. When Peter and John had bidden the paralytic arise in the name of Jesus, and he had been healed, the people were amazed; and the Scripture says, “And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and

preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." The disciples were not afraid to proclaim the truth. They expected that they would be persecuted. "Whom ye crucified." Why did they not keep that back?—Because it was a testimony that they were to bear before the great men of the earth. "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Then they asked in this council, "What shall we do to these men?" I expect that this question will be asked many times in reference to those who keep the commandments of God in these days of peril as time is about to close. The priests acknowledged that a notable miracle had been wrought, but they said, "That it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God, for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed. And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." They said, "Lord, thou art God," and we shall have to say the same thing.

When the authorities come between us and God, we shall receive help if we only trust in him as did the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and with them we shall be able to say, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." But while we trust in God, no one should be presumptuous; and that we may not take an unwise course, we should pray constantly. We should not rush into danger unless God sends us there; nor should we call our brethren cowards because they are cautious in their plans that they may not unnecessarily provoke the rulers and powers of the earth. What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered imprisonment and death for Christ's sake?—It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. They had fellowship with God and with his Son, and the multitude that believed were of one mind and one soul. We may safely seek to be of one accord in doctrine and spirit, and if this were done, we would be in harmony with God's will. If selfishness and pride and vanity and evil surmising were put away, we would become strong in God, and the door of our heart would be open for the entrance of Christ; the baptism of the Holy Ghost would fall upon us, and we should be filled with all the fullness of God. Then we should know what is the length and depth and breadth and height of the love of God which passeth knowledge,—we should know something of the mystery of godliness. We would be able to speak, as did Peter and John, of the things which we had seen and heard. What we need is a living experience in the things of God. We need the transforming grace of Christ to bring into subjection every thought of the mind, every power of the intellect. The physical, mental, and spiritual powers should be under the control of the God of heaven who gives us life, who gives us food, who gives us every blessing. He is the God of Israel, therefore we will accept him, and him alone will we serve.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that after the miracle at the temple gate, many signs and wonders were wrought, and many were healed. "Then the high-priest rose up, ... and all they that were with him, ... and were filled with indignation." Why?—Because the great adversary of God and man was provoked that he could not hold his captives in torment, and that Christ was doing the very work that he had declared in Nazareth he would do. He had said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

And then they shut the disciples up in a prison, that the message of God should no longer be given to the people, but the angel of the Lord was there. All heaven was

looking upon them then, and the angels are now looking upon those who are living at this closing period of earth's history. The angel of the Lord came by night to the servants of God, and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Here was an order directly contrary to the command given by the potentates of the earth. But the direction of the angel was from the highest court in the universe. Did the apostles say to the angel, "We cannot do this until we have consulted the magistrates, and received permission of them?"—No; God had said "Go," and they went forth to speak according to his commandment. In the morning their enemies called a council, and sent to the prison that they might be brought before them, but when the officers found them not, they said, "The prison truly found we shut with all safety, ... but when we had opened, we found no man within." The angel of God could take them through the prison walls, and they had no power to hold them. We have the same God today, and he works on the same plan. When they said the prison was shut, the chief priest doubted the keeper. God was working and the enemy was working, and the battle was waged between the God of heaven and the powers that be. Then the captain sent the officers and had them brought, because they feared the people, and when they were before the council, the high-priest asked, "Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in his name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Then the apostles answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." We ought to be obedient to all the laws of our country, except when those laws come in collision with the law of God, and then we must obey God, irrespective of everything else.

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; and said unto them, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." - RH April 22, 1890

**"I Will Keep Thee From the Hour of Temptation" - RH April 29,
1890 - Pt. 3 / 3**

God has the same power to bestow upon us as he gave to his people anciently, and he will give it to his people now, if we do not choose our own ways but God's ways. Let God take care of his people, and teach and direct them, and let man keep his plans out of the way. We would not lessen the courage of God's people, and be in a position where we shall dishonor the God of heaven, instead of glorifying him. There are many things brought to view in the Scriptures that will help us. James was killed, and because the enemies of the gospel saw that it pleased the Jews, they were going to take Peter, but they did not, because the Lord took charge of him. They killed Stephen, but the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors for Peter, for "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." There is your work. Pray as you have never prayed before; and if you spend nights in prayer, and learn to trust God, you will have an intelligent experience. It was by praying without ceasing that Peter gained the victory, and when the angel went to bring him out, Peter was bound with two chains, and, behold, the angel of the Lord came forth, and smote Peter on the side, and said, "Rise up quickly."

All the ruler's expectations failed because the same mighty agent that Joshua summoned when he was to bring down the walls of Jericho, was with the men who were bound with chains. When Peter returned to his brethren, a free man, he found them praying, and this is the key to his deliverance,—they were praying. He knocked at the gate, but the maid who came to open it, ran back to the house in great astonishment without letting him in. They did not think that Peter was to be released from the prison. They had expected a deliverance of a different order, but God worked in his own way and after his own counsel, and brought him to the very door of those who were praying for him.

We should seek to understand how God works. He wrought for his servants and released them from prison. They did not say, "If I can only get out of this place, I will never speak of Christ again," no, for Jesus was in their hearts, and they were happy. God is always by the side of his people, and he never leaves them,—he never gives a trial to his children but he will be there to help; he knows just what they can bear, and he does not give them any more than they can bear. If they fail, it is because they do not in faith bring their difficulties to God as to one who will help them. God does not forsake. No one fails because God leaves him to perish. When men fail, it is because they do not avail themselves of the provisions which God has made; they do not trust in the Lord.

When Paul and Silas were left with bleeding backs and with their feet in the stocks, they did not lament over their situation, but sang glory to God. A different note sounded in the prison from any ever heard there before. The keeper had heard cursing and swearing and blasphemy, but he had never heard the praises of God resounding through the halls; for he himself was an unconverted man. The suffering servants of God continued to send up their notes of thanksgiving, and they echoed in heaven; and the angels of God, as they caught the strain, came to their aid with a mighty tread, and the prison was shaken, and the apostles were loosed from their bands, and the light of the glory of God shone in the prison, and every man's bands were loosed, and the jailers found the doors open. The record says that the jailer drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled; but Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

How do we know but that this persecution came upon the servants of God in order that souls might be saved in that prison? God worked for his people in the past, he manifested his power in their behalf when they were in emergencies. If we let human counsel prevail, and arrange our plans so that God cannot work for us, we may expect to get into difficulties. May God help us to come to our senses. We have had little enough faith in the past, and we do not want to crush out the least particle of the faith that still lives.

Let us inspire our people with faith that they may stand firm for the right in whatever situation they may be placed. There is no necessity for thinking that we cannot endure persecution; we shall have to go through terrible times. I am going to stand at my post of duty, brethren, and I hope that you will give your brethren a chance to stand at their post of duty till the Master shall come.

When Stephen was called upon to suffer for Christ's sake, he did not waver. He read his fate in the cruel faces of his persecutors, and he did not hesitate to give to them the last message which he was to bear to men. He looked up and said, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." All heaven was interested in this case. Jesus, rising from the throne of his Father, was leaning over, looking upon the face of his servant, and imparting to his countenance the beams of his own glory, and men were astonished as they saw Stephen's face lighted up as if it had been the face of an angel. The glory of God shone upon him, and while he was beholding the face of his Lord, the enemies of Christ stoned him to death. Would we not

think that a hard death to die? But the fear of death was gone, and his last breath was spent in petitioning the Lord to forgive his persecutors.

Jesus has made it as easy as he possibly can for his children, and he wants us to follow in his footsteps; for if we do, we shall be partakers of Christ and his glory.

No law has ever been made to exalt the idol sabbath but that Satan has taken a leading part in its enactment and its enforcement. Every law for the elevation of Sunday has a direct reference to the fourth commandment. Every move that has been made to enforce its observance, is for the purpose of exalting the man of sin above God and above all that is worshiped. Satan would have us exalt the idol sabbath, but we cannot do it, for it would be disloyalty to God. In the face of Nebuchadnezzar's decree of death, the three Hebrew children refused to bend the knee, preferring to be cast into the fiery furnace rather than bow to the golden image. They declared they were not careful to answer the king, and said, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

They were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, but the Lord was with them. The king looked into the furnace, and said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Angels of the Lord were watching by the side of the faithful three. God wished to show to the nations of the world who was the great I AM, the God of the heavens, the ruler of the universe, who alone was to be worshiped. Did not the Hebrews break the law of the king?—Yes, but the law of God was first to be obeyed.

Now, brethren, we are coming to the crisis. Let us stand the test manfully, grasping the hand of Infinite Power. God will work for us. We have only to live one day at a time, and if we get acquainted with God, he will give us strength for what is coming tomorrow, grace sufficient for each day, and every day will find its own victories, just as it finds its trials. We shall have the power of the Highest with us; for we shall be clad with the armor of Christ's righteousness. We have the same God that has worked for his people in ages past. Jesus stands by our side, and shall we falter?—No, as the trials come, the power of God will come with them. God will help us to stand in faith on his word, and when we are united, he will work with special power in our behalf. - RH April 29, 1890

RH October 23, 1913 - "What Doest Thou Here?" - Pt. 1 / 2

Elijah's retreat on Mt. Horeb, though hidden from man, was known to God. As the prophet had brooded over Israel's unreadiness to return to God, and over Jezebel's continued influence over Ahab, his faith and courage had fled. But he was not left to struggle alone with the powers of darkness.

Through a mighty angel the word of the Lord came to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" In bitterness of soul, Elijah mourned out his complaint: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

Calling upon the prophet to leave the cave in which he had hidden, the angel bade him stand before the Lord on the mount, and listen to his word. As Elijah obeyed, "behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave." His petulance was silenced, his spirit softened and subdued. He now knew that a quiet trust, a firm reliance on God, would ever find for him a present help in time of need.

Not by a mighty manifestation of divine power, but by "a still small voice," God chose to reveal himself to his servant. Thus he desired to teach Elijah that it is not always the work that makes the greatest demonstration that is most successful in accomplishing God's purpose. While Elijah waited for the revelation of the Lord, a devouring fire swept by: but God was not in the flame. A tempest rolled, and the lightnings flashed; but God was not in all this. Then there came a still small voice, and the prophet covered his head before the presence of the Lord.

It is not always the most learned presentation of truth that convicts and converts the soul. Not by eloquence or logic men's hearts are reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart.

"What doest thou here, Elijah?" the voice inquired; and again the prophet answered, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of

Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

The Lord assured Elijah that the wrong-doers in Israel should not go unpunished. There was stern work to be done, that all might be given opportunity to take their position on the side of the true God. Elijah himself was to return to Israel, and share with others the burden of bringing about a reformation. Some were to be especially chosen to fulfil the divine purpose in the punishment of the idolatrous kingdom.

“Go,” the Lord commanded Elijah, “return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the word of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.”

Elijah had thought that he alone in Israel was a worshiper of the true God. But he who reads the hearts of all, revealed to the prophet that there were many in Israel who, through the years of apostasy, had remained true to him. “I have left me,” God said, “seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”

There are many lessons to be drawn from Elijah’s experience during these days of discouragement and apparent defeat,—lessons invaluable to the servants of God in this age, marked as it is by general departure from right. The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet’s day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their baleful influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. It is publicly taught that we have reached a time when human reason should be exalted above the teachings of the Word. The law of God, the divine standard of righteousness, is declared to be of no effect. The enemy of all truth is working with deceptive power to cause men and women to place human institutions where God should be, and to forget that which was ordained for the happiness and salvation of mankind.

Yet this apostasy, wide-spread as it is, is not universal. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who long to understand more fully in regard to Christ and the law, many who are hoping against hope that Jesus will soon come to end the reign of sin and death. And there are many who are worshipping Baal ignorantly, with whom the Spirit of God is striving.

These need the personal help of those who have learned to know God and the power of his word. In such a time as this, every child of God should be actively engaged in helping others. As those who have an understanding of Bible truth try to seek out the men and women who are longing for light, angels of God will attend them. And where angels go, none need fear to move forward. As a result of the faithful efforts of consecrated workers, many will be turned from idolatry to the worship of the living God. Many will cease to pay homage to man-made institutions, and will take their stand fearlessly on the side of God and his law.

Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through them. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. He leads them to settle down at ease, or, for the sake of greater worldly advantages, to remove from places where they might be a power for good. Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty because of opposition or persecution. - RH October 23, 1913

RH October 30, 1913 - "What Doest Thou Here?" - Pt. 2 / 2

To Elijah, in his place of hiding, the Lord said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" I sent you to Samaria with a message to Ahab; I sent you to the brook Cherith, and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel; and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here?

So, to every child of God not actively engaged in service whose voice the enemy of souls, no matter by what means, has succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, What doest thou here? I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here? Who sent you?

The joy set before Christ, the joy that sustained him through sacrifice and suffering, was the joy of seeing sinners saved. This should be the joy of every Christian, the spur to his ambition. Those who realize, even in a limited degree, what redemption means to them and to their fellow men, will comprehend in some measure the vast needs of humanity. Their hearts will be moved to compassion as they see the moral and spiritual destitution of thousands who are under the shadow of a terrible doom, in comparison with which physical suffering fades into nothingness.

Of families, as of individuals, the question is asked, What doest thou here? In many churches there are families well instructed in the truths of God's Word who might widen the sphere of their influence by moving to places in need of the ministry that they are capable of giving. God calls for Christian families to go into the dark places of the earth, and work wisely and perseveringly for those who are enshrouded in spiritual gloom. To answer this call requires self-sacrifice. While many are waiting to have every obstacle removed, souls are dying, without hope and without God. For the sake of worldly advantage, for the sake of acquiring scientific knowledge, men are willing to venture into pestilential regions, and endure hardship and privation. Where are those who are willing to do as much for the sake of telling others of the Saviour?

"The love of Christ constraineth us," the apostle Peter declared. This was the motive that impelled the zealous disciple in his arduous labors in the cause of the gospel. It was the impulse that moved the great apostle Paul. And no less is the need today that the followers of Christ feel the same constraining power and respond to its influence with the same zeal and devotion.

If under trying circumstances, men of spiritual power, pressed beyond measure, become discouraged and desponding, if at times they see nothing desirable in life, that they should choose it, this is nothing strange or new. One of the mightiest of prophets fled for his life before the rage of an infuriated woman. A fugitive, weary and travel-worn, bitter disappointment crushing his spirits, he asked that he might die. To all who, spending their lives in self-sacrificing labor, are tempted to give way to despondency and distrust, the experience of Elijah of Mt. Horeb should bring hope and courage in the assurance of God's watchful care, his love, and his power.

When men see their zeal for God's cause misunderstood or unappreciated, their counsels and reproofs slighted, their efforts to do a work of reform repaid with hatred and opposition; when they see those from whom they have a right to expect help and support, adding to their burdens, let them study anew the work of Elijah and the experience he gained on Horeb. It was when hope was gone, and his life-work seemed

threatened with defeat, that the prophet learned one of the deepest lessons of his life. In the hour of his greatest weakness he learned the need and the possibility of trusting God under circumstances the most forbidding. Never would Heaven forsake him while he maintained his integrity.

It is at the time of greatest weakness that Satan assails the soul with the fiercest temptations. It was thus that he hoped to prevail over the Son of God; for by this policy he had gained many victories over man. When the will-power weakened and faith failed, then those who had stood long and valiantly for the right yielded to temptation. Moses, wearied with the faithlessness and rebellion of the Israelites during the forty years of wandering, lost for a moment his hold on infinite power. He failed just on the borders of the promised land. So with Elijah. He who had stood undaunted before Ahab, who throughout that terrible day on Carmel had stood before the whole nation of Israel, the sole witness to the true God, in a moment of weariness allowed the fear of death to overcome his faith.

And so it is today. When we are encompassed with doubt, perplexed by circumstances, or afflicted by poverty or distress, Satan seeks to shake our confidence in God. It is then that he arrays before us our mistakes and tempts us to distrust God, to question his love. He hopes to discourage the soul, and break our hold on God; for he knows that once he succeeds in separating us from the source of our strength, he is sure of his prey.

Those who, standing in the front of the conflict, are impelled by the Spirit of God to do a special work, will frequently feel a reaction when the pressure is removed. Despondency may shake the most heroic faith, and weaken the most steadfast will. But God understands, and he still pities and loves his servants. He reads the motives and the purposes of the heart. To wait patiently, to trust when everything looks dark, is the lesson that every leader in God's work needs to learn. Heaven will not fail them in their day of adversity. Nothing is apparently more helpless yet really more invincible than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on God.

Not alone for men in positions of large responsibility is the lesson of Elijah's experience in learning anew how to trust God in the hour of trial. He who was Elijah's strength is strong to uphold every struggling child of his, no matter how weak. Of every one he expects loyalty, and to every one he grants power according to the need. In his own strength man is strengthless; but in the might of God he may be strong to overcome evil and to help others to overcome. Satan can never gain advantage of him who makes

God his defense. “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. . . . In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Fellow Christian, Satan knows your weakness; therefore cling to Jesus. Abiding in God's love, you may stand every test. The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stand against the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world. Bring faith into your experience. Faith lightens every burden, relieves every weariness. Providences that are now mysterious you may solve by continued trust in God. It is when God's people see no way of advance, when the Red Sea is before them and the pursuing army behind, that God bids them go forward. Thus he tests their faith. When such experiences come to you, go forward, trusting in Christ. Walk by faith in the path he marks out. Trials will come; but go forward. This will strengthen your faith in God, and fit you for service. The records of sacred history are written not merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old may work in us. In no less marked a manner than he wrought then will he work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of his power.

To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken, “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Christ will never abandon those for whom he has died. We may leave him, and be overwhelmed with temptation; but Christ can never turn from one for whom he has paid the ransom of his own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones. They force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and place their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend.

In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach God's servants that it is divine power that gives success. Those whom God employs as his messengers are not to feel that his work is dependent on them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who in every crisis has been the strength and dependence of his people, will carry out his eternal purpose. He will thwart the designs of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against his people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations he guards his children still. When the

strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of his enemies, his people will be safe in his hands.

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: . . . in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.” - RH October 30, 1913