

*Ellen G. White*

**SIGNS <sup>OF</sup> THE TIMES**  
**ARTICLES**



**BOOK II OF III**

**1883 - 1894**

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ing when these restrictions will cease. The holy oracles were especially committed to the Jews; not to be an Israelite was not to belong to the favored people of God. The Jews had come more and more to regard themselves as superior by divine right to every other people upon the earth; yet they had not been careful to maintain their separate and holy character by rendering obedience to all the commandments of God. Now the prophet declares that the stranger who will love and obey God shall enjoy the privileges that have belonged exclusively to the chosen people. Hitherto, circumcision and a strict observance of the ceremonial law had been the conditions upon which Gentiles could be admitted to the congregation of Israel; but these distinctions were to be abolished by the gospel. "Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him."

Again, after rebuking the selfishness, violence, and oppression of Israel, and exhorting them to works of righteousness and mercy, he declares: "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The first part of the chapter brings to view a people who apparently delight in the service of God; they seek him daily, "as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God." Yet their lives are not right before the Lord; for he commands his prophet, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their trans-

gression, and the house of Jacob their sins." He declares that if they will return unto the Lord with all the heart, they shall be called repairers of the breach, the restorers of paths to dwell in. Then he distinctly shows them what this breach is. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath,"—for they had been trampling it under their feet as a thing despised,— "then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

This prophecy reaches down the centuries to the time when the man of sin attempted to make void one of the precepts of God's law, to trample underfoot the original Sabbath of Jehovah, and in its stead exalt one of his own creation. And when the Christian world set aside God's holy Sabbath, and in its place accept a common working day, unsanctioned by a single "Thus saith the Lord," they are encouraging infidelity, and virtually acknowledging the supremacy of that power by whose authority alone the change has been effected. The rejection of the Sabbath has led to the rejection of the whole law, and thousands of professed Christians now boldly declare it void.

The law of ten commandments, which has been so lightly disregarded, is the foundation of many generations; and no man or body of men has been authorized to set aside, or vary in the slightest particular, one of the ten precepts of Jehovah. God spoke this law from Sinai in awful grandeur, in the hearing of all Israel, and he wrote it with his own fingers upon tables of stone, not for his chosen people only, but for all men, to the close of time. Christ himself declares that while the heavens and the earth remain, not one jot or tittle shall pass from this holy law.

There were two institutions founded in Eden that were not lost in the fall,—the Sabbath and the marriage relation. These were carried by man beyond the gates of paradise. He who loves and observes the Sabbath, and maintains the purity of the marriage institution, thereby proves himself the friend of man and the friend of God. He who by precept or example lessens the obligation of these sacred institutions is the enemy of both God and man, and is using his influence and his God-given talents to bring in a state of confusion and moral corruption.

**THE CHRISTIAN PATHWAY**

**C**HRI<sup>ST</sup> PROMISES, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The way is plain; the will of God is manifest. We are not to live in doubt and uncertainty, and to rest satisfied while groping our way without a guide. Jesus does not, after giving us general directions, leave us to guess the way amid by-paths and dangerous passes. He leads us in a straight path; and while we follow him, our footsteps will not slide. It was Jesus that led ancient Israel, though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night concealed him from their view; and in this important period of the world's history, he will as manifestly lead his people. The path is no uncertain one. The way is marked out, and every step is ordered of the Lord.

God has ample light and grace to bestow upon all them that fear him. Especially will he help his people in these last days, when Satan's devices are so abundant, so deceptive, and so corrupting. To those who will walk in the truth, the God of truth will give grace according to their needs. He will fill their hearts with peace, and courage, and confidence. But mercy and truth are promised only to the contrite and obedient. God has said that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; and those who are disobedient and rebellious will not escape the visitation of his just anger.

We cannot afford to separate ourselves from Jesus for a single hour. Without him we are in danger of being overcome of Satan, who is ever watching to suggest doubt, unbelief, and error. The world is flooded with error; it meets us on every hand. It is taught from the sacred desk, and lurks in theology, in literature, in philosophy, in science. Error perverts the judgment and opens the door to temptation, and through its influence Satan seeks to turn hearts from the truth; but an intelligent love for the truth sanctifies the receiver, and keeps him from the enemy's deceptive snares.

Satan uses some professed Christians to lead souls from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Worldly associates and amusements sow the seeds of doubt and skepticism. The sentiment of many worldly professors is, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." "Speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits." Many are daily cheating their souls with a

form of godliness without the power; but the Lord has removed his smile and the inspiration of his Spirit from them. His displeasure is against them, because their deeds are evil. He demands decided changes in the life and character. Good intentions, good resolutions, good acts, cannot be accepted as substitutes for repentance, faith, and willing obedience.

The people are too willing to believe their teachers without careful thought and prayerful investigation of God's word. They love to have their consciences quieted,—love to be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. In their blind selfishness, they deceive themselves in those things wherein they are willing to be deceived. Our Saviour declared to the Pharisees, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." And in his conversation with Nicodemus he said, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." So in this age; the church will neither search the Scriptures nor listen to the truth, lest her works be reprov'd. She is more willing to depart from the commandments of God than from the customs and friendship of the world. And because great men and worldly wise men are in her favor, because numbers and temporal prosperity are hers, she believes herself favored of God,— "rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing."

But earthly prosperity is no evidence of the favor of God. Christ and his apostles teach us, both by precept and example, that the true child of God cannot enjoy the friendship of the world. If he seeks it, it will become a snare to him; he will adopt the customs, precepts, and standards of the world, and will finally become like them in spirit. But there can be no fellowship between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. Says the apostle John, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God." They are unknown, unacknowledged by the world; but their names, cast out as evil by the lovers of sin, are written in the book of life. They are the adopted heirs of Christ, the nobility of Heaven. "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Many are not growing strong, because they do not take God at his word. They are conforming to the world. Every day they pitch their tents nearer to Egypt, when they should encamp a day's march nearer

the heavenly Canaan. We need individually to ask strength and grace from Heaven, that we may resist the temptation to assimilate to the world. We cannot afford to be divided in heart and purpose, first serving God, and then yielding to temptations and paying homage to the world. Many of us have grown gray in the service of Christ, in pushing the triumphs of his cross. We have fought the battles of the Lord too long, and endured too much, to permit Satan to gain the victory over us. The voice of our Leader is commanding "Go forward," and we should obey, saying, as did Caleb, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land."

If we commit the keeping of our souls to God in the exercise of living faith, his promises will not fail us; for they have no limit but our faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth." We may make or mar our own happiness. Many pet and excuse the defects in their characters; but these must all be remedied. Every deviation from the right is sin, and sin must be put away. We cannot afford to walk carelessly before our brethren or before the world.

Many confess their sins again and again, but do not put them away by genuine repentance. Unless we have a firm purpose and the aid of the grace of God, strong resolutions and vigilant watchfulness will be vain and powerless when temptations assail the soul; and under such circumstances some give up in despair, fearing that they must ever remain the slaves of sin. These have not a living faith in Jesus. We cannot trust in ourselves; if we do, we shall fail. Jesus has spoiled the powers of darkness; and it is through faith in his might that we shall be made strong. He will lift up a standard against Satan in behalf of every trusting, believing soul. We have the assurance that his grace is sufficient for us, and that we shall not be tempted above that we are able to bear. This is our only hope.

The apostle says, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Christian church at Pentecost, great wisdom and grace rested upon the whole body of believers. This blessing was given in answer to earnest, persevering prayer; and today God is just as willing to listen to the petitions of his people. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." When these fruits appear in the life, a telling influence will be exerted upon the world. The truly converted man will cease aspiring to be thought great. He will not seek for worldly honor, nor for luxury, ease, or wealth; neither will he be sensitive to reproach or neglect. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Self is no longer the supreme object of love; family and friends are no longer the boundary. His heart is enlarged. Jesus has the first place in his affections; he loves Christians, because he sees in them the image of his Master, and all mankind with a love that prompts him to do them good. This is the fruit growing on the true Vine, more precious in the sight of God than all the wealth and learning of earth's great men.

The unparalleled exhibition of love that was made on Calvary shows how God estimates souls. If we have this love in our hearts, we shall seek to win sinners to Jesus, that for them this great sacrifice may not have been made in vain. The language of the heart will be, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." We shall say with the psalmist, "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." We shall rejoice to speak of the wisdom and goodness of God as shown in the way he has led his people; for we shall have proved that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

March 13, 1884.

### SCIENCE AND REVELATION

"THE FOOL HATH said in his heart, There is no God." The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. If he reveals himself at all to men, it is by veiling himself in mystery. His ways are past finding out. Men must be ever searching, ever learning; and yet there is an infinity beyond. Could they fully understand the purposes, wisdom, love, and character of God, they would not believe in him as an infinite being, and trust him with the interests of their souls. If they could fathom him, he would no longer stand supreme.

There are men who think they have

of unbelievers, and their influence in the church will be very precious. We are required to be right in important matters; but faithfulness in little things will fit us for higher positions of trust.

On the part of many, there is a great lack of true courtesy. Much is said of the improvements that have been made since the days of the patriarchs; but those living in that age could boast of a higher state of refinement, and of more true courtesy of manners, than are possessed by the people in this age of boasted enlightenment. Integrity, justice, and Christian kindness, blended, make a beautiful combination. Courtesy is one of the graces of the Spirit. It is an attribute of Heaven. The angels never fly into a passion, never are envious, selfish, and jealous. No harsh or unkind words escape their lips. And if we are to be the companions of angels, we too must be refined and courteous. And we have none too much time to change our wrong habits, reform our defective characters, and obtain a fitness for the society of those heavenly beings. All harshness and severity, coarseness and unkindness, must be overcome; and now is the time for us to do the work. We can have no second probation. But if we do not improve these hours of privilege, we would not improve a second probation, should it be granted to us.

A Christian will cultivate that charity that is not easily provoked, that suffereth long and is kind, that hopeth all things, endureth all things. If this grace be in you, if you are ruled by the Spirit of Christ, your words and actions will testify that your religion is genuine; for your life will be full of good fruits. The children of God never forget to do good and to communicate. Good works are spontaneous with them; for God has transformed their natures by his grace. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

November 18, 1886.

### **THE VALUE OF PRAYER**

*"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."*

**WE ARE TOLD** that Elijah "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly," and his prayer was answered. A royal decree was signed in the courts of Babylon, that if for thirty days any man asked a petition of any God or man, save of Darius the king, he should be cast into the lions' den; but Daniel, notwithstanding he knew of the decree,

failed not to pray three times a day, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, as he had done before the decree was made; and the God whom he served continually, delivered him out of the power of the lions. These holy men knew the value of communion with God.

When Jesus was upon earth, and walked a man among the children of men, he prayed, and oh, how earnest were his prayers! How often he spent the whole night upon the damp, cold ground, in agonizing supplication! And yet he was the beloved and sinless Son of God. If Jesus felt the necessity of communion with his Father, and manifested so much earnestness in calling upon him, how much more should we, whom he has called to be heirs of salvation, who are subject to the fiery temptations of the wily foe, and dependent upon divine grace for strength to overcome, have our whole souls stirred to wrestle with God. The language of our souls should be, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." But many have allowed their hearts to become overcharged with the cares of this life, and God and his word have been neglected.

The subjects of Satan, although they hate and war with one another, are active and united in the one object of destroying souls. They are vigilant in improving every opportunity to advance their common interest, and war against the kingdom of Christ. But He who is the great Commander in Heaven and on earth, has limited their power.

Satan is ever ready to insinuate that prayer is a mere form, and avails us nothing. He cannot bear to have his powerful rival appealed to. At the sound of fervent prayer, the hosts of darkness tremble. Fearing that their captive may escape, they form a wall around him, that Heaven's light may not reach his soul. But if in his distress and helplessness the sinner looks to Jesus, pleading the merits of his blood, our compassionate Redeemer listens to the earnest, persevering prayer of faith, and sends to his deliverance a re-enforcement of angels that excel in strength. And when these angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of Heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, the angels of darkness fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost, and that one more soul is escaping from the power of their influence.

Prayer is the Christian's life. There is a remedy for the sin-sick soul, and that remedy is in Jesus. Precious Saviour! his

grace is sufficient for the weakest, and the strongest must have his help or perish. A Christian has victory over his passions and besetments. I would not dishonor my Master so much as to admit that a careless, trifling, prayerless person is a Christian. It is the privilege of the Christian to enjoy the deep movings of the Spirit of God. A sweet, heavenly peace will pervade his mind. He will love to meditate upon God and Heaven, and to feast upon the glorious promises of the written word.

But how shall this victory over the world be obtained? Go to your closet, dear reader, and there plead with God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Be in earnest; be sincere; Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God. Remain until unutterable longings for salvation are awakened in your heart, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin. Then when you leave your closet, watch; and so long as you watch and pray, the grace of God will appear in your life.

In no case neglect secret prayer; for it is the soul of religion. If you expect salvation, you must pray. Take time. Be not hurried and careless in your prayers. Intercede with God to work in you a thorough reformation, that the fruits of the Spirit may dwell in you, and that, by your godly life, you may shine as a light in the world. When you sincerely feel that without the help of God you perish, when you pant after him as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, then will the Lord strengthen you speedily, and you will have that peace that passeth understanding.

While you pray that you may not be led into temptation, remember that your work does not end with the prayer. You must then answer your own prayer as far as possible, by resisting temptation, and leave that which you cannot do for yourselves for Jesus to do for you. We cannot be too guarded in our words and deportment, lest we invite the enemy to approach us with his temptations. With the word of God for our guide, and Jesus for our heavenly teacher, we need not be ignorant of the divine requirements or of Satan's devices. And it will be no unpleasant task to be obedient to the will of God, when we yield ourselves fully to be directed by his Spirit.

Pray in the family. Morning and evening obtain the victory at your family altar. Let not your daily labor keep you from this duty. Take time to pray. And as you pray, believe that God hears you, have faith

mixed with your prayers. Let faith take hold of the blessing, and it is yours.

In the morning the Christian's first thoughts should be of God. Come before him with humility, with a heart full of tenderness, and with a sense of the temptations and dangers that surround yourself and your children. Morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, make a hedge about your children. Patiently instruct them; kindly and untiringly teach them how to live so that they may please God.

Teach your children reverence for God and the hour of prayer. The Lord our God is holy, and his name is to be treated with great reverence. Angels are displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which the name of God, the great Jehovah, is sometimes used in prayer. They mention that name with the greatest awe, even veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; the name of Christ also is sacred, and is spoken with the greatest reverence. And those who in their prayers use the name of God in a common and flippant manner, have no sense of the exalted character of God, of Christ, or of heavenly things.

Pray in faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Prevailing prayer is the prayer of living faith; it takes God at his word, and claims his promises. Feeling has nothing to do with faith. When faith brings the blessing to your heart, and you rejoice in the blessing, then it is no more faith, but feeling. How strange it is that men will put confidence in the word of their fellow-men, and yet find it so hard to exercise living faith in God! The promises are ample; why not accept them just as they read? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Every petition that is offered to God in faith, and with a true heart, will be answered. Such prayer is never lost; but to claim that it will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust him even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon his sure promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Fervent and effectual prayer will be regarded in Heaven. It is the privilege of Christians to obtain strength from God to hold every precious gift of his Spirit.

The power of God has not decreased. His grace and his Spirit will be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob, crying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Enduring faith has been dying away, and must be revived in the hearts of God's people. There must be a claiming of the blessing of God. Living faith always bears upward to God and glory; unbelief, downward to darkness and death.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." We can overcome, fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that by prevailing prayer by his grace, we might overcome every temptation, every subtle share of the adversary, and at last sit down with him in his kingdom.

*Basel, Switzerland.*

November 25, 1886.

### **THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS**

*"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?" Luke 16:9-12.*

**T**HE PARABLE of the unjust steward was given to teach us a lesson in regard to our duty in temporal things. Every man is a steward of God. To each the Master has entrusted his means, and he says, "Occupy till I come." A time is coming when he will require his own with usury. He will say to each of his stewards, "Give an account of thy stewardship." But men often claim their means as their own. They seem to have no sense of the fact that the property they are using belongs to God, and that they must give him an account for the use they make of it.

Said the Saviour: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." By using our means to the glory of God here, we lay up a treasure in Heaven; and when earthly possessions are all gone, the faithful steward has Jesus and angels for his friends, to re-

ceive him home to everlasting habitations.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." He that is faithful in his earthly possessions, which are least, making a judicious use of the means which God has entrusted to his care, will be faithful in every other respect. Every investment made in the cause of God will increase his love for it. He will not be the poorer in this world, and he will be "laying up in store" for himself "a good foundation against the time to come," that he "may lay hold on eternal life."

"He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." If he will not give of his means to support the warfare against the moral darkness that is flooding the world, he will be unfaithful in the things of God in every respect. He keeps his means from doing good in the cause of God, and often that which is committed to his trust is taken from him.

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" The Christian church, as a general rule, are disowning the claims of God upon them to give alms of the things which they possess; and the work of God can never advance as it should until the followers of Christ realize their duty in this respect. If they prove unfaithful in the management of their temporal affairs, God will never give them the true riches, the immortal inheritance.

"If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Jesus has purchased redemption for us. It is ours; but we are placed here on probation to see if we will prove worthy of eternal life. Our heavenly Father tests us by trusting us with earthly possessions. If we use these freely to advance his cause and to benefit our fellow-men, we shall prove good stewards, and shall gain the approbation of our Lord. But we "cannot serve God and mammon;" for "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."

The idea of stewardship should have a practical bearing upon all the people of God. The parable of the talents has not been fully understood, or it would bar out covetousness, which God calls idolatry. The talents do not represent merely the ability to preach and to instruct from the word of God. The parable also applies to the temporal means which God has entrusted to his people. Those who received the five and the two talents traded, and doubled that which was committed to their

said unto him, "God forbid; thou shalt not die; behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so."

After the remarkable exhibition of the power of God, Jonathan could not believe that his father would still harm David, for that would be manifest rebellion against God. But notwithstanding the oft-repeated and confident assurances of his friend, David was not convinced. He declared that Saul knew of their attachment for each other, and that this would be a sufficient reason why the king would not make his purposes known to his son. With intense earnestness he rehearsed how he had been driven from place to place, and now he assured Jonathan, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

August 31, 1888.

### DAVID'S DISTRUST

**A**T THE TIME of the new moon, a sacred festival was celebrated in Israel. This festival recurred upon the day following the sad interview between David and Jonathan concerning the certain death that seemed to wait the son of Jesse. It was expected that both the young men would be at the feast. David feared to be present, and an arrangement was made that he should visit his brothers, and on his return, he should hide himself in the field not far from the banqueting hall, and for three days he should absent himself from the presence of the king, and Jonathan would note the effect upon Saul. If inquiry was made as to the whereabouts of the son of Jesse, Jonathan was to say that he had gone home to attend the yearly sacrifice offered at his father's house. If no angry demonstrations were made by the king, but he should answer, "It is well," then it would be safe for David to return to the court. But if he should become enraged at his absence, it would decide the matter of David's flight.

David was to hide himself in a place appointed before, and after his return from the feast at his father's house, Jonathan, who was skilled in archery, was to go with an attendant to the field, near the hiding-place of David, and shoot a certain number of arrows that would be a sign to him of the temper of the king, and would decide his course of action. If Jonathan should say to the young man who gathered

up the arrows, "Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee," David would have nothing to fear, but might come to the palace, and the presence of the king. But if he should say to his attendant, "Behold, the arrows are beyond thee," then David was to take his departure, for it would not be safe for him to come to the court.

On the first day of the feast, the king made no inquiry concerning the absence of David; but when his place was vacant the second day, he asked his son the reason of the non-appearance of his friend. He questioned, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor today? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem; and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there; and now, if I have found favor in thine eyes, let me go away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table." When Saul heard these words, his anger was ungovernable. He abused his son, and cursed David. He declared that as long as David lived, Jonathan could not come to the throne of Israel, and he demanded that David should be sent for immediately, for he had determined that he should die. Jonathan again made intercession for his friend, pleading, "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" This appeal to the king for the reason of his wrath against an innocent man, only made him more Satanic in his fury, and he hurled the javelin, which he had intended for David, at his own son.

The prince was grieved and indignant, and leaving the royal presence, he was no more a guest at the feast. His soul was bowed down with sorrow, as he repaired, at the appointed time, to the spot where David was to learn the king's intentions toward him. Jonathan shot the arrow, and as the lad ran to find it, exclaimed, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" David understood the sign, and knew that he must flee for his life. When Jonathan had sent the lad home with his bow and arrows, he sought his beloved friend. They fell upon each other's neck and wept bitterly. Their united hearts were sorely grieved at the necessity of separation. The dark passion of the king cast its shadow upon the lives of the young men, and their grief was too intense for expression. Jonathan's last words fell upon the ear of David as they separated to pursue their different paths, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in

the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever."

Jonathan watched the form of his friend until he was lost from sight, lest he should be observed by spies, and taken to the presence of his enemy. Then the king's son returned to Gibeah, and David hastened to reach Nob, a city some ten miles distant, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. The tabernacle had been taken to this place from Shiloh, and here Ahimelech, the high priest, ministered. David knew not where to fly for refuge, except to the servant of God. The high priest looked upon him with astonishment, as he came unattended, with a countenance marked by anxiety, care, and sorrow. He inquired what had brought him to the place without an attendant. The young man was in constant fear of discovery, and was perplexed as to how he should reply. In his extremity he resorted to deception. Here David manifested a want of faith in God, and his sin resulted in causing the high priest to be put to death. Had the facts been plainly stated, Ahimelech would have known what course to pursue to preserve his life. God requires that truthfulness shall mark his people, even in times of peril. David told the priest that he had been sent by the king to accomplish some secret business which required that he should go alone. He asked the priest for five loaves of bread. There was nothing but hallowed bread in the possession of the man of God; David succeeded, however, in removing his scruples, and obtained the bread to satisfy his hunger.

But a new difficulty now presented itself, which caused fresh anxiety to David. He saw Doeg, the chief of Saul's herdsmen, who had professed the faith of the Hebrews, and who was now paying his vows in the place of worship. The sight of this man decided David to make haste to secure another place of refuge, and to obtain some weapon with which to defend himself if it should become necessary. He knew that Doeg was acquainted with the purpose of Saul in regard to himself. He was aware that orders had been issued to the king's servants to take the life of David if they should find him, and he feared that this man might attempt it before he could make good his escape.

He asked Ahimelech for a sword, and was told that he had none except the sword of Goliath, which had been kept as a relic in the tabernacle. David replied, "There is none like that; give it me." His courage

revived as he grasped the sword that he had once used so valiantly to destroy the champion of the Philistines. David fled to Achish, the king of Gath, for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people than with his own brethren. He decided to throw himself upon the mercies of national foes, rather than stay in the dominions of Saul.

But it was reported to Achish that David was the very man who had slain the champion of the Philistines years before, and now he who had sought refuge with the foes of Israel, found himself in the greatest peril. He feigned to be mad, and his enemies were deceived, and deemed him unworthy of their notice. Thus he made his escape.

The first error of David was his manifest distrust of God at Nob, and his second mistake was his deception before Achish. In his friendship and love for Jonathan, David had displayed noble traits of character, and his moral worth had won him favor with the people; but as the trial and test came upon him, his faith was shaken, and human weakness appeared. He saw in every man a spy and a betrayer. But his experience was serving to teach David wisdom, for he had a realization of his weakness and frailty, and of the necessity of constant dependence upon God. While in these trying scenes, he composed some of the psalms.

We see the weakness of even noble men when they are brought into trying circumstances. This man, when in a great emergency, had looked up to God with the steady eye of faith, and had met the proud, boasting Philistine. He believed in God, he went in his name. He trusted in his power to do the work of defeating the armies of the Lord's enemies. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight. He seemed to think that he was left alone, to fight his own battles. He was confused, and knew not which way to turn. We may learn a lesson from the experience of David. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." All need the help which God alone can give. Oh, how priceless is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed, despairing souls, encouraging the faint-hearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! Oh, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring, and manifests his patience and tenderness when we are in

adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow!

David ought not to have distrusted God for one moment. Wherever the children of God make a failure, it is due to their lack of faith. When shadows encompass the soul, when we want light and guidance, we must look up; there is light beyond the darkness. We must learn to trust our heavenly Father, and not allow the soul to be defiled with the sin of unbelief. In trying to save ourselves, we do not commit the keeping of our souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator. We do not expect him to work for us, but frantically beat about in our own finite strength to break through some wall of difficulty which God alone can remove for us. Man is nothing without God. The example of the good and noble men of sacred history, is to be imitated by us only where they followed the footsteps of the Lord. When man relies implicitly upon God, he will be true to himself; and he can hope and rejoice in the God of his salvation, though every friend of earth becomes a foe.

David had reason to trust God. He was the Lord's anointed. He had been protected in the midst of danger by the angels of God. He had been armed with valor and courage to do wonderful things, and if he had but removed his mind from the distressing situation in which he was placed, and thought of God's wonderful power and majesty, he would have been at peace even in the midst of the shadows of death, and could with confidence have repeated the promise of the Lord, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

September 7, 1888.

### IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

**D**AVID SOUGHT refuge in the strongholds of the mountains from the determined pursuit of Saul. He made good his escape to the cave of Adullam, a place that could be defended against a large army by a small force. "And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him." The family of David could not feel secure, knowing that at any time the unreasonable suspicions of Saul might be directed against them on account of their relation to David. They concluded that they would be safer with him whom the prophet Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, even though he was a fugitive in

a lonely cave, than exposed to the insane madness of a jealous king. They believed the Lord would protect David from the persecuting enmity of Saul, and they determined to leave their unguarded home, and unite their fortunes with their kinsman in his lonely retreat. It was a sad leave-taking of home and flocks, as the family procession moved on toward the valley of Judah.

In the cave of Adullam, the family were at last united in sympathy and affection. The son of Jesse could make melody with voice and harp as he sang, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" He had tasted the bitterness of suspicion and distrust from his brethren; and the harmony that had taken the place of discord, brought joy and comfort to the exile's heart. It was here that David composed the fifty-seventh psalm.

It was not long before they were joined by others who desired to escape the exactings of the king. There were many who had lost their confidence in the ruler of Israel, for he no longer seemed to be guided by the Spirit of the Lord. "And everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them; and there were with them about four hundred men." Here David had a little kingdom of his own, over which he ruled, and he enforced perfect order and discipline. But even in his retreat in the mountains, he was far from feeling secure; for he received continual evidence that the king had not relinquished his murderous purpose. The spirit of evil was upon Saul. He felt that his doom had been sealed by the solemn message of his rejection from the throne of Israel. His departure from the plain requirements of God was bringing its sure results. He did not turn, and repent, and humble his heart before God, but opened it to receive every suggestion of the enemy. He listened to every false witness, eagerly receiving anything that was detrimental to the character of David, hoping that he might find an excuse for manifesting his increasing envy and hatred of him who had been anointed to the throne of Israel. Every rumor was credited, no matter how inconsistent and irreconcilable it was with the former character and custom of David.

Every evidence that the protecting care of God was over David seemed to embitter and deepen his one engrossing and determined purpose. The failure to accomplish his own designs appeared in marked con-

in her great need put forth her hand and touched the hem of His garment, she felt the healing virtue. Hers was the touch of faith, and Christ recognized that touch. He knew that virtue had gone out from Him, and turning about in the throng, He asked, "Who touched me?" (Luke 8:45). Surprised at such a question, the disciples answered, "Master, the multitude throng thee, . . . and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8:45-48). The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God's commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

Jesus says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). Can we conceive of a more intimate relation than this implies? The fibers of the branch are identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and nourishment from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branches. Such is the believer's relation to Christ, if he abides in Christ and draws his nourishment from Him. But this spiritual relation between Christ and the soul can be established only through the exercise of personal faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6); for it is faith that connects us with the power of heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God, and, living with an eye single to the glory of God, more and more we discern the beauty of His character, the excellence of His grace. Our souls become strong in spiritual power; for we are breathing the atmosphere of heaven, and realizing that God is at our right hand, that we shall not be moved. We are rising

above the world, beholding Him who is the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, and by beholding we are to become changed into His image.

December 26, 1892.

### THE WAY TO CHRIST

**"IF ANY MAN** be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves; for his life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises to the life of Jesus. Love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Ps. 18: 35).

But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed. We have no reason to fear while looking to Jesus, no reason to doubt but that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him; but we may constantly fear lest our old nature will again obtain the supremacy, that the enemy shall devise some snare whereby we shall again become his captives. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. With our limited powers we are to be as holy in our sphere as God is holy in His sphere. To the extent of our ability, we are to make manifest the truth and love and excellence of the divine character. As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.

We are to grow daily in spiritual loveliness. We shall fail often in our efforts to copy the divine pattern. We shall often have to bow down to weep at the feet of Jesus, because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged; we are to pray more fervently, believe more fully, and try again with more steadfastness to grow into the likeness of our Lord. As we distrust our own power,

we shall trust the power of our Redeemer, and render praise to God, who is the health of our countenance, and our God.

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God.

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will.

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. Weaknesses that have been manifested in a vacillating will and powerless character, are overcome, for

continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ, having soundness and strength of principle. His perception is clear, and he manifests that wisdom which comes from God. Says James, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17, 18). This will be the wisdom manifested by him who takes the cup of salvation and calls upon the name of the Lord. This salvation, which offers pardon to the transgressor, presents to him the righteousness that will bear the scrutiny of the Omniscient One, gives victory over the powerful enemy of God and man, provides eternal life and joy for its receiver, and may well be a theme of rejoicing to the humble, who hear thereof and are glad.

The beautiful parable that Christ gave of the one lost sheep, of the shepherd that left the ninety and nine to go in search of that which was lost, illustrates the work of Christ, the sinner's condition, and the rejoicing of the universe over the salvation of the soul. The shepherd did not look carelessly over the sheep, and say, "I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one; let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold that he may come in; but I cannot go after him." No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the countenance of the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock, and when he is certain that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine within the fold, and, however dark and tempestuous the night, however perilous and unpleasant the way, however long and tedious the service, he does not weary, he does not falter, until the lost is found. And when it is found, he lays the weary, exhausted sheep on his shoulder, and, with cheerful gratitude that his search has not been in vain, he bears back the wanderer to the fold. His gratitude finds expression in the melodious songs of rejoicing, and he calls upon his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:6). So when a wanderer is

found by the Great Shepherd of the sheep, heavenly angels respond to the Shepherd's note of joy. When the lost is found, heaven and earth unite in thanksgiving and rejoicing. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

January 2, 1893.

### CHOSEN IN CHRIST

**M**ANY HAVE confused ideas as to what constitutes faith, and they live altogether below their privileges. They confuse feeling and faith, and are continually distressed and perplexed in mind; for Satan takes all possible advantage of their ignorance and inexperience. Through manifold temptations, Satan often succeeds in making the experience of the Christian dark and bitter, according to his evil designs. We are to accept of Christ as our personal Saviour, or we shall fail in our attempt to be overcomers. It will not answer for us to hold ourselves aloof from him, to believe that our friend or our neighbor may have him for a personal Saviour, but that we may not experience his pardoning love. We are to believe that we are chosen of God, to be saved by the exercise of faith, through the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit; and we are to praise and glorify God for such a marvelous manifestation of his unmerited favor. It is the love of God that draws the soul to Christ, to be graciously received, and presented to the Father. Through the work of the Spirit the divine relationship between God and the sinner is renewed. The Father says: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. I will exercise forgiving love toward them, and bestow upon them my joy. They shall be to me a peculiar treasure; for this people whom I have formed for myself shall show forth my praise."

The Father sets his love upon his elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of his own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as his obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith he hath loved them. Everyone who will humble himself as a little child who will receive and obey the word of God with a child's simplicity, will be among the elect of God. Of the church at

Ephesus, the apostle writes:—

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving his only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus. The pride of man hinders him from accepting the provisions of salvation. But human merit will not admit a soul into the presence of God. That which will make a man acceptable to God is the imparted grace of Christ through faith in his name. No dependence can be placed in works or in happy flights of feelings as evidence that men are chosen of God; for the elect are chosen through Christ.

Jesus says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." When the repenting sinner comes to Christ, conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, realizing that he is deserving of punishment, but relying on the mercy and love of Christ, he will not be turned away. The pardoning love of