

Ellen G. White

SIGNS ^{OF} THE TIMES

ARTICLES



BOOK III OF III

1894 - 1915

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June 18, 1894.

**HARMONY WITH APOSTATE
POWERS A SIGN OF
ENMITY TO GOD**

(Concluded.)

GOD HAS made provision in Jesus Christ that we shall keep the commandments of God. In this age of the world the powers of apostasy are seeking in every way to entice men into disobedience. The very work that Satan did in Eden he is doing today. He persuaded Adam and Eve that God had withheld some great good from them, and, while insinuating that God had not their welfare at heart, he pretended to have a deep interest in their advancement. Satan's falsehood prevailed; he succeeded in winning their confidence through promising them a greater breadth of knowledge than they had yet attained, even declaring that they should be as gods. God had placed upon them a very slight test. They were simply prohibited from partaking of one tree in the midst of the garden. Yet a violation of this one slight prohibition resulted in the fall of the human race. Though the action might be accounted small, yet it was disobedience and transgression; and, when weighed in God's balances, it was seen to be a most heinous sin. Adam's disobedience to God was the result of unbelief and ingratitude, and led him to take his position on the side of the great apostate, in giving credence to Satan's statements rather than to the word of God.

The history of Adam's transgression is before the human family, and is written for our admonition and warning, that we may realize how terrible is the sin of violating the least commandment of God.

We have full light upon the fact of how the Lord regarded Adam's transgression, and yet men presume to violate the fourth commandment. After the Lord created the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day, and sanctified the day of his rest, and bade men observe the day of rest throughout all generations. And yet men are repeating Adam's transgression, and are entering into a confederacy with Satan to war against God, in trampling upon the Sabbath institution. The church and the world are choosing Satan for their god and sovereign, and setting aside the God that made heaven and earth and all things that are therein.

Man lost his righteousness through

transgression, and "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Through the righteousness of Christ, our substitute and surety, our obedience to God's commandments is made acceptable. Christ clothed his divinity with humanity, and endured the test upon the point of appetite, ambition, and love of the world, thus making it possible for man to keep the commandments of God through his imputed righteousness. Through faith in Christ, man becomes partaker of the divine nature, and is complete in him, as long as he walks in the light. But when light has come to a soul that has been in darkness in regard to the binding claims of the law of God, and the transgressor refuses to walk in the light, he is guilty before God, and is charged with apostasy. He chooses that sin shall have dominion over him, and therefore the penalty of the law is upon him. By his continued transgression he reveals the fact that he is at enmity with God, that his heart is carnal, and not subject to the law of God. He repeats the transgression of Adam, accepts the insinuations of the fallen foe, takes his place on the side of the man of sin, and exalts Satan above God. In refusing the light, he becomes one with the ranks of apostasy, and chooses to act with the confederacy of Satan.

It was necessary that Christ should take upon him our nature, in order to prove the falsity of Satan's statements. The apostate cast contempt upon the law of God, and declared that it was impossible for men to keep God's commandment, which had been preordained in the counsels of heaven. Therefore Christ became man's representative and surety, thus demonstrating to heavenly intelligences, to unfallen worlds, and to the human race, that, through cooperation with divine agencies, humanity could be pure and holy. By partaking of the divine nature they could meet the demand of a perfect and holy law. Of Christ it is written: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

Adam failed to obey the commandments of God. Shall the sons and daughters of Adam continue in transgression, and also fail to obey? No one can enter into life who persists in disloyalty, since Christ

was given to our world that he might save his people from their sins. When the young man came to Christ, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. It was not possible for the young man, or for anyone, to keep the commandments of God except through the merit of Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of the blood of Christ there could be no remission of sin, no imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner. Christ endured the penalty of sin in his own body on the cross, and fulfilled all righteousness. The merit of the righteousness of Christ is the only ground upon which the sinner may hope for a title to eternal life; for Christ hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God, as a sweet-smelling savor. An infinite price was paid for man's redemption, not that he might be saved in his sins, not to make void the law of God. Paul says: "Do we then make void the law of God through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." For though "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," yet the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

How strange it is that the church and the world are joined together in a confederacy to do a work that God has especially prohibited! They disobey the commandments of God with impunity. The prohibition of God in the Garden of Eden was disregarded by Adam and Eve, and the most terrible consequences resulted. The Lord is placing the same test upon the human family today, and proving them by bringing to their attention the Sabbath, which is a memorial of God's creative power. In this memorial God testifies to the world and to heavenly intelligences that he made the world in six days, and rested—on the first day?—No, but on the seventh day. The same instruction comes to us today as when the Lord spoke to the children of Israel, saying, "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations."

The Lord sends messengers of truth to the people; but when he brings words of stern truth to bear upon their consciences, there are many who are in no way pleased or grateful. The message of truth disturbs them in their ease-loving service of God, and they do not like the rugged, thorny path that is pointed out to them. They do not wish to separate from the world, to

practice self-denial and self-sacrifice, and to attain unto the likeness of Christ. They desire to live at peace, and glorify self, and do not wish to identify their interest with that of Jesus Christ. They count that separation from the pleasures of the world, separation from the world's careless neglect of piety and devotion, is too heavy a cross for them to bear.

In rejection of light the hearts of men are hardened, and they finally unite with the agencies of apostasy in a work of compelling the conscience of those who do not agree with them, in persecuting and putting to death those who love God and keep his commandments. But the Lord says to his chosen people: "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 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 which 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. . . . And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. . . . Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

The remnant people of God are to endure persecutions. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." They are to give the warning message against the power represented by "the beast." The prophet says of this power, which represents the Papacy: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the

saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The remnant church of God are to give the warning of the third angel to the world: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

The church of God, despised 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 afflictions. For Jesus' sake they endure opposition, hatred, calumny. 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 over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And 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."

June 25, 1894.

ONE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

WHY IS IT that there is so much suffering in our world? One reason is that the rich do not fulfill their God-given responsibilities, and, as good stewards of the grace of God, make distribution for the wants of the poor. Men have perverted their God-given powers, and think only of how they may accumulate wealth. There are thousands of rich people who have every luxury, and do not know what to do with their possessions. They make their bodies idols, and heap treasure upon themselves. The rich and the poor have been represented in the Bible in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Those who do not deal out their bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and bring the poor that are cast

out into their houses, are committing the sin of Sodom. The iniquity of Sodom was pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, neither did they strengthen the hands of the poor and needy. The Lord says, "They were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good."

Idleness is sin. To every man and woman God has given his or her work, and all are to employ their time in doing good to others. Through luxury and haughtiness, hard-heartedness and inconsiderate thoughtlessness are developed in the character, and these are found in a large degree among those who hold high positions in the world. Those who have an abundance have little sympathy for the hungry, the naked, and the homeless.

What true satisfaction can persons have who load their bodies with costly jewels, while there are thousands destitute, shivering in their nakedness, crying to God in their hunger and distress! Oh, that those who deck themselves with jewels, and make idols of themselves, might see how they appear in the eyes of their Creator! Oh, that they might realize how the Saviour, who has died for them, looks upon them, witnessing every extravagance, and contrasting it with the destitution of the poor, who cry unto him, and who cry not in vain! Not one who decks himself with jewels and costly array will stand before God guiltless. No one can turn from the truth, violate justice, give up integrity, neglect the poor, and yet flatter himself that he has not forsaken God. All idolatry of self dishonors God, and he who dishonors God fails to benefit humanity. The eternal principles of right and wrong are violated. Needless expenditure of means, indulgence in extravagances, the putting on of gaudy trappings, and decking the body with flashing jewels, is an evidence that the soul has turned from God to self, and at the last day the poor will rise up in judgment and condemn those who have lived for the gratification of selfish desires. The sentence will be passed that, while many were in nakedness and starvation, the rich sinners were squandering money to gratify pride and ambition, and by so doing degraded themselves.

A man may be lifted up because of his wealth to sit among princes; but if he has not a living connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, he has a cheap mind, for he has lost eternity out of his reckoning. In the sight of God he is accounted of the earth,

shall not stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

Those who made this charge against Christ were on perilous ground. They were quenching the last ray of light emanating from the throne of God to their prejudiced, benighted souls. Jesus warned them of their danger, saying: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Though Christ had given them evidence upon evidence of his divine power in healing the sick, in casting out devils, in opening the eyes of the blind, and in doing many mighty works, yet certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees came to him, and said: "Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Then he goes on to illustrate the manner of their unbelief, and the consequences that would come upon them. He said: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

Jesus spoke with supreme, personal authority, and yet he always made the impression upon the people that he spoke by the authority of his Father. He placed himself on a level with the eternal throne. The glory of God fell directly upon him, and was shed upon those who would receive the light, and who would become light-bearers to others.

While many of the people believed on him, his own brethren, connected with him

by ties of relationship, were unbelieving, and thought he was beside himself in thus claiming divine authority, and in placing himself before the Pharisees as a reprover of their sins. His brethren knew that they were seeking to find occasion against him, and they felt that in the words he had spoken, he had given occasion enough. They must make some determined effort to prevent him from uttering words that would not only involve him in difficulty, but bring down upon his family the denunciations of the Pharisees. While he was speaking these decided words against those who were unbelieving, his disciples brought in the message that his mother and his brethren were without, and desired to speak with him. He knew what was in their hearts. He knew that they did not understand his character or mission, or realize that he came forth from the bosom of the Father. They did not realize that he was born to bear witness unto the truth, and did not understand his words of calm authority, that came forth from his lips with an earnestness proportionate to their reality and importance.

After hearing the message that his mother and his brethren were without, and desired to see him, he asked: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

He had come to earth as man's substitute and surety, and those who would receive him by faith, believing that he was the Sent of God, were more closely related to him than were those who were united to him by the ties of human relationship. Such would not perish, but have everlasting life. They would become one with him, as he was one with the Father. His mother, as a believer and doer of his words, was more nearly and savingly related to him because of this fact than because of her natural relationship in the flesh. Those who were his brethren in a natural way, would not be the least benefited by their relationship to him, unless they accepted him as their personal Saviour. But how precious are the words of Christ to those who believe! What cause of rejoicing should they be to every soul who is linked to Christ by saving faith! What a support Christ would have found in his earthly relatives if they had believed in him as in one from heaven, and had cooperated with him in doing the work of God. But the inspired word

declares, "Neither did his brethren believe on him." Christ had stated a sad fact in his experience when in Nazareth he said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country."

Christ uttered no sentiments, notions, or opinions that were simply such. That which he spoke was the truth. He had come forth from the bosom of the Father, and was the revealer of the infinite mind. He spoke with the authority of the divine oracle. He uttered the words of eternal life, unfolded truths of the highest order. Then what comfort should come to the believer as he reads these words: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

October 8, 1896.

WITNESSING FOR GOD

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

ALL WHO ADVOCATE truth in distinction from error, have a special work to do in vindicating the law of God. Men inspired by a power from beneath, have regarded it their duty to uphold, as the Sabbath of the Lord, the first day of the week. By disregarding the claims of God, ministers, who claim to preach the Gospel, are echoing the words told to Adam and Eve in Eden, that if they transgressed the law, they would not die, but would be as gods, knowing good and evil. The influence and example of these men have caused a lie to be received as truth. With persevering energy they have labored to establish a spurious sabbath, and this man-made institution has received the homage of the greater part of the world. But this does not make a day holy which God has given us as a common working day. Though this error is hoary with age, though the world is bowing in reverence to it, it still remains an error and a delusion; for God says, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Well-nigh universal contempt is shown to the law of God, and all who are loyal to him have a sacred and solemn work to do in magnifying the law, and making it honorable. God placed his sanctity upon the seventh day, and gave it to man to keep holy; and he says, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out

of my lips." By rendering obedience to his commandments, we uphold the honor of God in the earth.

Satan works against the law with untiring energy, and God calls upon his people to be witnesses for him by pressing the battle to the gates. This work must advance, or it will go backward. In this war there is no release. Those who take part in it must put on the whole armor of God, that they may fight manfully in the warfare against evil.

Often God's soldiers will find themselves brought into difficult places, they know not why. But are they to relax their hold because difficulties arise? Is their faith to diminish because they cannot see their way through the darkness? God forbid. They are to cherish an abiding sense of God's power to uphold them in their work. They cannot perish, neither can they lose their way, if they will follow his guidance, and strive to uphold his law.

The experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness should guide us in our work. The word of the Lord declares, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." In their journeyings the Lord brought the children of Israel into hard places, to test their faith and their fidelity to him. He had pledged himself to bring them into the promised land, and if they had waited patiently for the Lord, reviving their faith in him by recounting his great goodness and his wonderful works in their behalf, he would have shortened their test. But they forgot their heavenly Leader. Murmuring and complaining, they vented their wrath and bitterness upon Moses, forgetting that their emergency was God's opportunity.

Today God says to his people, Do not imitate the children of Israel by showing unbelief when brought into difficulties. For "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."

"Dearly beloved," says the apostle Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold,

glorify God in the day of visitation." God has led us out to stand in defense of his law, and he calls upon us to let our light so shine that others, seeing our good works, may be led to glorify our heavenly Father. We have no time to waste in thinking of our individual difficulties. When we bemoan the hardness of the way, we turn from the path of faith. God can make us fully able to go up and possess the promised land. He says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

If our path is not always made plain and easy, if we are not always so well favored as we think we should be, let us look to God, and say in faith, By the mighty cleaver of truth God has separated us from the world, from its customs and maxims, and has chosen us as his peculiar people, and he is able to work for us. Let us go forward in the strength of the Lord God Almighty, striving to uplift his law in the earth. So shall we testify to his truth. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me." "I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me."

October 15, 1896.

A LESSON FROM GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

GOD CHOSE Israel as his people, and gave them gracious promises on condition of obedience. He faithfully performed his promises. He demonstrated his power in their deliverance from Egypt; he opened them a path in the Red Sea, and caused them to pass safely over, while their enemies, in pursuit, perished beneath its waters. He subdued the nations before them; he guided them with his counsel; he enriched them with his bounties.

The mixed multitude who came up from Egypt with Israel were continually departing from God, and making themselves a snare to his people. God saw that Israel would, in their future intercourse with other nations, be in danger of following their example; and he provided for this. His law was to be read and explained to

them as a nation; his dealings toward them were to be repeated; the warnings, the reproofs and counsels which the Lord gave them, were to be presented before them. His law was proclaimed from Mount Sinai, that all might hear. Point by point, it was explained to meet the minds of both the learned and the ignorant. It was necessary that all should become intelligent in regard to its binding claims, especially in reference to the Sabbath and intermarriage with other nations.

The Sabbath and marriage were instituted in Eden, when man was upright and innocent before God. They were established when the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But men broke the rules which God gave respecting these institutions, and brought upon themselves condemnation and woe.

When the law was spoken, the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, stood by the side of his Son, enshrouded in the fire and the smoke on the mount. It was not here that the law was first given; but it was proclaimed, that the children of Israel, whose ideas had become confused in their association with idolaters in Egypt, might be reminded of its terms, and understand what constitutes the true worship of Jehovah.

What condescension was this, that the infinite God should stand side by side with his Son, while the law, which is the foundation of his government, was given. He would give his people an intelligent knowledge of his will. He does not command men to obey him when they do not understand what he requires. Here was displayed his wisdom, power, and love. Man was so dear to the Creator of the world that he spoke to him through Jesus Christ, with an audible voice, giving unmistakable evidence of his presence and majesty.

But we have on this occasion an illustration of the power of temptation upon men. Satan with his host stood in the midst of the armies of Israel to exercise his influence over the people of God's choice. He tempted them, and many yielded to his suggestions; for while the holy law of God was still sounding in their ears; while the glory of God was displayed before their eyes, and God himself was guiding, guarding and sustaining them by his miraculous power, the children of Israel rebelled against him, and imitated the practices they had witnessed in Egypt. They turned

"I find no fault in Him at all." Nevertheless he ordered Him to be scourged, and then delivered Him up to suffer the most cruel death that could be devised.

"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." It pleased God to bruise His only-begotten Son, to suffer temptation to come to Him, to permit Satan to develop his attributes and the principles of his government. The enmity of the apostate against the Commander of all heaven must be seen. It must be shown that Satan's mercy is cruelty. What a battle was this, between Christ and Satan! It was waged up to the very time of the resurrection, yea, up to the time of the ascension. Then it was transferred to Christ's followers, and today Satan wars against them.

During His lifetime Christ's spirit was grieved because His own nation looked upon Him as a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness that they should desire Him. He longed for careworn, oppressed, weary human beings to come to Him, that He might give them the light and life and joy that are only to be found in Him. The veriest sinners were the objects of His deep, earnest interest, pity, and love. But when in the greatest need of human sympathy, in the hour of His trial and temptation, even the most promising of His disciples forsook Him. He was indeed compelled to tread the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. An atmosphere of apostasy surrounded Him. On every side could be heard sounds of mockery, taunting, and blasphemy. Satanic agencies full of animosity strove to inspire the human family with deadly animosity against the law of Jehovah; and in his enmity the apostate was joined by the professed worshipers of God, for whom Christ had done so much.

The Lord of hosts suffered with His Son, but He did not abate one jot of the penalty. The world's Redeemer heard the people taking the oath of allegiance to a rival sovereign. He heard them divorcing themselves from God, refusing to obey His rule, saying, "We have no king but Caesar." As He hung on the cross, He heard them say tauntingly, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God."

The Lord permits men to go to a certain length in sin, and then, as in the destruction

of the old world, He will arise and punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth will disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain.

"Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Thus it was. The terrible scenes of the crucifixion revealed what humanity will do when under Satan's control. They revealed what the outcome would be if Satan was to control the world. Those who witnessed these scenes never lost the impressions made upon their minds. Many were converted, and told others of the awful scene they beheld. Many who heard the report of Christ's death were converted, and commenced searching the Scriptures. Thus were fulfilled the words, "So shall He sprinkle many nations."

"Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent; in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."

Christ was this Branch, the highest branch of the highest cedar. He was the plant of the Lord's setting. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Christ's every act was acceptable to the Father. God loved His Son in His humiliation. He loved Him most when the penalty for the transgression of His law fell on Him.

Christ was the Majesty of heaven, the Commander of the heavenly hosts. But He put off His crown, and divested Himself of His royal robe, to take upon Him human nature, that humanity might touch humanity. As the world's Redeemer, He passed through all the experiences through which we must pass. He found Himself in fashion as a man. He humbled Himself to do the greatest work that could be done for the human race. A beam of righteousness

from heaven shone amid the moral darkness of this earth, to enlighten every man that cometh into the world.

Christ suffered in man's stead, giving His life for the life of the world. All who repent and turn to Him are His heritage. His death proved God's administration and government to be without a flaw. Satan's charge in regard to the conflicting attributes of justice and mercy was forever settled beyond question. Every voice in heaven and out of heaven will one day testify to the justice, mercy, and love of God.

July 19, 1899.

UNBELIEVING ISRAEL

THERE ARE MANY who have received the idea that the Jewish age was one of darkness, superstition, and ignorance, that repentance and faith and divine enlightenment were reserved for the Gospel dispensation, that these had no part in the Hebrew religion, which, they claim, consisted only in forms and ceremonies. A greater deception than this could not exist. The Hebrew nation was taken into close relation to God, as a peculiar people, a holy nation. The Lord gave to Israel evidences of His presence, that they might fear His name and obey His voice, and that they might know that He was leading them to the promised land. The power of God, which was revealed in so remarkable a manner in their deliverance from Egypt, was seen from time to time through all their journeyings.

And in these manifestations and revelations God was uplifting Israel from a demoralized condition. Great changes were to be wrought in this disorganized people; for oppression and servitude and idolatrous association had molded their habits, their appetites, and their characters.

The Lord had promised Israel that if they would obey His commandments, He would supply their necessities by His miraculous power. But the Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They wanted their own way. They desired to follow the leadings of their own minds and be controlled by their own judgment.

The Lord heard their murmurings, and the divine presence was revealed in so remarkable a manner that they were afraid. A voice was heard from the glory, bidding Moses and Aaron draw near to the cloudy pillar where Christ was enshrouded. And the Lord talked with Moses and Aaron,

and the Israelites heard His voice telling them that He had heard their murmurings. They heard Him promise that they should have what their appetites craved,—bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening. In all His dealings with them, God was seeking to teach His people that it was not Moses with whom they were finding fault, but that their murmurings were directed against their divine Leader.

The Christian world, who today look upon the Jewish nation as under the curse of God, should inquire, Why did the Lord let His judgments fall upon Israel in so signal a manner?—It was because they had rejected the great light given to them since the day of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It was because God revealed to them His will by prophets and by holy men, and they walked in their own ways.

Their calamities did not come because they kept the law of God, but because they disregarded that law. God had told them that if they did not obey His commandments, He could not keep His covenant with them. The history of the Israelites is portrayed for our warning. They had great light and exalted privileges; yet they did not live up to that light nor appreciate their advantages, and their light became darkness. They walked in the light of their own eyes, instead of following the leadings of God. Their history is given for the benefit of those who live in these last days, that we may avoid following the same example of unbelief. The apostle Paul says: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?"

In these last days God has brought to His people a knowledge of His law. A flood of light has been poured upon the New Testament, revealing the truths of the Old. God has brought out from the world and from the church a people whom He has made the depositaries of His law. They are to teach that that law must be obeyed if men would enter into life. To those who keep His commandments He will be a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, to lighten and lead the way in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in.

In keeping the commandments, we have the assurance that there is great reward, and no earthly consideration should induce Christians to refuse to lift the cross in keeping all of God's commandments. Riches, ease, pleasure, ambition, and worldly honors are as dross that will perish in the fires of the last days. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Better far obtain a knowledge of God's will through an understanding of His word than have the praise of men and the honor of the world.

There is a great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led His people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep His law and obey His voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet what was to the Israelites a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of the night. To us as a people has been committed the law of God. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But to those who disregard them they are as the clouds of night.

"Go forward," God said to Israel, when the flowing waters of the Red Sea blocked their passage as they moved out in the path which Providence had indicated. As they placed their feet in the waters of the sea, they did what the Lord required of them. They did not see what God would do next. They did not see the broad path opened for them by the power of God until they manifested their faith by moving forward. And then God's power was revealed. The waters on either side were piled up like a wall, leaving an open path before them.

The voice of God bidding His faithful ones go forward, frequently tries their faith to the uttermost; but we must not seek for some object upon which to hang our doubts and unbelief. If we wait until every shadow of uncertainty is removed, we shall never plant our feet upon the platform of eternal truth. Those who will not follow the light because some things are not entirely clear to their understanding, will never believe the truth. Faith is not certainty; it is "the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen."

God will do marvelous things for those who trust in Him. It is because His professed people trust so much to their own

wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf, that they have not more strength. He will help His believing children in every emergency, if they will place their entire confidence in Him. He will work mightily for a faithful people who obey His word without questioning or doubt.

July 26, 1899.

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT"

BE YE THEREFORE perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Man is to be perfect in his sphere, even as God is perfect in His sphere. How can such a lofty standard be reached? The required perfection is based on the perfection of Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He gave the command requiring perfection, He who was by birth a human being, though allied to divinity. He has passed over the road we are to tread, and He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." But with Him we can do everything. Thus a perfect character can be obtained. God never issues a command without furnishing the grace sufficient for its fulfillment. Ample provision has been made that man shall be a partaker of the divine nature.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This is the standard God holds before His children. It is a standard of Christlikeness. Christianity means entire surrender to the will of God. Then it can be said of us, "Ye are complete in Him."

When such possibilities are presented to us; when we see that it is our privilege to attain Christian perfection, should we not strive to reach the standard? Should not our one purpose be to appreciate and understand the high honor conferred upon us? Christ has shown us how the heavenly universe values the beings for whom He made so great a sacrifice. Men and women are God's by creation and by redemption, and those who receive Christ He invests with His strength. They are bound up with Him, and are fully capable of reaching the highest elevation of character.

It is the Lord's will that we should cherish a solemn sense of our accountability to Him, as the owner of the talents He has lent us. He desires us to appreciate His entrusted gifts, doing all in our power to reach the standard He has set before us.

In the varied lines of Christ's work,

July 27, 1904.

THE CHRISTIAN PATHWAY

jailer, convicted of the reality of that faith which sustains Paul, inquires the way of salvation, and with his whole household unites with the persecuted band of Christ's disciples.

See Paul at Athens before the council of the Areopagus, as he meets science with science, logic with logic, and philosophy with philosophy. Mark how, with the tact born of divine love, he points to Jehovah as the "Unknown God," whom his hearers have ignorantly worshiped; and in words quoted from a poet of their own he pictures Him as a Father whose children they are. Hear him, in that age of caste, when the rights of man as man were wholly unrecognized, as he sets forth the great truth of human brotherhood, declaring that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Then he shows how, through all the dealings of God with man, runs like a thread of gold His purposes of grace and mercy. He "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, the He be not far from every one of us."

Hear him in the court of Festus, when King Agrippa, convicted of the truth of the Gospel, exclaims, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." With what gentle courtesy does Paul, pointing to his own chain, make answer, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Thus passed his life, as described in his own words, "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

"Being reviled," he said, "we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat;" "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

In service he found his joy, and at the close of his life of toil, looking back on its struggles and triumphs, he could say, "I have fought a good fight."

WE ARE PILGRIMS and strangers on this earth, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The path in which we travel is narrow, and calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice, but God has not left us without help. He has filled His Word with wonderful promises to strengthen and cheer His children. In these promises He draws back the veil from eternity, and gives us glimpses of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that awaits the overcomer.

All along the pathway God places the fair flowers of promise, to brighten our journey. But many refuse to gather these flowers, choosing, instead, the thorns and thistles. At every step they weep and mourn, when they might rejoice in the Lord.

How much joy we might bring into our life here below if we would but make these promises our own. As we talk of the mansions that Christ is preparing for us, we shall forget the petty annoyances that we meet day by day. It is our privilege to sing the songs of Zion now, to turn our eyes to the light, to bring hope into our hearts and into the hearts of others. God desires us to gather up His promises, that we may be strengthened and refreshed. Let us take our eyes from the curse, and fix them on the grace so abundantly provided.

This life will be much brighter for us if we will gather the flowers and leave the briars alone. Comfort, encouragement, and support have been provided for every circumstance and condition of life. No temptation comes to us that Christ has not withstood, no trial that He has not borne. He knows each one of us by name. When a burden is placed on us, He stands by to lift the heaviest weight. He assures us that His grace is sufficient. Today we have His help. Tomorrow we may be placed in new circumstances of trial, but the promise is, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Let us rejoice in the love of God. Let us praise Him who has made promises so royal. Let these promises keep our hearts in perfect peace. Jesus lives. His hand is guiding us. Constantly our hearts may be filled with the peace that passeth all understanding, even the peace that Jesus gives.

The Saviour 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 these tempted ones who are standing 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.

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," will not desert us in the battle with the adversary. "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."

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."

August 3, 1904.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD"

ATHESIM HAS NO power to restrain crime, or to quicken the higher energies of the being, no power to elevate or purify the soul. It can shed no light into the grave.

Men may think that they have succeeded in banishing from their minds all thought of God; but when they are brought face to face with the king of terrors, there is wrung from their unwilling lips the confession that the boasts of a lifetime have been a delusion.

Was ever an instance known where a dying Christian gave to his watching friends the testimony that he had been deceived, that there is no God, no reality in the religion of Christ? But how many of those who have drawn about them the dark robes of atheism have let them fall before the grim messenger of death. We might cite many instances where learned men have gloried in their unbelief, and in parading their atheism. But when death claimed them, they have looked with horror into the starless future, and their dying words have been, "I have tried to believe

that there is no God, no reward for the faithful, no punishment for the wicked. But how vain has been the attempt. I know now that I must meet the doom of the lost.”

Sir Thomas Scott in his last moments cried: “Until this moment I believed there was neither a God nor a hell. Now I know and feel that there are both, and that I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of God.”

Voltaire was at one time the lion of the hour. He lived in a splendid mansion, and was surrounded by every luxury that heart could wish. Kings honored him. The great men of the world sought his society. On one occasion men took his horses from his carriage, and drew him themselves in triumph around the city.

Was this sufficient to make men who deny Christ happy? Go with me to his death-bed, and listen to his words of mournful despair: “In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He loves life, and yet knows that he must die. If he enjoys a transient good, he suffers various ills, and is at last devoured by worms. The bulk of mankind are little more than wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate, and the globe contains carcasses rather than men. I tremble at this awful picture, and wish I had never been born.”

Go now to the death-bed of a Christian,—Halburton of Scotland. He was in poverty, and was suffering great pain. He had none of the comforts that Voltaire possessed, but he was infinitely richer. He said: “I shall shortly die. In the resurrection I shall come forth to see my God and to live forevermore. I bless His name that I have found Him, and I die rejoicing in Him. I bless God that I was ever born.”

Giving an account of the last days of Sir Davis Brewster, his daughter writes: “He thanked God that the way of salvation was so simple. No labored argument, no hard attainment, was required. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ was to live. He trusted in Him, and enjoyed His peace.” The last words of this great man of science were: “Life has been very bright to me, and now there is the brightness beyond. I shall see Jesus, who created all things, who made the worlds. I shall see Him as He is. Yes, I have had the Light for many years. O, how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied.”

“The way of the transgressor is hard;” but wisdom’s “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” In the downward road the gateway may be

bright with flowers, but there are thorns in the path. The light of hope which shines from its entrance fades into the darkness of despair; and the soul who follows that path descends into the shadows of unending night.

But he who takes Christ for his guide will be led safely home. The road may be rough, and the ascent steep; there may be pitfalls upon the right hand and upon the left; we may have to endure toil in our journey; when weary, when longing for rest, we may have to toil on; when faint, we may have to fight; when discouraged, we must still hope; but with Christ as our guide, we shall not fail of reaching the desired haven at last. Christ has trodden the rough way before us, and has smoothed the path for our feet.

Those who walk in wisdom’s ways are, even in tribulation, exceedingly joyful; for He whom their soul loveth walks invisible beside them. At each upward step they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step, brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of the angels before the throne. “The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

August 24, 1904.

WILLING TO SPEND AND BE SPENT

EVERY TRUE, self-sacrificing worker for God is willing to spend and be spent for the sake of others. Christ says, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” By earnest, thoughtful efforts to help where help is needed, the true Christian shows his love for God and for his fellow-beings. He may lose his life in service. But when Christ gathers His jewels to Himself, he will find it again.

Do not, for the sake of appearance, spend time and money on self. Those who do this are obliged to leave undone many things that would have comforted others, sending a warm glow to their weary spirits. We all need to learn to improve more faithfully the opportunities that so often come to us to bring light and hope into the lives of others. How can we improve these opportunities if our thoughts are centered upon self. He who is self-centered loses countless opportunities for doing

that which would have brought blessing to himself and those around him. It is the duty of the servant of Christ, under every circumstance, to ask, What can I do to help others? Having done his best, he is to leave the consequences with God.

The Lord has provided for every one pleasure that may be enjoyed by rich and poor alike,—the pleasure found in cultivating pureness of thought and unselfishness of action, the pleasure that comes from speaking sympathizing words and doing kindly deeds. From those who perform such service the light of Christ shines forth to brighten lives darkened by many shadows.

The perils of the last days are upon us. Those who live to please and gratify self are dishonoring the Lord. He cannot work with them; for they would misrepresent Him before those who are ignorant of the truth. Be very careful not to hinder, by an unwise expenditure of means, the work that the Lord would have done in proclaiming the warning message to a world lying in wickedness. Study economy, cutting down your personal expenses to the lowest possible figure. On every hand the necessities of the cause of God are calling for help. God may see that you are fostering pride. He may see that it is necessary to remove from you blessings which, instead of improving, you have used for the gratification of selfish pride. The truth that we hear will save us only as we gladly accept it, showing in our lives the result of its working, growing in grace and in a knowledge of God.

Help in Every Time of Need.

Those who are laboring in places where the work has not long been started will often find themselves in great need of better facilities. Their work will seem to be hindered for lack of these facilities; but let them not worry. Let them take the whole matter to the Lord in prayer. When trying to build up the work in new territory, we have often gone to the limit of our resources. At times it has seemed as if we could advance no farther. But we kept our petitions ascending to the heavenly courts, all the time denying self; and God heard and answered our prayers, sending us means for the advancement of the work.

Lay every care at the feet of the Redeemer. “Ask, and it shall be given unto you.” Work, and pray, and believe with the whole heart. Do not wait till the money is in your hands before doing anything. God has declared that the standard of truth is