

The Triumph of God's Love

Sabbath Afternoon, June 22

Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them. Those who accept the teachings of God's Word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet the apostle Paul declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country. (Hebrews 11:14-16.) There the great Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home. —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 430, 431.

Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of Paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts.

We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 362.

Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry them [God's children] through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial. The form of the Fourth will be with them in the fierce heat of the furnace, which will not leave even the smell of fire upon their garments. . . . [B]ecome Bible students and . . . have firm religious principles that will stand the test of the perils sure to be experienced by all who live upon the earth during the last days in the closing history of the world. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 212.

Hope in the Time of Trouble

As we approach the perils of the last days, the temptations of the enemy become stronger and more determined. Satan has come down in great power, knowing that his time is short; and he is working "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). . . .

The end of all things is at hand. The time of trouble is about to come upon the people of God. Then it is that the decree will go forth forbidding those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord to buy or sell, and threatening them with punishment, and even death, if they do not observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath. . . .

In the time of trouble Satan stirs up the wicked, and they encircle the people of God to destroy them. But he does not know that "pardon" has been written opposite their names in the books of heaven. —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 344.

The period of probation is the time granted to all to prepare for the day of God. If any neglect the preparation, and heed not the faithful warnings given, they will be without excuse. Jacob's earnest, persevering wrestling with the angel should be an example for Christians. Jacob prevailed, because he was persevering and determined. All who desire the blessing of God, as did Jacob, and will lay hold of the promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed, as he succeeded. Why there is so little exercise of true faith, and so little of the weight of truth resting upon many professed believers is because they are indolent, in spiritual things. They are unwilling to make exertions, to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for the blessing, and therefore they do not obtain it. That faith which will live through the time of trouble must be in daily exercise now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith will be wholly unprepared to exercise that faith which will enable them to stand in the day of trouble. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 135.

True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours. . . . "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. . . . When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds. True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises. —*Early Writings*, p. 72.

Hope in Jesus' Soon Return

The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the "appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" was the "blessed hope." . . . [Paul points] to the resurrection, to take place at the Saviour's advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "And so," he said, "shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

When Christ shall come in His glory and the glory of His Father, with all the heavenly angels surrounding Him, escorting Him on His way with voices of triumph, while strains of the most enchanting music fall upon the ear, all will then be interested. . . .

Then kings and nobles, the mighty man, and the poor man, and the mean man, alike, cry there most bitterly. They who in the days of their prosperity despised Christ and the humble ones who followed in His footsteps, men who would not humble their dignity to bow to Christ, who hated His despised cross, are now prostrate in the mire of the earth. . . .

They then realize with terrible bitterness that they are eating the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices. In their supposed wisdom they turned away from the high, eternal reward, rejected the heavenly inducement, for earthly gain. The glitter and tinsel of earth fascinated them, and in their supposed wisdom they became fools. They exulted in their worldly prosperity as though their worldly advantages were so great that they could through them be recommended to God, and thus secure heaven. — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 41.

No language can describe the glory of the scene [the Second Coming]. The living cloud of majesty and unsurpassed glory came still nearer, and we could clearly behold the lovely person of Jesus. He did not wear a crown of thorns, but a crown of glory rested upon His holy brow. Upon His vesture and thigh was a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. . . . The earth trembled before Him, the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. . . .

Those who a short time before would have destroyed God's faithful children from the earth, now witnessed the glory of God which rested upon them. And amid all their terror they heard the voices of the saints in joyful strains, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9. —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 411, 412.

The Millennium on Earth

[During the millennium the] earth looked like a desolate wilderness. Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns. Ragged rocks, thrown out by the sea, or torn out of the earth itself, were scattered all over its surface. Large trees had been uprooted and were strewn over the land. Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth and see the effects of his rebellion against God's law.

For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen. During this time, Satan suffers extremely. Since his fall his evil traits have been in constant exercise. But he is then to be deprived of his power, and left to reflect upon the part which he has acted since his fall, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future, when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for all the sins that he has caused to be committed. —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

The rest of the earth will not be cleansed until the end of the one thousand years, when the wicked dead are raised, and gather up around the city. The feet of the wicked will never desecrate the earth made new. Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them—burn them up root and branch. Satan is the root, and his children are the branches. The same fire that will devour the wicked will purify the earth. —*Early Writings*, p. 51.

In the Saviour's expiring cry, "It is finished," the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. . . .

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 503, 504.

Judgment in the Millennium

Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon [the thrones]; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then they meted out to the wicked the portion which they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan's punishment was to be far greater than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear no comparison with it. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on much longer. —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

At the end of one thousand years, Jesus, the king of glory, descends from the holy city, clothed with brightness like the lightning, upon the mount of olives—the same mount from whence he ascended after his resurrection. As his feet touch the mountain, it parts asunder, and becomes a very great plain, and is prepared for the reception of the holy city in which is the paradise of God, the garden of Eden, which was taken up after man's transgression. Now it descends with the city, more beautiful, and gloriously adorned than when removed from the earth. The city of God comes down and settles upon the mighty plain prepared for it. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 83.

God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 764.

As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete. —*The Review and Herald*, December 13, 1892.

Thursday, June 27

Two Eternities

[After the thousand years] Jesus leaves the city surrounded by the redeemed host, and is escorted on his way by the angelic throng. In fearful majesty he calls forth the wicked dead. They are wakened from their long sleep. What a dreadful waking! They behold the Son of God in his stern majesty and resplendent glory. All, as soon as they behold him, know that he is the crucified one who died to save them, whom they had despised and rejected. They are in number like the sand upon the sea-shore. At the first resurrection all come forth in immortal bloom, but at the second, the marks of the curse are visible upon all. All come up as they went down into their graves. Those who lived before the flood, come forth with their giant-like stature, more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and well proportioned. . . . A mighty host of kings, warriors, statesmen and nobles, down to the most degraded, came up together upon the desolate earth. When they behold Jesus in his glory they are affrighted, and seek to hide from his terrible presence. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 83.

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand [the sinfulness of sin]. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 764.

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 362.

Friday, June 28

For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, "Defenders of the Faith," p. 269;

Sons and Daughters of God, "Christ Comes With Power and Great Glory," p. 357.