

Taken and Tried

Sabbath afternoon, September 7

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Here is language that expresses His mind toward a corrupt and idolatrous people: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together." Must He give up the people for whom such a provision has been made, even His only-begotten Son, the express image of Himself? God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father.

Herein His love commends itself in the most marvelous manner to the rebellious race. What a sight for angels to behold! What a hope for man, "that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"! The just suffered for the unjust; He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. "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?"—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 245, 246.

Jesus did not consider heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod.

He who becomes a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost.

Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 105.

The life of Christ is to be carefully meditated upon, and to be constantly studied with a desire to understand the reason why He had to come at all. We can only form our conclusions by searching the Scriptures as Christ has enjoined upon us to do, for He says, "They testify of me." We may find by searching the Word the virtues of obedience in contrast with the sinfulness of disobedience. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Reflecting Christ, p. 132.

Sunday, September 8

Unforgettable

She [Mary] had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honor. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of "ointment of spikenard, very costly," with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honoring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair.

She had sought to avoid observation, and her movements might have passed unnoticed, but the ointment filled the room with its fragrance, and published her act to all present. . . .

The fragrant gift which Mary had thought to lavish upon the dead body of the Saviour she poured upon His living form. At the burial its sweetness could only have pervaded the tomb; now it gladdened His heart with the assurance of her faith and love. . . . And as He went down into the darkness of His great trial, He carried with Him the memory of that deed, an earnest of the love that would be His from His redeemed ones forever.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 558–560.

Satan had deceived Judas and led him to think that he was one of Christ's true disciples; but his heart had ever been carnal. He had seen the mighty works of Jesus, he had been with Him through His ministry, and had yielded to the overpowering evidence that He was the Messiah; but Judas was close and covetous; he loved money. He complained in anger of the costly ointment poured upon Jesus. . . . Judas, as an excuse for his covetousness, urged that the ointment might have been sold and given to the poor. But it was not because he had any care for the poor; for he was selfish, and often ap-propriated to his own use that which was entrusted to his care to be given unto the poor. Judas had been inattentive to the comfort and even to the wants of Jesus, and to excuse his covetousness he often referred to the poor. This act of generosity on the part of Mary was a most cutting rebuke of his covetous disposition. The way was prepared for Satan's temptation to find a ready reception in the heart of Judas.—Early Writings, p. 165.

Judas knew how anxious they [the priests and rulers] were to obtain Jesus and offered to betray Him to the chief priests and elders for a few pieces of silver. His love of money led him to agree to betray his Lord into the hands of His bitterest enemies. Satan was working directly through Judas, and in the midst of the impressive scene of the last supper, the traitor was devising plans to betray his Master.—Early Writings, p. 166.

Monday, September 9

The Last Supper

They [the Israelites] were also directed to keep the feast of the passover for an ordinance, that when their children should inquire what such service meant, they should relate to them their wonderful preservation in Egypt. That when the destroying angel went forth in the night to slay the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast, he passed over their houses, and not one of the Hebrews was slain that had the token of blood upon their door-posts. And the people bowed their heads and worshiped, grateful for this remarkable memorial given to preserve to their children the remembrance of God's care for his people. . . .

The passover pointed backward to the deliverance of the children of Israel, and was also typical, pointing forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, slain for the redemption of fallen man. The blood sprinkled upon the door-posts prefigured the atoning blood of Christ, and also the continual dependence of sinful man upon the merits of that blood for safety from the power of Satan, and for final redemption. Christ ate the passover supper with his disciples just before his crucifixion, and the same night instituted the ordinance of the Lord's supper, to be observed in commemoration of his death.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 223, 225.

When Christ on the eve of His betrayal forewarned His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," Peter confidently declared, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Mark 14:27, 29. Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he denied his Lord.

When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that grieved look, in which compassion and love for him were blended, Peter understood himself. He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ's broke his heart. Peter had come to the turning point, and bitterly did he repent his sin. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he found mercy. The look of Christ assured him of pardon.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 152.

Jesus looks with compassion on His disciples. He cannot save them from the trial, but He does not leave them comfortless. He assures them that He is to break the fetters of the tomb, and that His love for them will not fail. "After I am risen again," He says, "I will go before you into Galilee." Matthew 26:32. Before the denial, they have the assurance of forgiveness. After His death and resurrection, they knew that they were forgiven, and were dear to the heart of Christ.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 674.

Tuesday, September 10

Gethsemane

In company with His disciples, the Saviour slowly made His way to the garden of Gethsemane. The Passover moon, broad and full, shone from a cloudless sky. The city of pilgrims' tents was hushed into silence.

Jesus had been earnestly conversing with His disciples and instructing them; but as He neared Gethsemane, He became strangely silent. He had often visited this spot for meditation and prayer; but never with a heart so full of sorrow as upon this night of His last agony. Throughout His life on earth He had walked in the light of God's presence. . . . But now He seemed to be shut out from the light of God's sustaining presence. Now He was numbered with the transgressors. . . . Feeling how terrible is the wrath of God against transgression, He exclaims, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."—The Desire of Ages, p. 685.

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.—The Desire of Ages, p. 693.

We cannot have a weak faith now; we cannot be safe in a listless, indolent, slothful attitude. Every jot of ability is to be used, and sharp, calm, deep thinking is to be done. The wisdom of any human agent is not sufficient for the planning and devising in this time. Spread every plan before God with fasting, [and] with the humbling of the soul before the Lord Jesus, and commit thy ways unto the Lord. The sure promise is, He will direct thy paths. He is infinite in resources. The Holy One of Israel, who calls the host of heaven by name, and holds the stars of heaven in position, has you individually in His keeping. . . .

I would that all could realize what possibilities and probabilities there are for all who make Christ their sufficiency and their trust. The life hid with Christ in God ever has a refuge; he can say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).—Selected Messages, book 2, p. 364.

Wednesday, September 11

Leaving All to Flee From Jesus

The disciples were terrified as they saw Jesus permit Himself to be taken and bound. They were offended that He should suffer this humiliation to Himself and them. They could not understand His conduct, and they blamed Him for submitting to the mob. In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, "they all forsook Him, and fled." But Christ had foretold this desertion, "Behold," He had said, "the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." John 16:32.—The Desire of Ages, p. 697.

Jesus was left alone in the hands of the murderous mob. Oh, what a triumph of Satan then! And what sadness and sorrow with the angels of God! Many companies of holy angels, each with a tall commanding angel at their head, were sent to witness the scene. They were to record every insult and cruelty imposed upon the Son of God, and to register every pang of anguish which Jesus should suffer; for the very men who joined in this dreadful scene are to see it all again in living characters.—Early Writings, p. 168.

As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat, while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are ever to bear in mind that there is One that can take away sin and save the sinner. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses, and all that had been bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look and live, so also the Son of man must be lifted up, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Unless he makes it his life business to behold the uplifted Saviour, and by faith to accept the merits which it is his privilege to claim, the sinner can no more be saved than Peter could walk upon the water unless he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon Jesus.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 92, 93.

Thursday, September 12

Who Are You?

Peter followed his Lord after His betrayal. He was anxious to see what would be done with Jesus. But when he was accused of being one of His disciples, fear for his own safety led him to declare that he knew not the man. The disciples were noted for the purity of their language, and Peter, to convince his accusers that he was not one of Christ's disciples, denied the charge the third time with cursing and swearing. Jesus, who was at some distance from Peter, turned a sorrowful reproving gaze upon him. Then the disciple remembered the words which Jesus had spoken to him in the upper chamber, and also his own zealous assertion, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." He had denied his Lord, even with cursing and swearing; but that look of Jesus' melted Peter's heart and saved him. He wept bitterly and repented of his great sin, and was converted, and then was prepared to strengthen his brethren.—Early Writings, p. 169.

Jesus stood meek and humble before the infuriated multitude, while they offered Him the vilest abuse. They spit in His face—that face from which they will one day desire to hide, which will give light to the city of God and shine brighter than the sun. Christ did not cast upon the offenders an angry look. They covered His head with an old garment, blindfolding Him, and then struck Him in the face and cried out, "Prophesy, who is it that smote Thee?" There was commotion among the angels. They would have rescued Him instantly; but their commanding angels restrained them.—Early Writings, p. 170.

I am glad indeed that our feelings are no evidence that we are not children of God. The enemy will tempt you to think that you have done things that have separated you from God and that He no longer loves you, but our Lord loves us still, and we may know by the words He has placed on record for just such cases as yours. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). . . .

God loves you; and the precious Saviour, who gave Himself for you, will not thrust you from Him because you are tempted and in your weakness may have been overcome. He loves you still.

Peter denied his Lord in the hour of trial, but Jesus did not forsake His poor disciple. Although Peter hated himself, the Lord loved him, and after His resurrection He called him by name and sent him a loving message. O what a kind, loving, compassionate Saviour we have! And He loves us though we err.—That I May Know Him, p. 285.

Now do not worry yourself out of the arms of the dear Saviour, but rest trustingly in faith. He loves you; He cares for you. He is blessing you and will give you His peace and grace. He is saying to you, "Thy sins be forgiven you." You may be depressed with bodily infirmities, but that is not evidence that the Lord is not working in your behalf every day. He will pardon you, and that abundantly. Gather to your soul the sweet promises of God. Jesus is our constant, unfailing friend, and He wants you to trust in Him. . . .

Look away from yourself to the perfection of Christ.—Letter 49, 1896.

Friday, September 13

For Further Reading

Our High Calling, "Beware of Self-Confidence," p. 307;
The Desire of Ages, "Judas," pp. 716–722.