

More Testimonies About Jesus

Sabbath afternoon, November 2

Christ presented to the multitude of Jews and Gentiles of all nations the real original truths connected with his kingdom, which had been buried out of sight. He sought to clear away the mist and fog of their false, long-cherished ideas in regard to his mission and his kingdom. They supposed it was a temporal, earthly kingdom; but he showed them its spiritual and eternal nature. He unfolded before them the far-reaching principles of the law of God; commandment after commandment he opened before them in its true spiritual bearing, and showed the extent of the requirements of God's precepts. They are not only to direct conduct, but to control the heart. The lessons given by Christ were so different from anything to which the people had listened from the scribes and Pharisees, that they were astonished at his doctrines. He did not present labored, intricate arguments that buried with exactions the commandments of God, so that no one could ever hope to keep them. Jesus, the great Teacher, laid open in the simplest language, the great moral truths, clothing them with freshness and power. —*The Review and Herald*, March 21, 1893, par. 3.

The report of Christ's miracles had spread wherever the Jews were dispersed; and although for many months He had been absent from the feasts, the interest in Him had not abated. Many from all parts of the world had come up to the Feast of Tabernacles in the hope of seeing Him. At the beginning of the feast many inquiries were made for Him. The Pharisees and rulers looked for Him to come, hoping for an opportunity to condemn Him. They anxiously inquired, "Where is He?" but no one knew. The thought of Him was uppermost in all minds. Through fear of the priests and rulers, none dared acknowledge Him as the Messiah, but everywhere there was quiet yet earnest discussion concerning Him. Many defended Him as one sent from God, while others denounced Him as a deceiver of the people. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 451.

Jesus could have been at peace with the world only by leaving the transgressors of the law unreprieved, unrebuked. This he could not do; for he was to take away the sins of the world. . . . Christ denounced unrighteousness, and his very presence was a rebuke to sin. The atmosphere that surrounded his soul was so pure, so elevated, that it placed the hypocritical rabbis, priests, and rulers in their true position, and revealed them in their true character as claiming sanctity, and at the same time misrepresenting God and his truth. In the rich loveliness of the character of Christ, zeal for God was always apparent. His righteousness went before him, and the glory of the Lord was rearward. He hated one thing only, and that was sin. But the world loved sin and hated righteousness, and this was the cause of the hostility of the world to Jesus. —*The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1894, par. 5.

Sunday, November 3

Humility of Soul: John the Baptist Testifies Again

When, after Christ's ministry began, the disciples of John came to him with the complaint that all men were following the new Teacher, John showed how clearly he understood his relation to the Messiah, and how gladly he welcomed the One for whom he had prepared the way. . . .

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him; rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." [John 3:27–30.]

Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of self-abnegation. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, until they should rest upon the Lamb of God. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness. Now with joy he accepted silence and obscurity, that the eyes of all might be turned to the Light of life. —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 55, 56.

The prophet [John the Baptist] points to the Saviour as the Sun of Righteousness rising with splendor, and soon to eclipse his own light, then growing pale and dim in the glory of a greater light. John, by his unselfish joy in the successful ministry of Jesus, presents to the world the truest type of nobility ever exhibited by mortal man. It carries a lesson of submission and self-sacrifice to those whom God has placed in responsible positions. It teaches them never to appropriate to themselves undue honor, nor let the spirit of rivalry disgrace the cause of God. . . .

The news that had been carried to John concerning the success of Jesus, was also borne to Jerusalem, and there created against him jealousy, envy, and hatred. Jesus knew the hard hearts and darkened minds of the Pharisees, and that they would spare no pains to create a division between his own disciples and those of John that would greatly injure the work, so he quietly ceased to baptize and withdrew to Galilee. He knew that the storm was gathering which was soon to sweep away the noblest prophet God had ever given to the world. He wished to avoid all division of feeling in the great work before him, and, for the time, removed from that region for the purpose of allaying all excitement detrimental to the cause of God. —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 138, 139.

When, in the place of leaning upon human understanding or conforming to worldly maxims, we sit at the feet of Jesus, eagerly drinking in His words, learning of Him, and saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" our natural independence, our self-confidence, our strong self-will, will be exchanged for a childlike, submissive, teachable spirit. . . .

Our affections will center in Jesus, our thoughts will be strongly drawn heavenward. Christ will increase, I will decrease. . . . We will cultivate the virtues that dwell in Jesus, that we may reflect to others a representation of His character. —*Our High Calling*, p. 99.

Monday, November 4

A New Understanding of the Messiah

When the Saviour began His ministry, the popular conception of the Messiah and His work was such as wholly unfitted the people to receive Him. The spirit of true devotion had been lost in tradition and ceremonialism, and the prophecies were interpreted at the dictate of proud, world-loving hearts. The Jews looked for the coming One, not as a Saviour from sin, but as a great prince who should bring all nations under the supremacy of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In vain had John the Baptist, with the heart-searching power of the ancient prophets, called them to repentance. In vain had he, beside the Jordan, pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. God was seeking to direct their minds to Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Saviour, but they would not hear. —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 1.

In the light of divine revelation, through the atoning Sacrifice, we may see the glorious plan of redemption whereby our sins are pardoned, and we drawn near to the heart of infinite love. We see how God can retain all his justice, and yet pardon the transgressor of his law. And we are not simply forgiven, but we are accepted of God through the Beloved. The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven,—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. The sacrifice of our Saviour has made ample provision for every repenting, believing soul. We are saved because God loves the purchase of the blood of Christ; and not only will he pardon the repentant sinner, not only will he permit him to enter heaven, but he, the Father of mercies, will wait at the very gates of heaven to welcome us, to give us an abundant entrance to the mansions of the blest. Oh what love, what wondrous love the Father has shown in the gift of his beloved Son for this fallen race! And this Sacrifice is a channel for the outflow of his infinite love, that all who believe on Jesus Christ may, like the prodigal son, receive full and free restoration to the favor of Heaven. —*The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886, par. 12.

Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. We can make no atonement for ourselves; but by faith we can accept the atonement that has been made. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 321.

Tuesday, November 5

Acceptance and Rejection

The Jews were about to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem, in commemoration of the night of Israel's deliverance, when the destroying angel smote the homes of Egypt. In the paschal lamb God desired them to behold the Lamb of God, and through the symbol receive Him who gave Himself for the life of the world. But the Jews had come to make the symbol all-important, while its significance was unnoticed. They discerned not the Lord's body. The same truth that was symbolized in the paschal service was taught in the words of Christ. But it was still undiscerned.

Now the rabbis exclaimed angrily, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" They affected to understand His words in the same literal sense as did Nicodemus when he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" John 3:4. To some extent they comprehended the meaning of Jesus, but they were not willing to acknowledge it. By misconstruing His words, they hoped to prejudice the people against Him.

Christ did not soften down His symbolical representation. He reiterated the truth in yet stronger language: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 388, 389.

Christ had spoken a sacred, eternal truth regarding the relation between Himself and His followers. He knew the character of those who claimed to be His disciples, and His words tested their faith. He declared that they were to believe and act upon His teaching. All who received Him would partake of His nature, and be conformed to His character. This involved the relinquishment of their cherished ambitions. It required the complete surrender of themselves to Jesus. They were called to become self-sacrificing, meek and lowly in heart. They must walk in the narrow path traveled by the Man of Calvary, if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven.

The test was too great. The enthusiasm of those who had sought to take Him by force and make Him king grew cold. This discourse in the synagogue, they declared, had opened their eyes. Now they were undeceived. In their minds His words were a direct confession that He was not the Messiah, and that no earthly rewards were to be realized from connection with Him. They had welcomed His miracle-working power; they were eager to be freed from disease and suffering; but they would not come into sympathy with His self-sacrificing life. They cared not for the mysterious spiritual kingdom of which He spoke. The insincere, the selfish, who had sought Him, no longer desired Him. If He would not devote His power and influence to obtaining their freedom from the Romans, they would have nothing to do with Him. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

Wednesday, November 6

The Witness of the Father

The world for Christ was not a place of ease and self-aggrandizement. He was not watching for an opportunity to seize its power and its glory. It held out no such prize for Him. It was the place into which His Father had sent Him. He had been given for the life of the world, to work out the great plan of redemption. He was accomplishing His work for the fallen race. But He was not to be presumptuous, not to rush into danger, not to hasten a crisis. Each event in His work had its appointed hour. He must wait patiently. He knew that He was to receive the world's hatred; He knew that His work would result in His death; but to prematurely expose Himself would not be the will of His Father. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 451.

What was the work of the God-given messenger to our world? The only-begotten Son of God clothed His divinity with humanity, and came to our world as a teacher, an instructor, to reveal truth in contrast with error. Truth, saving truth, never languished on His tongue, never suffered in His hands, but was made to stand out plainly and clearly defined amid the moral darkness prevailing in our world. For this work He left the heavenly courts. He said of Himself, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." The truth came from His lips with freshness and power, as a new revelation. He was the way, the truth, and the life. His life, given for this sinful world, was full of earnestness and momentous results; for His work was to save perishing souls.

He came forth to be the True Light, shining amid the moral darkness of superstition and error, and was announced by a voice from heaven, proclaiming, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And at His transfiguration this voice from heaven was again heard, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 405.

The [Savior] took away the sins of the paralytic and then presented him to God as pardoned. And He gave him also physical healing. God had given His Son power to lay hold of the eternal throne. While Christ stood forth in His own personality, He reflected the luster of the position of honor that He had held within the enriching light of the eternal throne.

On another occasion Christ made the request: "Father, glorify Thy name." And in answer there came "a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." John 12:28.

If this voice did not move the impenitent, if the power that Christ manifested in His mighty miracles did not cause the Jews to believe, we should not be greatly surprised to find that men and women today are in danger . . . of manifesting the same unbelief that the Jews manifested, and of developing the same perverted understanding. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 202.

Thursday, November 7

The Witness of the Crowd

The flowing of the water from the rock in the desert was celebrated by the Israelites, after their establishment in Canaan, with demonstrations of great rejoicing. In the time of Christ this celebration had become a most impressive ceremony. It took place on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the people from all the land were assembled at Jerusalem. On each of the seven days of the feast the priests went out with music and the choir of Levites to draw water in a golden vessel from the spring of Siloam. They were followed by multitudes of the worshipers, as many as could get near the stream drinking of it, while the jubilant strains arose, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isaiah 12:3. . . .

The Saviour made use of this symbolic service to direct the minds of the people to the blessings that He had come to bring them. . . . His voice was heard in tones that rang through the temple courts, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" [John 7:37, 38]. . . . The refreshing water . . . is an emblem of the divine grace which Christ alone can bestow, and which is as the living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 412.

He in whom Christ is abiding has within him a never-failing fountain of grace and strength. Jesus cheers the life and brightens the path of all who truly seek Him. His love, received into the heart, will spring up in good works unto eternal life. And not only does it bless the soul in which it springs, but the living stream will flow out in words and deeds of righteousness, to refresh the thirsting around him. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 412.

Have you exhausted the fountain?—No; for it is inexhaustible. Just as soon as you feel your need, you may drink, and drink again. The fountain is always full. And when you have once drunk of that fountain, you will not be seeking to quench your thirst from the broken cisterns of this world; you will not be studying how you can find the most pleasure, amusement, fun, and frolic. No; because you have been drinking from the stream which makes glad the city of God. Then your joy will be full. —*Our High Calling*, p. 65.

Friday, November 8

For Further Reading

Conflict and Courage, "I Must Decrease," p. 275;

The Desire of Ages, "In the Outer Court," pp. 621–626.