

The Source of Life

Sabbath afternoon, November 23

The teachers of Israel were not sowing the seed of the word of God. Christ's work as a teacher of truth was in marked contrast to that of the rabbis of His time. They dwelt upon traditions, upon human theories and speculations. Often that which man had taught and written about the word, they put in place of the word itself. Their teaching had no power to quicken the soul. The subject of Christ's teaching and preaching was the word of God. He met questioners with a plain, "It is written." "What saith the Scriptures?" "How readest thou?" At every opportunity, when an interest was awakened by either friend or foe, He sowed the seed of the word. He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Himself the living Word, points to the Scriptures, saying, "They are they which testify of Me." And "beginning at Moses and all the prophets," He opened to His disciples "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." John 5:39; Luke 24:27. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 38.

Every word He uttered seemed to the hearers as the life of God. . . .

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:14, 15). Yes, He was before John. Enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He led the children of Israel through the wilderness. "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." —*The Upward Look*, p. 236.

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can. Yet we are to beware of deifying reason, which is subject to the weakness and infirmity of humanity. If we would not have the Scriptures clouded to our understanding, so that the plainest truths shall not be comprehended, we must have the simplicity and faith of a little child, ready to learn, and beseeching the aid of the Holy Spirit. A sense of the power and wisdom of God, and of our inability to comprehend His greatness, should inspire us with humility, and we should open His word, as we would enter His presence, with holy awe. When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.

There are many things apparently difficult or obscure, which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them. But without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 109, 110.

Sunday, November 24

In Him Was Life

The love of God was Christ's theme when speaking of His mission and His work. "Therefore doth my Father love me," He says, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17). My Father loves you with a love so unbounded that He loves Me the more because I have given My life to redeem you. He loves you, and He loves Me more because I love you, and give My life for you. . . . Well did the disciples understand this love as they saw their Saviour enduring shame, reproach, doubt, and betrayal, as they saw His agony in the Garden, and His death on Calvary's cross. This is a love the depth of which no sounding can ever fathom. As the disciples comprehended it, as their perception took hold of God's divine compassion, they realized that there is a sense in which the sufferings of the Son were the sufferings of the Father. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 69.

When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. Now was proved the truth of His words, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Now was fulfilled the prophecy He had spoken to the priests and rulers, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 10:17, 18; 2:19.

Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, "I am the resurrection, and the life." These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are recipients of the life of the Son of God. However able and talented, however large their capacities, they are replenished with life from the Source of all life. He is the spring, the fountain, of life. The life which He had laid down in humanity, He again took up and gave to humanity. "I am come," He says, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." . . .

Christ became one with humanity, that humanity might become one in Spirit and life with Him. By virtue of this union in obedience to the Word of God, His life becomes their life. He says to the penitent, "I am the resurrection, and the life." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 237.

Monday, November 25

The Words of Eternal Life

When so many of Christ's followers left Him, and the Saviour asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). It filled Christ's heart with sorrow to see anyone leaving Him, because He knew that faith in His name and in His mission is man's only hope. This desertion of His followers was a humiliation to Him. Oh, how little human beings know of the sorrow that filled the heart of infinite love when such things took place. . . .

Well might the disciples say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Consider what Christ was. The Son of the Highest, yet a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Have we experienced the blessing that comes from trusting Him with the whole heart, and honoring Him by ever showing our love and devotion to Him? Christ is hungry for fruit—fruit that will appease His hunger of soul in our behalf. It is His desire that we bear "much fruit."

Let us keep our hearts open to His love. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). Oh, when we can speak understandingly the words spoken by Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," wonderful blessings will come to us. —*This Day With God*, p. 189.

And if you love Jesus, you will have your feet planted in the blood-stained foot-prints of the Man of Calvary, and at last those who have gained the victory will enter in through the gates into the city, and have a right to the tree of life. God has given us reasoning faculties, and he wants us to use them. He has given us a chart which marks out for us the only right way to reach eternal life. Study the Scriptures for yourselves. Hear what the voice of the true Shepherd says to you, and then walk in the path of humble obedience, and at last the gift of eternal life will be granted to you. We cannot afford to lose eternal life. May God grant that we may meet this dear people around the great white throne, and with them sing the song of redemption in the kingdom of glory. —*The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1890, par. 13.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given them. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The right knowledge of the truth, God and of Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer, brings eternal life to the receiver,—spiritual life in this human existence and eternal life in the kingdom of God. —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 233.

Tuesday, November 26

Believing and New Birth

The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again. —Ellen G. White *Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1101.

Today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.

In this age, the Word of God is not considered reliable. The word of Christ, that cuts directly across human desires and indulgences, and condemns popular habits and practices—the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us—is ignored and despised. The teachings and example of Christ are not made the criterion for the life of the professed follower of Christ. Many who name the name of Christ are walking in the light of the sparks of their own kindling, rather than following in the footsteps of their professed Master. They do not represent the same character that Christ represented in His pure, sincere love to God, and in His love for fallen man. They do not take God at His word, and identify their interests with Jesus Christ. They do not form the habit of communing with Jesus, of taking Him as a guide and counselor, and thus learn the trade of living a well-defined Christian life. . . .

The result of the internal operation of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in the outward conduct. The life of the Christian is hid with Christ in God, and God acknowledges those who are His, declaring, "Ye are My witnesses." They testify that divine power is influencing their hearts and shaping their conduct. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 124.

Rejecting the Source of Life

When Christ was upon this earth, the people flocked to hear Him. So simple and plain were His words that the most unlearned among the people could understand Him, and His hearers listened as if spellbound. This enraged the scribes and Pharisees. They were filled with envy because the people listened so attentively to the words of this new Teacher. They determined to break His hold upon the multitudes. They began by attacking His character, saying that He was born in sin, and that He cast out devils through the prince of the devils. Thus were fulfilled the words "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25; cf. Psalm 69:4). The Jewish leaders maligned and persecuted the One who is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. —*The Upward Look*, p. 325.

This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days. —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 15.

Caleb and Joshua, the two who, of all the twelve spies, trusted in the word of God, rent their clothes in distress when they perceived that these unfavorable reports had discouraged the whole camp. They endeavored to reason with them; but the congregation were filled with madness and disappointment, and refused to listen to these two men. Finally Caleb urged his way to the front, and his clear, ringing voice was heard above all the clamor of the multitude. He opposed the cowardly views of his fellow spies, which had weakened the faith and courage of all Israel. . . . He spoke of the land he had visited. Said he: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But as he spoke, the unfaithful spies interrupted him, crying: "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

These men, starting upon a wrong course, set their hearts against God, against Moses and Aaron, and against Caleb and Joshua. Every step they advanced in this wrong direction made them firmer in their design to discourage every attempt to possess the land of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to carry their baneful purpose. . . .

When men in responsible positions yield their hearts to unbelief, there are no bounds to the advance they will make in evil. Few realize, when they start upon this dangerous course, the length that Satan will lead them. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 149, 150.

Thursday, November 28

Condemnation

The first king of Israel proved a failure, because he set his will above the will of God. . . . Saul refused to make obedience to God his first consideration, and the principles of heaven the government of his conduct. . . .

Those whose deeds are evil, will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved and their real characters revealed. If they continue in the path of transgression, and sever themselves entirely from the Redeemer, stubbornness, and sullenness, and a spirit of revenge will take possession of them. . . . As Saul resisted the reproofs of the servant of the Lord, this spirit took possession of him. He defied the Lord, he defied His servant, and his enmity toward David was the outworking of the murderous spirit that comes into the heart of those who justify themselves in the face of their guilt. —*Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1017.*

John's favorite theme was the infinite love of Christ. . . . He understood the character and work of Jesus; and when he saw his Jewish brethren groping their way without a ray of the Sun of Righteousness to illuminate their path, he longed to present to them Christ, the Light of the world.

The faithful apostle saw that their blindness, their pride, superstition, and ignorance of the Scriptures were riveting upon their souls fetters which would never be broken. The prejudice and hatred against Christ which they obstinately cherished, was bringing ruin upon them as a nation and destroying their hopes of everlasting life. But John continued to present Christ to them as the only way of salvation. The evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah was so clear that John declares no man needs to walk in the darkness of error while such light is proffered him. —*The Sanctified Life, pp. 62, 63.*

When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, . . . Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ. . . .

Though Jesus recognized Satan from the beginning, He was not provoked to enter into controversy with him. . . . He rested in His Father's love. He would not parley with temptation.

Jesus met Satan with the words of Scripture. "It is written," He said. In every temptation the weapon of His warfare was the word of God. Satan demanded of Christ a miracle as a sign of His divinity. But that which is greater than all miracles, a firm reliance upon a "Thus saith the Lord," was a sign that could not be controverted. So long as Christ held to this position, the tempter could gain no advantage. —*The Desire of Ages, pp. 118–120.*

Friday, November 29

For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, "Controversy," pp. 601–609;

My Life Today, "Christ Is the Truth," p. 260.