

Memorials of Grace

Sabbath Afternoon, October 11

If all the misdirected energies were devoted to the one great object—the rich provisions of the grace of God in this life—what testimonials we could hang in memory’s halls, recounting the mercies and favors of God! . . . Then the habit would be carried with us as an abiding principle to accumulate spiritual treasures as earnestly and perseveringly as the worldly aspirants labor for the earthly and temporal things.

You may well be dissatisfied with the present supply when the Lord has a heaven of blessedness and a treasure house of good and gracious things to supply the necessities of the soul. Today we want more grace, today we want a renewal of God’s love and tokens of His goodness, and He will not withhold these good and heavenly treasures from the true seeker. —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 798, 799.

The Lord works continually to benefit mankind. He is ever imparting His bounties. He raises up the sick from beds of languishing, He delivers men from peril which they do not see, He commissions heavenly angels to save them from calamity, to guard them from “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday” (Psalm 91:6); but their hearts are unimpressed. He has given all the riches of heaven to redeem them, and yet they are unmindful of His great love. By their ingratitude they close their hearts against the grace of God. Like the heath in the desert they know not when good cometh, and their souls inhabit the parched places of the wilderness.

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies. Like the people of Israel, let us set up our stones of witness, and inscribe upon them the precious story of what God has wrought for us. And as we review His dealings with us in our pilgrimage, let us, out of hearts melted with gratitude, declare, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” Psalm 116:12–14. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 348.

Crossing the Jordan

The priests were to go before the people and bear the ark containing the law of God. And as their feet were dipped in the brim of Jordan, the waters were cut off from above, and the priests passed on, bearing the ark, which was a symbol of the Divine Presence; and the Hebrew host followed. When the priests were halfway over Jordan, they were commanded to stand in the bed of the river until all the host of Israel had passed over. Here the then existing generation of the Israelites were convinced that the waters of Jordan were subject to the same power that their fathers had seen displayed at the Red Sea forty years before. Many of these had passed through the Red Sea when they were children. Now they pass over Jordan, men of war, fully equipped for battle.

After all the host of Israel had passed over Jordan, Joshua commanded the priests to come up out of the river. As soon as the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, came up out of the river, and stood on dry land, Jordan rolled on as before and overflowed all his banks. This wonderful miracle performed for the Israelites greatly increased their faith. That this wonderful miracle might never be forgotten, the Lord directed Joshua to command that men of note, one of each tribe, take up stones from the bed of the river, the place where the priests' feet stood while the Hebrew host was passing over, and bear them upon their shoulders, and erect a monument in Gilgal, to keep in remembrance the fact that Israel passed over Jordan on dry land. After the priests had come up from Jordan, God removed His mighty hand, and the waters rushed like a mighty cataract down their own channel.

When all the kings of the Amorites and the kings of the Canaanites heard that the Lord had stayed the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, their hearts melted with fear. The Israelites had slain two of the kings of Moab, and their miraculous passage over the swollen and impetuous Jordan filled them with the greatest terror. Joshua then circumcised all the people which had been born in the wilderness. After this ceremony they kept the passover in the plains of Jericho. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and His people because the Hebrews had not possessed the land of Canaan, which they expected to inherit soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because they had so long wandered in the wilderness, and they proudly lifted themselves up against God, declaring that He was not able to lead them into the land of Canaan. They had now passed over Jordan on dry land, and their enemies could no longer reproach them.

The manna had continued up to this time, but now as the Israelites were about to possess Canaan and eat of the fruit of the land, they had no more need of it, and it ceased. —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 176–178.

The Living God of Wonders

Throughout the history of God's people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unfaltering trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power. Before the demand of faith, the obstacles placed by Satan across the pathway of the Christian will disappear; for the powers of heaven will come to his aid. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you."

The way of the world is to begin with pomp and boasting. God's way is to make the day of small things the beginning of the glorious triumph of truth and righteousness. Sometimes He trains His -workers by bringing to them disappointment and apparent failure. It is His purpose that they shall learn to master difficulties.

Often men are tempted to falter before the perplexities and obstacles that confront them. But if they will hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, God will make the way clear. —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 258.

In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," said Jesus, "ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." Though the grain of mustard seed is so small, it contains that same mysterious life principle which produces growth in the loftiest tree. When the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutriment, and it speedily develops a sturdy growth. If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God's word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of heaven. The obstacles that are piled by Satan across your path, though apparently as insurmountable as the eternal hills, shall disappear before the demand of faith. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 431.

Tuesday, October 14

Remember

This pledge was given not only to Israel but to all who are obedient to God's Word. Those who live amid the perils of the last days may realize that just as at the beginning of their experience the truth united them to the Saviour, so He who is the author and finisher of their faith will perfect the work He has begun for them. God is faithful, by whom we are called to fellowship with His Son. As men and women cooperate with God in doing the work He has given them, they go forward from strength to greater strength. As they exercise simple faith, believing day by day that God will not fail to establish them in Christ, God says to them as He did to ancient Israel: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Deuteronomy 7:6.

Thus God is able and willing to lead all who will be led. He desires to teach each one a lesson of constant trust, unwavering faith, and unquestioning submission. He says to each one, I am the Lord thy God. Walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light. . . .

But God requires obedience to all His commands. The only way in which it is possible for men to be happy is by rendering obedience to the laws of God's kingdom.

Life, with its privileges and endowments, is God's gift. Let us remember that all we have comes from God, and is to be wholly and freely consecrated to Him. Paul declares, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philippians 3:8. The sacrifice of our ideas, our will, is necessary if we would be one with Christ in God. All we have and are must be laid at Christ's feet. —*Our High Calling*, p. 24.

[God] is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater. —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 217.

Forgetfulness

With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and He gave Himself in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49:15.

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son and pray that He may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing.

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Ephesians 1:7. Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness. —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 54, 55.

To comprehend and enjoy God is the highest exercise of the powers of man. This may be attained only when our affections are sanctified and ennobled by the grace of Christ. . . . In Christ was the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person. Said our Saviour, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." John 14:9. In Christ is the life of the soul. In the outgoings of our hearts to Him, in our earnest, affectionate yearnings for His excellence, in our eager searching into His glory, we find life. In communion with Him we eat the bread of life.

When we allow objects of minor importance to absorb our attention, to the forgetfulness of Christ, turning away from Him to accept other companionship, we set our feet in a path which leads away from God and from heaven. Christ must be the central object of our affections, and then we shall live in Him, then we shall have His spirit. . . .

What constitutes the brightness of heaven? In what will consist the happiness of the redeemed? Christ is all in all. They will gaze with rapture unutterable upon the Lamb of God. They will pour out their songs of grateful praise and adoration to Him whom they loved and worshiped here. That song they learned and began to sing on earth. They learned to put their trust in Jesus while they were forming characters for heaven. Their hearts were attuned to His will here. Their joy in Christ will be proportioned to the love and trust which they learned to repose in Him here. —*Our High Calling*, p. 61.

Beyond the Jordan

At this time of the year—in the spring season—the melting snows of the mountains had so raised the Jordan that the river overflowed its banks, making it impossible to cross at the usual fording places. God willed that the passage of Israel over Jordan should be miraculous. . . .

At the appointed time began the onward movement, the ark, borne upon the shoulders of the priests, leading the van. . . . All watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan. They saw them with the sacred ark move steadily forward toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers were dipped into the waters. Then suddenly the tide above was swept back, while the current below flowed on, and the bed of the river was laid bare. . . .

When the people had all passed over, the ark itself was borne to the western shore. No sooner had it reached a place of security, and “the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up unto the dry land,” than the imprisoned waters, being set free, rushed down, a resistless flood, in the natural channel of the stream.

Coming generations were not to be without a witness to this great miracle. While the priests bearing the ark were still in the midst of Jordan, twelve men previously chosen, one from each tribe, took up each a stone from the riverbed where the priests were standing, and carried it over to the western side. These stones were set up as a monument in the first camping place beyond the river. . . .

The influence of this miracle, both upon the Hebrews and upon their enemies, was of great importance. It was an assurance to Israel of God’s continued presence and protection—an evidence that He would work for them through Joshua as He had wrought through Moses. . . .

This exercise of divine power in behalf of Israel was designed also to increase the fear with which they were regarded by the surrounding nations, and thus prepare the way for their easier and complete triumph. . . . To the Canaanites, to all Israel, and to Joshua himself, unmistakable evidence had been given that the living God, the King of heaven and earth, was among His people, and that He would not fail them nor forsake them. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 132.

Friday, October 17

For Further Reading

Our High Calling, "More, More, More!" July 1, p. 188.

This Day With God, "Peace in His Presence," February 19, p. 58.