

# The Conflict Behind All Conflicts

Sabbath Afternoon, October 18

Adam taught his descendants the law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. But . . . there were few who accepted it and rendered obedience. By transgression the world became so vile that it was necessary to cleanse it by the Flood from its corruption. The law was preserved by Noah and his family, and Noah taught his descendants the Ten Commandments. As men again departed from God, the Lord chose Abraham, of whom He declared, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Genesis 26:5. . . .

Concerning the law proclaimed from Sinai, Nehemiah says, "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments." Nehemiah 9:13. And Paul . . . declares, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:12.

The whole world will be judged by the moral law according to their opportunity of becoming acquainted with it, whether by reason, or tradition, or the written Word.

We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. . . .

The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. "Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them"—cause them to stumble. There is no peace in unrighteousness; the wicked are at war with God. But he who receives the righteousness of the law in Christ is in harmony with heaven.

As received in Christ, it [God's law] works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 83.

Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. . . . As God's agents you are to yield yourselves to Him, that He may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your cooperation. The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger. Then why not trust Him? —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 117.

Sunday, October 19

# Commander of the Army of the Lord

As Joshua withdrew from the armies of Israel, to meditate and pray for God's special presence to attend him, he saw a man of lofty stature, clad in warlike garments, with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua did not recognize him as one of the armies of Israel, and yet he had no appearance of being an enemy. In his zeal he accosted him, and said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And He said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, What saith my Lord unto His servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

This was no common angel. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, He who had conducted the Hebrews through the wilderness, enshrouded in the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day. The place was made sacred by His presence; therefore Joshua was commanded to put off his shoes.

The Lord then instructed Joshua what course to pursue in order to take Jericho. All the men of war should be commanded to compass the city once each day for six days, and on the seventh day they should go around Jericho seven times. —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 178.

Study carefully the experiences of Israel in their travels to Canaan. . . . We need to keep the heart and mind in training, by refreshing the memory with the lessons that the Lord taught His ancient people. Then to us, as He designed it should be to them, the teachings of His Word will ever be interesting and impressive.

When Joshua went forth in the morning before the taking of Jericho, there appeared before him a warrior fully equipped for battle. And Joshua asked, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" and he answered, "As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." If the eyes of Joshua had been opened as were the eyes of the servant of Elisha at Dothan, and he could have endured the sight, he would have seen the angels of the Lord encamped about the children of Israel; for the trained army of heaven had come to fight for the people of God, and the Captain of the Lord's host was there to command. When Jericho fell, no human hand touched the walls of the city, for the angels of the Lord overthrew the fortifications, and entered the fortress of the enemy. It was not Israel, but the Captain of the Lord's host that took Jericho. But Israel had their part to act to show their faith in the Captain of their salvation. —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 117.

# War in Heaven

Satan has ever sought to infatuate the minds of men with subtle mysteries. Thus he beguiled Eve, and thus he seeks to seduce men today. Those who misquote the Word of God in an effort to substantiate error are following the example of him who beguiled Eve, and who tempted Christ in the wilderness. The enemy substituted for the Word of God his own misleading statements.

The same deceptive agency that seduced the angels in heaven is working in like manner upon human minds today. By means of his seducing statements he won the confidence of many of the angels, and there was a great war in heaven. Michael and His angels fought against Satan and his deceived followers. . . .

Some who have received warning and instruction from God have deliberately turned from the messages sent to them. They have, as it were, walked blindfolded into Satan's prepared snares. Satan is playing the game of life for their souls. And some who might be in a position to help these ensnared souls have themselves become ensnared as captives to the archdeceiver.

God's love for His church is infinite. He has made every provision for its growth and enlargement. His care over His people is unceasing. He has given instruction regarding the dangers of false theories and subtle reasonings of the archdeceiver. He has sent warnings, reproofs, and messages to save His people. But some, like many of Christ's disciples, are offended, because they have misinterpreted the messages sent by God.

When it is essential for the purification of the church, trials are permitted. Under these trials some regard themselves as abused, and instead of humbling their hearts, they rise up in indignation. Satan watches his opportunity to present some pleasing sophistry that will captivate the minds of the tempted ones and lead them to accept his fables. Those who are thus deceived become channels through which other minds are seduced by delusive sentiments. . . .

God has no pleasure in the death of the unrighteous. He has borne long with stubborn, obdurate hearts. He who gave Christ to the world has sent messages of warning, but many have refused to heed. Long has He borne with men who have not glorified His name. He now calls upon His people to make a thorough work and remove every stumbling block. Let us clear the highway for our God. —*The Upward Look*, p. 338.

Because he was not able to insinuate his deceptions upon Christ, he determined to undermine Him by false statements and reports. War in heaven was the result, and Satan was expelled. He became Christ's most deadly foe. His constant effort was to counteract, in every possible way, His great work of saving souls. —*This Day With God*, p. 256.

# The Lord Is a Warrior

The Hebrew host marched in perfect order. First went a select body of armed men, clad in their warlike dress, not now to exercise their skill in arms, but only to believe and obey the directions given them. Next followed seven priests with trumpets. Then came the ark of God, glittering with gold, a halo of glory hovering over it, borne by priests in their rich and peculiar dress denoting their sacred office. The vast army of Israel followed in perfect order, each tribe under its respective standard. Thus they compassed the city with the ark of God. No sound was heard but the tread of that mighty host, and the solemn voice of the trumpets, echoed by the hills, and resounding through the city of Jericho.

With wonder and alarm the watchmen of that doomed city mark every move, and report to those in authority. They cannot tell what all this display means. Some ridicule the idea of that city's being taken in this manner, while others are awed, as they behold the splendor of the ark and the solemn and dignified appearance of the priests and the host of Israel following, with Joshua at their head. They remember that the Red Sea, forty years before, parted before them, and that a passage had just been prepared for them through the river Jordan. They are too much terrified to sport. They are strict to keep the gates of the city closely shut, and mighty warriors to guard each gate.

For six days the armies of Israel performed their circuit around the city. On the seventh day they compassed Jericho seven times. The people were commanded, as usual, to be silent. The voice of the trumpets alone was to be heard. The people were to observe, and when the trumpeters should make a longer blast than usual, then all were to shout with a loud voice, for God had given them the city. "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." "So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

God intended to show the Israelites that the conquest of Canaan was not to be ascribed to them. The Captain of the Lord's host overcame Jericho. He and His angels were engaged in the conquest. Christ commanded the armies of heaven to throw down the walls of Jericho and prepare an entrance for Joshua and the armies of Israel. God, in this wonderful miracle, not only strengthened the faith of His people in His power to subdue their enemies, but rebuked their former unbelief.

Jericho had defied the armies of Israel and the God of heaven. And as they beheld the host of Israel marching around their city once each day, they were alarmed; but they looked at their strong defenses, their firm and high walls, and felt sure that they could resist any attack. But when their firm walls suddenly tottered and fell with a stunning crash, like peals of loudest thunder, they were paralyzed with terror and could offer no resistance. —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 179–181.

# The Lord Will Fight for You

In obedience to the divine command Joshua marshaled the armies of Israel. No assault was to be made. They were simply to make the circuit of the city, bearing the ark of God and blowing upon trumpets. First came the warriors, a body of chosen men, not now to conquer by their own skill and prowess, but by obedience to the directions given them from God. Seven priests with trumpets followed. Then the ark of God, surrounded by a halo of divine glory, was borne by priests clad in the dress denoting their sacred office. The army of Israel followed, each tribe under its standard. . . . No sound was heard but the tread of that mighty host and the solemn peal of the trumpets, echoing among the hills and resounding through the streets of Jericho. . . .

For six days the host of Israel made the circuit of the city. The seventh day came, and with the first dawn of light, Joshua marshaled the armies of the Lord. Now they were directed to march seven times around Jericho, and at a mighty peal from the trumpets to shout with a loud voice, for God had given them the city. . . .

As the seventh circuit was completed, the long procession paused. The trumpets, which for an interval had been silent, now broke forth in a blast that shook the very earth. The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city.

The Israelites had not gained the victory by their own power; the conquest had been wholly the Lord's; and as the firstfruits of the land, the city, with all that it contained, was to be devoted as a sacrifice to God. . . . Only faithful Rahab, with her household, was spared, in fulfillment of the promise of the spies. . . .

The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them." . . . To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. . . . The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism, and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 134.

# The Second-Best Option

By rebellion and apostasy man forfeited the favor of God; not his rights, for he could have no value except as it was invested in God's dear Son. This point must be understood. He forfeited those privileges which God in His mercy presented him as a free gift, a treasure in trust to be used to advance His cause and His glory, to benefit the beings He had made. The moment the workmanship of God refused obedience to the laws of God's kingdom, that moment he became disloyal to the government of God and he made himself entirely unworthy of all the blessings wherewith God had favored him.

This was the position of the human race after man divorced himself from God by transgression. Then he was no longer entitled to a breath of air, a ray of sunshine, or a particle of food. And the reason why man was not annihilated was because God so loved him that He made the gift of His dear Son that He should suffer the penalty of his transgression. Christ proposed to become man's surety and substitute, that man, through matchless grace, should have another trial—a second probation—having the experience of Adam and Eve as a warning not to transgress God's law as they did. And inasmuch as man enjoys the blessings of God in the gift of the sunshine and the gift of food, there must be on the part of man a bowing before God in thankful acknowledgment that all things come of God. Whatever is rendered back to Him is only His own who has given it.

Man broke God's law, and through the Redeemer new and fresh promises were made on a different basis. All blessings must come through a Mediator. Now every member of the human family is given wholly into the hands of Christ, and whatever we possess—whether it is the gift of money, of houses, of lands, of reasoning powers, of physical strength, of intellectual talents—in this present life, and the blessings of the future life, are placed in our possession as God's treasures to be faithfully expended for the benefit of man. Every gift is stamped with the cross and bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ. All things come of God. From the smallest benefits up to the largest blessing, all flow through the one Channel—a superhuman mediation sprinkled with the blood that is of value beyond estimate because it was the life of God in His Son.

Now not a soul can give God anything that is not already His. Bear this in mind: "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14). This must be kept before the people wherever we go—that we possess nothing, can offer nothing in value, in work, in faith, which we have not first received of God and upon which He can lay His hand any time and say, They are Mine—gifts and blessings and endowments I entrusted to you, not to enrich yourself, but for wise improvement to benefit the world. —

*Faith and Works*, pp. 21, 22.

Friday, October 24

## For Further Reading

*Christ Triumphant*, "Will You Choose Jesus?" September 24, p. 274.  
*God's Amazing Grace*, "Kept From Falling," November 21, p. 333.