

Lesson 11  
Sabbath Afternoon, June 06  
Setbacks

A strait gate means a gate difficult to enter. By this illustration Christ showed how hard it is for men and women to leave the world and the attractions it holds, and heartily and lovingly obey the commandments of God. The wide gate is easy to enter. Entrance through it does not call for the restrictions which are painful to the human heart. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are not seen in the broad way. There depraved appetite and natural inclinations find abundant room. There may be seen self-indulgence, pride, envy, evil surmisings, love of money, self-exaltation.

Said Christ, "Strive"—agonize—"to enter in. . . ." We must feel our continual dependence upon God and the great weakness of our own wisdom and our own judgment and strength, and then depend wholly upon Him who has conquered the foe in our behalf, because He pitied our weakness and knew we should be overcome and perish if He did not come to our help. . . . Think not that by any easy or common effort you can win the eternal reward. You have a wily foe upon your track. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). Here is the battle to overcome as Christ has overcome. His life of temptation, of trial, of toil and conflict, is before us for us to imitate. We may make efforts in our own strength, but not succeed. But when we fall all helpless and suffering and needy upon the Rock of Christ, feeling in our inmost soul that our victory depends upon His merits, that all our efforts of themselves without the special help of the great Conqueror will be without avail, then Christ would send every angel out of glory to rescue us from the power of the enemy rather than that we should fall. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 304.

The purity and soundness of our religious life is dependent not only on the truth we accept, but on the company we keep, and the moral atmosphere we breathe. Faith, elasticity and vigor, hopefulness, joyfulness, doubts and fears, slothfulness, stupidity, envy, jealousy, distrust, selfishness, waywardness, and backsliding, are the result of the associations we form, the company we keep, and the air we breathe. . . .

Christ, the Great Physician, has given a prescription for every believer. He must eat the food provided in the Word of God. And the faith that works by love to God and man is dependent not only upon the food we eat but upon the air we breathe. If we associate with those who are evil, we breathe an atmosphere tainted with the malaria of sin. Be sure, by association with the meek and lowly followers of Jesus, to breathe a pure, holy atmosphere. —*Our High Calling*, p. 255.

Sunday, June 07  
Life's Storms

Before our Lord went to His agony on the cross, He made His will. He had no silver or gold or houses to leave to His disciples. He was a poor man, as far as earthly possessions were concerned. Few in Jerusalem were so poor as He. But He left His disciples a richer gift than any earthly monarch could bestow on his subjects. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," He said; "not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

He left them the peace which had been His during His life on the earth, which had been with Him amidst poverty, buffeting, and persecution, and which was to be with Him during His agony in Gethsemane and on the cruel cross.

The Saviour's life on this earth, though lived in the midst of conflict, was a life of peace. While angry enemies were constantly pursuing Him, He said, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." No storm of satanic wrath could disturb the calm of that perfect communion with God. And He says to us, "My peace I give unto you."

Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." . . .

Every man's experience testifies to the truth of the words of Scripture: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." . . . Sin has destroyed our peace. . . . The masterful passions of the heart no human power can control. We are as helpless here as were the disciples to quiet the raging storm. But He who spoke peace to the billows of Galilee, has spoken the word of peace for every soul. However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, "Lord, save us," will find deliverance. His grace, which reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. . . . So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." . . .

The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven, and will diffuse its blessed influence all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 278.

Monday, June 08  
Be Made Well

Satan is the destroyer; the Lord is the Restorer. The Lord has not worked as a physician in the way that He desires to work, because, He says, Ye will not come to Me, that I may give you life. We look to every source for relief except to the One who proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection, and the life." . . .

Christ met one poor soul who had spent all her living in order that she might be cured of a physical malady. The statement is that she had spent all that she had on many physicians, and was nothing better, but rather made worse. But one touch of Christ by faith took away the infirmity of long years. This suffering woman came behind Christ and touched His garment, [having] faith in the Person whom the garment covered, and instantly she was made whole. "Who touched me?" said Christ. Peter was astonished. He answered, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?"

Christ desired to give a lesson that all present would never forget. He would show the difference between the touch of living faith and a casual touch. He said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." When the woman saw that she could not be hid, she came forward trembling, and throwing herself at His feet, told her pitiful story. Christ comforted her. "Daughter," He said, "thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

Why do we not come to Jesus in faith? Many give Him a casual touch, coming in contact only with His person. The woman did more than this. She put forth her hand in faith and was healed instantly. . . . The friends of the truth will honor Him who is the Author and Finisher of their faith. Christ will prove Himself a physician in restoring the body as well as the soul. The workers together with God will yoke up with Christ and place themselves, soul, body, and spirit, in right relation to God. . . .

The will of men, women, and children must be trained by cooperation with God. . . . The melody of spiritual joy, and spiritual as well as physical health, will be revealed and will promote that blessedness that the Lord Jesus came to our world to impart to every individual who will believe. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 239.

Tuesday, June 09  
Job

When depression settles upon the soul, it is no evidence that God has changed. He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8. You are sure of the favor of God when you are sensible of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; but if the clouds sweep over your soul, you must not feel that you are forsaken. Your faith must pierce the gloom. Your eye must be single, and your whole body will be full of light. The riches of the grace of Christ must be kept before the mind. Treasure up the lessons that His love provides. Let your faith be like Job's, that you may declare, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." . . .

The most trying experiences in the Christian's life may be the most blessed. The special providences of the dark hours may encourage the soul in future attacks of Satan, and equip the servant of God to stand in fiery trials. The trial of your faith is more precious than gold. You must have that abiding confidence in God that is not disturbed by the temptations and arguments of the deceiver. Take the Lord at His word. You must study the promises, and appropriate them as you have need. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. . . .

It is faith that familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God; and when we live with an eye single to His glory, we discern more and more the beauty of His character. Our souls become strong in spiritual power, for we are breathing the atmosphere of heaven, and, realizing that God is at our right hand, we shall not be moved. . . . We should live as in the presence of the Infinite One. . . .

Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. —*Our High Calling*, p. 324.

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement—days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earth-born children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God and are brought into the slavery of doubt, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences, we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills; and new faith, new life, would spring into being.

The faithful Job, in the day of his affliction and darkness, declared: . . .

"My soul chooseth . . . death rather than my life.

I loathe it;

I would not live alway:

Let me alone;

For my days are vanity."

But though weary of life, Job was not allowed to die. To him were pointed out the possibilities of the future, and there was given him the message of hope:

"Thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

Because thou shalt forget thy misery,

And remember it as waters that pass away. . . ."

From the depths of discouragement and despondency Job rose to the heights of implicit trust in the mercy and the saving power of God. Triumphantly he declared: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 162, 163.

Wednesday, June 10  
The Road to Emmaus

On the first day of the week after Christ's crucifixion, the disciples had everything to fill their hearts with rejoicing. But this day was not a day of joy to all. To some it was a day of uncertainty, confusion, and perplexity. . . . The women brought tidings that . . . positively affirmed that Christ had risen from the dead, and that they themselves had seen Jesus alive in the garden.

But still the disciples seemed unbelieving. Their hopes had died with Christ. And when the news of His resurrection was brought to them, it was so different from what they had anticipated that they could not believe it. . . . From eyewitnesses some of the disciples had obtained quite a full account of the events of Friday. Others beheld the scenes of the crucifixion with their own eyes. In the afternoon of the first day of the week, two of the disciples, restless and unhappy, decided to return to their home in Emmaus, a village about eight miles from Jerusalem. . . .

They had not advanced far on their journey when they were joined by a stranger. But they were so absorbed in their gloom and disappointment that they did not observe Him closely. They continued their conversation, expressing the thoughts of their hearts. . . . Jesus knew that their hearts were bound up with Him in love, and He longed to take them in His arms and wipe away their tears, and put joy and gladness in their hearts. But He must first give them lessons that they would never forget. . . .

They told Him of their disappointment in regard to their Master, "how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." With hearts sore with disappointment and with quivering lips they said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done."

Why did not the disciples remember Christ's words, and realize that events were to be as they had been? Why did not they realize that the last part of His disclosure would be just as verily fulfilled as the first part, that the third day He would rise again? This was the part they should have remembered. The priests and rulers did not forget this.

—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 295.

Thursday, June 11  
See Jesus

When Jesus sat down to rest at Jacob's well, He had come from Judea, where His ministry had produced little fruit. . . . He was faint and weary; yet He did not neglect the opportunity of speaking to one woman, though she was a stranger, an alien from Israel, and living in open sin. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 194.

As the woman talked with Jesus, she was impressed with His words. . . . She realized her soul thirst, which the waters of the well of Sychar could never satisfy. Nothing that had hitherto come in contact with her had so awakened her to a higher need. Jesus had convinced her that He read the secrets of her life; yet she felt that He was her friend, pitying and loving her. While the very purity of His presence condemned her sin, He had spoken no word of denunciation, but had told her of His grace, that could renew the soul. . . .

Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. . . . With heart overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious light she had received. "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did," she said to the men of the city. "Is not this the Christ?" Her words touched their hearts. There was a new expression on her face, a change in her whole appearance. They were interested to see Jesus. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 189, 191

As soon as she had found the Savior the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. . . . Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Savior. . . .

This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

Friday, June 12  
For Further Reading

*Christ Triumphant*, "No Temptation Could Induce the Saviour to Sin," July 3, p. 191.  
*In Heavenly Places*, "The Faith That Avails," April 11, p. 108.