

I urge our people to cease their criticism and evil-speaking, and go to God in earnest prayer, asking Him to help them to help the erring. Let them link up with one another and with Christ. Let them study the seventeenth of John, and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full. His words will be to them as the bread of life, and in the strength thus gained they will be enabled to develop characters that will be an honor to God. Perfect Christian fellowship will exist among them. There will be seen in their lives the fruit that always appears as the result of obedience to the truth.

Let us make Christ's prayer the rule of our life, that we may form characters that will reveal to the world the power of the grace of God. Let there be less talk about petty differences, and a more diligent study of what the prayer of Christ means to those who believe on His name. We are to pray for union, and then live in such a way that God can answer our prayers.

Perfect oneness—a union as close as the union existing between the Father and the Son—this is what will give success to the efforts of God's workers.

Complete union with Christ and with one another is absolutely necessary to the perfection of believers. Christ's presence by faith in the hearts of believers is their power, their life. It brings union with God. "Thou in me." Union with God through Christ makes the church perfect.

He who seeks to serve others by self-denial and self-sacrifice will be given the attributes of character that commend themselves to God, and develop wisdom, true patience, forbearance, kindness, compassion. This gives him the chiefest place in the kingdom of God.

Nothing can perfect a perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. . . . When you as individual workers of the church love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, then there will be no labored efforts to be in unity, there will be oneness in Christ, the ears to report will be closed, and no one will take up a reproach against his neighbor. The members of the church will cherish love and unity and be as one great family. Then we shall bear the credentials to the world that will testify that God has sent His Son into the world. Christ has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 200.

Sunday, July 12

## The Problem of Cliques in the Church

The solemn, earnest prayer of Christ. . . reaches down along the line to our time. What a position is this for fallen man to attain through obedience—oneness with God through Jesus Christ! To what heights we are permitted to rise if we will have respect unto the recompense of the reward! We are to receive power from God that human nature, under the divine working, may not always be perverted and not always be under the depraving, corrupting influence of sin. Human nature, through Jesus Christ, becomes allied to angels—yes, even to the great God.

Those who are truly connected with God will not be at variance with one another. . . . His Spirit ruling in their hearts will create harmony, love, and unity. The opposite of this works in the children of Satan; there is with them a continual contradiction. Strife and envy and jealousy are the ruling elements. The characteristic of the Christian is the meekness of Christ. Benevolence, kindness, mercy, and love originate from Infinite Wisdom, while the opposite is the unholy fruit of a heart that is not in harmony with Jesus Christ. . . . In union there is strength. In division there is weakness and defeat.

The most convincing argument we can give to the world of Christ's mission is to be found in perfect unity. . . . In proportion to our unity with Christ will be our power to save souls.

If we reach the standard of perfection, our peculiar traits of disposition must be molded in harmony with Christ's will. Then we shall sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Brethren will work together, without a thought of collision. Little differences, dwelt upon, lead to actions that destroy Christian fellowship. . . . Let us keep drawing near to God, and He will draw near to us. Then, as one, we shall reach upward to Him. The churches will be as gardens of the Lord, under His cultivation. God's people will be trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord, and watered with the river of life. —*Our High Calling*, p. 170.

The golden chain of love, binding the hearts of the believers in unity, in bonds of fellowship and love, and in oneness with Christ and the Father, makes the connection perfect, and bears to the world a testimony of the power of Christianity that cannot be controverted. . . .

Satan understands the power of such a testimony as a witness to the world of what grace can do in transforming character. . . . He will work every conceivable device to break this golden chain which links heart to heart of those who believe the truth and binds them up in close connection with the Father and the Son.

Those who have never experienced the tender, winning love of Christ cannot lead others to the fountain of life. His love in the heart is a constraining power, which leads men to reveal Him in the conversation, in the tender, pitiful spirit, in the uplifting of the lives of those with whom they associate. . . .

In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life, and sheds a refining influence on all around.

He who loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself will work with the constant realization that he is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Making God's will his will, he will reveal in his life the transforming power of the grace of Christ. In all the circumstances of life, he will take Christ's example as his guide.

Every true, self-sacrificing worker for God is willing to spend and be spent for the sake of others. . . . By earnest, thoughtful efforts to help where help is needed, the true Christian shows his love for God and for his fellow beings. He may lose his life in service. But when Christ comes to gather His jewels to Himself, he will find it again. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 237.

Monday, July 13  
Centered on Jesus

Here the eye of faith is directed to God, to look to the unseen, not upon the things that are now apparent. Faith lives in expectation of a future good; it discerns inexpressible advantages in the heavenly gift. The hope of the future life is an essential part of our Christian faith. When we allow worldly attractions to come in between the soul and God, the world is all we can discern. . . . Look up higher, fix the eye of faith upon things unseen, and you will become strong in the divine strength.

Our faith increases by beholding Jesus, who is the center of all that is attractive and lovely. The more we contemplate the heavenly, the less we see desirable and attractive in the earthly. The more continually we fix the eye of faith on Christ, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered, the more our faith grows; our hope strengthens, our love becomes more intense and fervent, with the clearness of our spiritual insight, and our spiritual intelligence increases. More and more we realize the positive claim of God upon us to purify ourselves from the customs and practices of a world that knows not God, nor Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

The more we behold Christ, talk of His merits, and tell of His power, the more fully we shall reflect His image in our own characters and the less we shall submit our minds and affections to the paralyzing influences of the world. The more our minds dwell upon Jesus, the less they will be enveloped in the fog of doubt, and the more easily shall we lay all our trials, all our burdens, upon the Burden Bearer. . . .

Let faith pierce through the hellish shadow of Satan and center in Jesus, our high priest, who hath entered for us within the veil. Whatever clouds overcast the sky, whatever storms surge around the soul, this anchor holds firm, and we may be sure of victory. —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 127.

O how gracious is our Lord! "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:16). . . . "I will not leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). The Holy Spirit is to be given for the asking. Only think of it, He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Then let us rejoice, let us be glad. Let us not look at the hellish work of the powers of darkness until hope and courage shall fail. Jesus lives, and we must let our faith pierce the blackness. . . and rest in the light, rejoice in the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

Jesus lives to make intercession for us. While the blackness and darkness are closing about the world, our lives are only secure as they are hid with Christ in God. Precious Saviour! In Him alone are our hopes of eternal life to be centered. We will then talk faith, talk hope, talk courage, and diffuse light on every side. "Ye are," saith Christ, "the light of the world. A city. . . set on an hill. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may. . . glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14–16). Faith must pierce the darkest cloud. Simple, earnest trust in God will glorify His name, and in that trust you may be all light in the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise Him, and glorify God for His matchless love. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 284.

Tuesday, July 14  
Wisdom and Maturity

The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use aged workers. When John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, there were many who thought him to be past service, an old and broken reed, ready to fall at any time. But the Lord saw fit to use him still. Though banished from the scenes of his former labor, he did not cease to bear witness to the truth. Even in Patmos he made friends and converts. His was a message of joy, proclaiming a risen Saviour. . . .

The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God. These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and trial. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God's cause. Though worn, and unable to bear the heavier burdens that younger men can and should carry, the counsel they can give is of the highest value.

They may have made mistakes, but from their failures they have learned to avoid errors and dangers, and are they not therefore competent to give wise counsel? They have borne test and trial, and though they have lost some of their vigor, the Lord does not lay them aside. He gives them special grace and wisdom. . . . The Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with these faithful men. . . .

As those who have spent their lives in the service of Christ draw near to the close of their earthly ministry, they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to recount the experiences they have had in connection with the work of God. The record of His wonderful dealings with His people, of His great goodness in delivering them from trial, should be repeated to those newly come to the faith. God desires the old and tried laborers to stand in their place, doing their part to save men and women from being swept downward by the mighty current of evil. He desires them to keep the armor on till He bids them lay it down. —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 363.

When you begin to feel despondent, look unto Jesus, and commune with Him. When you think your brethren misunderstand you, remember that Jesus, your Elder Brother, never makes a mistake. He will judge righteously. The words of Christ uttered in the great day of the feast have a wonderful meaning and power. He lifted up His voice and said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." We are not to be driven to Christ. It is our part to come—to make our own choice, and come to the fountain of life. Why should we not come to Christ? for in Him our hope of eternal life is centered. The lessons that have come to us through Christ are not oft-repeated maxims; they are full of vital thought. But it is our part to appropriate divine truth. The apostle Paul exhorts us to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. By faith we are to appropriate the promises of God, and to provide ourselves with the abundant blessings which have been secured for us through Christ Jesus. Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer; but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer; for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings who shall be partakers with Him in His glory. He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men; but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith. Believing in Him, we have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. We are to understand that we may confidently expect God's favor not only in this world, but in the heavenly world, since He paid such a price for our salvation. Faith in the atonement and intercession of Christ will keep us steadfast and immovable amid the temptations that press upon us. . . . Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 331.

How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them?

The disciples made no move toward serving one another. Jesus waited for a time to see what they would do. Then He, the divine Teacher, rose from the table. Laying aside the outer garment that would have impeded His movements, He took a towel, and girded Himself. With surprised interest the disciples looked on, and in silence waited to see what was to follow. "After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light.

So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part. . . .

To those who receive the spirit of this service, it can never become a mere ceremonial. Its constant lesson will be, "By love serve one another." Galatians 5:13. In washing the feet of His disciples, Christ gave evidence that He would do any service, however humble, that would make them heirs with Him of the eternal wealth of heaven's treasure. His disciples, in performing the same rite, pledge themselves in like manner to serve their brethren. Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other. They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry. And this, not only for one another. Their field of labor is as wide as their Master's was. The world is full of those who need our ministry. The poor, the helpless, the ignorant, are on every hand. Those who have communed with Christ in the upper chamber will go forth to minister as He did.

Jesus, the served of all, came to be the servant of all. And because He ministered to all, He will again be served and honored by all. And those who would partake of His divine attributes, and share with Him the joy of seeing souls redeemed, must follow His example of unselfish ministry.

All this was comprehended in the words of Jesus, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." This was the intent of the service He established. And He says, "If ye know these things," if you know the purpose of His lessons, "happy are ye if ye do them." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 651.

Thursday, July 16

## A Lifestyle That Reflects the Cross

Remove the cross from the Christian and it is like blotting out the sun which illumines the day, and dropping the moon and the stars out of the firmament of the heavens at night. The cross of Christ brings us nigh to God, reconciling man to God, and God to man. The Father looks upon the cross, upon the suffering He has given His Son to endure in order to save the race from hopeless misery and to draw man to Himself. He looks upon it with the relenting compassion of a Father's love. The cross has been almost lost sight of, but without the cross there is no connection with the Father, no unity with the Lamb in the midst of the throne in heaven, no welcome reception of the wandering who would return to the forsaken path of righteousness and truth, no hope for the transgressor in the day of judgment. Without the cross there is no means provided for overcoming the power of our strong foe. Every hope of the race hangs upon the cross.

When the sinner reaches the cross, and looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ; and the words of pardon are spoken: Live, O ye guilty sinners, live. Your repentance is accepted; for I have found a ransom.

Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness. —*Our High Calling*, p. 46.

The mind must be trained to dwell upon heavenly things. Humility will come as the result of discerning the loveliness of Jesus Christ. Dwelling upon Christ's excellencies of character, we shall see the offensive character of sin and will by faith grasp the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We will cultivate the virtues that dwell in Jesus, that we may reflect to others a representation of His character. When we look at the cross of Calvary, we will not exalt self, but keep constantly in view our unworthiness and how much our salvation cost heaven; we will discern Christ's matchless love. —*This Day With God*, p. 261.

Friday, July 17  
For Further Reading

*Maranatha*, "Greatest Work in the World," April 1, p. 99.  
*God's Amazing Grace*, "Thy Salvation," January 13, p. 15.