

# Miracles Around the Lake

**Sabbath afternoon, July 27**

At the birth of Jesus, Satan knew that One had come with a divine commission to dispute his dominion. He trembled at the angel's message attesting the authority of the newborn King. Satan well knew the position that Christ had held in heaven as the Beloved of the Father. That the Son of God should come to this earth as a man filled him with amazement and with apprehension. He could not fathom the mystery of this great sacrifice. His selfish soul could not understand such love for the deceived race. The glory and peace of heaven, and the joy of communion with God, were but dimly comprehended by men; but they were well known to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Since he had lost heaven, he was determined to find revenge by causing others to share his fall. This he would do by causing them to undervalue heavenly things, and to set the heart upon things of earth.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 115.

Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is "not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father's throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed—the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness. . . .

Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into cap-tivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 14, 15.

He who had said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17), came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself. Humanity died; divinity did not die. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will.

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. Only He who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, could say, "I have power to lay it [my life] down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18).—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 301.

Sunday, July 28

## Calming a Storm

Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, [the disciples] had forgotten that Jesus was on board. Now, seeing their labor vain and only death before them, they remembered at whose command they had set out to cross the sea. In Jesus was their only hope. . . .

Suddenly a flash of lightning pierces the darkness, and they see Jesus lying asleep, undisturbed by the tumult. . . . As the lightning's glare reveals Him, they see the peace of heaven in His face; they read in His glance self-forgetful, tender love, and, their hearts turning to Him, cry, "Lord, save us: we perish."

Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded. As the disciples grasp their oars to make a last effort, Jesus rises. He stands in the midst of His disciples, while the tempest rages. . . . He lifts His hand, so often employed in deeds of mercy, and says to the angry sea, "Peace, be still". . . .

As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 334–336.

Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; "but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Satan's hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God's protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. . . . "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matthew 10:31.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 272, 273.

Our divine Lord is equal to any emergency. With Him nothing is impossible. He has shown His great love for us by living a life of self-denial and sacrifice and by dying a death of agony. Come to Christ just as you are. . . . Cast yourself wholly on His mercy. There is no difficulty within or without that cannot be surmounted in His strength.

Some have stormy tempers; but He who calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee will say to the troubled heart, "Peace, be still." There is no nature so rebellious that Christ cannot subdue it, no temper so stormy that He cannot quell it, if the heart is surrendered to His keeping.

He who commits his soul to Jesus need not despond. We have an all-powerful Saviour. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, you can say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Psalm 46:1, 2).—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 17.

Monday, July 29

## Can You Hear a Whisper Above a Shout?

At the command of Jesus the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them calmly sitting at the Saviour's feet, subdued, intelligent, and gentle. But the demons were permitted to sweep a herd of swine into the sea; and to the dwellers of Gadara the loss of these outweighed the blessings which Christ had bestowed, and the divine Healer was entreated to depart. This was the result which Satan designed to secure. By casting the blame of their loss upon Jesus, he aroused the selfish fears of the people and prevented them from listening to His words. Satan is constantly accusing Christians as the cause of loss, misfortune, and suffering, instead of allowing the reproach to fall where it belongs—upon himself and his agents. . . .

This event was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast. The Saviour desired His followers to have a knowledge of the foe whom they were to meet, that they might not be deceived and overcome by his devices. It was also His will that the people of that region should behold His power to break the bondage of Satan and release his captives. And though Jesus Himself departed, the men so mar-velously delivered, remained to declare the mercy of their Benefactor.—The Great Controversy, pp. 514, 515.

Though the people of Gergesa had not received Jesus, He did not leave them to the darkness they had chosen. When they bade Him depart from them, they had not heard His words. They were ignorant of that which they were rejecting. Therefore He sent the light to them, and by those to whom they would not refuse to listen.

In causing the destruction of the swine, it was Satan's purpose to turn the people away from the Saviour and prevent the preaching of the gospel in that region. But this very occurrence roused the country as nothing else could have done, and directed attention to Christ. Though the Saviour Himself departed, the men whom He had healed remained as witnesses to His power. Those who had been mediums of the prince of darkness became channels of light, messengers of the Son of God. When Jesus returned to Decapolis, the people flocked about Him, and for three days thousands from all the surrounding country heard the message of salvation.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 98.

The strength of every soul is in God and not in man. Quietness and confidence is to be the strength of all who give their hearts to God. Christ has not a casual interest in us but an interest stronger than a mother for her child. . . . Our Saviour has purchased us by human suffering and sorrow, by insult, reproach, abuse, mockery, rejection and death. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. He will make you secure under His protection. . . . Our weakness in human nature will not bar our access to the heavenly Father, for He [Christ] died to make intercession for us.—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 77.

Tuesday, July 30

## On the Roller Coaster With Jesus

[Jesus] remained by the seaside for a time, teaching and healing, and then repaired to the house of Levi-Matthew to meet the publicans at the feast. Here Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, found Him.

This elder of the Jews came to Jesus in great distress, and cast himself at His feet, exclaiming, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live."

Jesus set out at once with the ruler for his home. Though the disciples had seen so many of His works of mercy, they were surprised at His compliance with the entreaty of the haughty rabbi.—The Desire of Ages, p. 342.

In making His way through the multitude, the Saviour came near to where the afflicted woman was standing. Again and again she had tried in vain to get near Him. Now her opportunity had come. She could see no way of speaking to Him. She would not seek to hinder His slow advance. But she had heard that healing came from a touch of His garments; and, fearful of losing her one chance for relief, she pressed forward. . . .

Christ knew every thought of her mind, and He was making His way to where she stood. He realized her great need, and He was helping her to exercise faith.

As He was passing, she reached forward and succeeded in barely touching the border of His garment. That moment she knew that she was healed. In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life, and instantly her pain and feebleness disappeared.—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 59, 60.

Christ did not ask ["Who touched Me?"] for His own information. He had a lesson for the people, for His disciples, and for the woman. He wished to inspire the afflicted with hope. He wished to show that it was faith which had brought the healing power. The woman's trust must not be passed by without comment. God must be glorified by her grateful confession. Christ desired her to understand that He approved her act of faith. He would not have her depart with a half blessing only. She was not to remain in ignorance of His knowledge of her suffering, or of His compassionate love and of His approval of her faith in His power to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. . . .

Finding concealment vain, she came forward trembling, and cast herself at His feet. With grateful tears she told Him, before all the people, why she had touched His garment, and how she had been immediately healed. She feared that her act in touching His garment had been one of presumption; but no word of censure came from Christ's lips. . . . "Daughter," He said gently, "be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Verse 48. How cheering were these words to her. Now no fear that she had given offense embittered her joy.—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 60, 61.

Wednesday, July 31

## Rejection and Reception

The words of Jesus to His hearers in the synagogue [at Nazareth] struck at the root of their self-righteousness, pressing home upon them the bitter truth that they had departed from God and forfeited their claim to be His people. Every word cut like a knife as their real condition was set before them. They now scorned the faith with which Jesus had at first inspired them. They would not admit that He who had sprung from poverty and lowliness was other than a common man.

Their unbelief bred malice. Satan controlled them, and in wrath they cried out against the Saviour. They had turned from Him whose mission it was to heal and restore; now they manifested the attributes of the destroyer.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 239.

The disciples' message was the same as that of John the Baptist and of Christ Himself: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were to enter into no controversy with the people as to whether Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; but in His name they were to do the same works of mercy as He had done. . . .

The disciples on their first missionary tour were to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." If they had now preached the gospel to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, they would have lost their influence with the Jews. By exciting the prejudice of the Pharisees they would have involved themselves in controversy which would have discouraged them at the outset of their labors. Even the apostles were slow to understand that the gospel was to be carried to all nations. Until they themselves could grasp this truth they were not prepared to labor for the Gentiles. If the Jews would receive the gospel, God purposed to make them His messengers to the Gentiles. Therefore they were first to hear the message.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 350 351.

Because the rulers did not believe on Him, the people were not willing to accept Jesus. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They could not endure to be governed by His sober, self-denying life. They wished to enjoy the honor which the world bestows. Yet many followed the Son of God and listened to His instructions, feasting upon the words which fell so graciously from His lips. His words were full of meaning, yet so plain that the weakest could understand them.

Satan and his angels blinded the eyes and darkened the understanding of the Jews, and stirred up the chief of the people and the rulers to take the Saviour's life. . . . I saw that many of the magis-trates and elders did believe on Jesus; but Satan kept them from acknowledging it; they feared the reproach of the people more than they feared God.

Thus far the cunning and hatred of Satan had not broken up the plan of salvation. The time for the accomplishment of the object for which Jesus came into the world was drawing near.—*Early Writings*, pp. 160, 161.

Thursday, August 1

## A Different Kind of Messiah

When the question comes home to your heart, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" let not your answer be the response of unbelief. When the disciples heard the Saviour's direction, "Give ye them to eat," all the difficulties arose in their minds. They questioned, Shall we go away into the villages to buy food? So now, when the people are destitute of the bread of life, the Lord's children question, Shall we send for someone from afar, to come and feed them? But what said Christ? "Make the men sit down," and He fed them there. So when you are surrounded by souls in need, know that Christ is there. Commune with Him. Bring your barley loaves to Jesus.

The means in our possession may not seem to be sufficient for the work; but if we will move forward in faith, believing in the all-sufficient power of God, abundant resources will open before us. If the work be of God, He Himself will provide the means for its accomplishment. He will reward honest, simple reliance upon Him. . . . If we go to the Source of all strength, with our hands of faith outstretched to receive, we shall be sustained in our work, even under the most forbidding circumstances, and shall be enabled to give to others the bread of life.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 370, 371.

Though the finite minds of men are inadequate to enter into the counsels of the Infinite One, or to understand fully the working out of His purposes, yet often it is because of some error or neglect on their own part that they so dimly comprehend the messages of Heaven. Not infrequently the minds of the people, and even of God's servants, are so blinded by human opinions, the traditions and false teaching of men, that they are able only partially to grasp the great things which He has revealed in His word. Thus it was with the disciples of Christ, even when the Saviour was with them in person. Their minds had become imbued with the popular conception of the Messiah as a temporal prince, who was to exalt Israel to the throne of the universal empire, and they could not understand the meaning of His words foretelling His sufferings and death.—The Great Controversy, p. 344.

In consideration of the shortness of time we as a people should watch and pray, and in no case allow ourselves to be diverted from the solemn work of preparation for the great event before us. Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future, immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value. . . . God has a people upon the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast-fulfilling prophecy and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 306.

Friday, August 2

## For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, "The Touch of Faith," pp. 342–348.

My Life Today, "With Peace," p. 336.