

Blessed Are Those Who Believe

Sabbath afternoon, November 9

In the human brotherhood it takes all classes of talents to make a perfect whole; and the church of Christ is composed of all ranks, all classes, and varied talents. God never designed that the pride of men should dissolve that which his own wisdom had ordained,—the combination of all classes of minds, of all the varied talents that make a complete whole. There should be no depreciating of any part of God's great work, whether the agencies are higher or lowlier. All have their part to act in diffusing light in different degrees. There should be no monopolizing of what belongs, in a measure, to all, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Not a ray of light must be undervalued, not a ray shut out, not a gleam unrecognized or acknowledged reluctantly. Let all act their part for truth and righteousness. The interests of the varied classes of society are indissolubly united. We are all woven together in the great web of humanity, and we cannot without loss withdraw our sympathies from one another. It is impossible for a healthful influence to be maintained in the church when this common interest and sympathy does not exist. —*Gospel Workers*, p. 314.

It is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each member of the household should sacredly regard the feelings and respect the rights of the others. By this means mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Harmony may be secured, and the blending of the varied temperaments may be a benefit to each. —*Signs of the Times*, September 9, 1886, par. 2.

Today let the question come home to the heart of every one who professes the name of Christ, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" . . . Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have no saving faith in him as their sacrifice and Saviour. They have no realization that Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed, in order that they may be brought back to loyalty to God. Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins; that you, through the merits of his righteousness, may be re-instated to the favor of God. . . .

You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood. —*The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888, par. 4, 5.

Sunday, November 10

Harking Back to Abraham

[Abraham] offered up the most earnest prayer that before his death he might behold the Messiah. And he saw Christ. A supernatural light was given him, and he acknowledged Christ's divine character. He saw His day, and was glad. He was given a view of the divine sacrifice for sin. Of this sacrifice he had an illustration in his own experience. The command came to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering." Genesis 22:2. Upon the altar of sacrifice he laid the son of promise, the son in whom his hopes were centered. Then as he waited beside the altar with knife upraised to obey God, he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Genesis 22:12. This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might . . . realize the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 468.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than 50 years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.

"Before Abraham was, I am." Christ is the preexistent, self-existent Son of God. The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 17.

The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:1–5. Therefore there is no occasion for one to glory over another or to grudge against another. No one is privileged above another, nor can anyone claim the reward as a right. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 401.

Monday, November 11

The Witness of Mary

I was carried down to the time when Jesus ate the Passover supper with His disciples. Satan had deceived Judas and led him to think that he was one of Christ's true disciples; but his heart had ever been carnal. He had seen the mighty works of Jesus, he had been with Him through His ministry, and had yielded to the overpowering evidence that He was the Messiah; but Judas was close and covetous; he loved money. He complained in anger of the costly ointment poured upon Jesus. Mary loved her Lord. He had forgiven her sins, which were many, and had raised from the dead her much-loved brother, and she felt that nothing was too dear to bestow upon Jesus. The more precious the ointment, the better could she express her gratitude to her Saviour by devoting it to Him. . . . This act of generosity on the part of Mary was a most cutting rebuke of [Judas's] covetous disposition. The way was prepared for Satan's temptation to find a ready reception in the heart of Judas. —*Early Writings*, p. 165.

At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of "ointment of spikenard, very costly," with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honoring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair. . . .

Mary knew not the full significance of her deed of love. She could not answer her accusers. She could not explain why she had chosen that occasion for anointing Jesus. The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings. Inspiration stoops to give no reason. An unseen presence, it speaks to mind and soul, and moves the heart to action. It is its own justification.

Christ told Mary the meaning of her act, and in this He gave her more than He had received. "In that she hath poured this ointment on My body," He said, "she did it for My burial." As the alabaster box was broken, and filled the whole house with its fragrance, so Christ was to die, His body was to be broken; but He was to rise from the tomb, and the fragrance of His life was to fill the earth. Christ "hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Ephesians 5:2. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 558, 560.

[God] always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of his children, and he leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. . . . If we will trust him, and commit our ways to him, he will direct our steps in the very path that will result in our obtaining the victory over every evil passion, and every trait of character that is unlike the character of our divine Pattern. —*Signs of the Times*, May 25, 1888, par. 9.

The Unwitting Witness of Pilate

From the first, Pilate was convicted that Jesus was no common man. He believed Him to be an excellent character, and entirely innocent of the charges brought against Him. The angels who were witnessing the scene marked the convictions of the Roman governor, and to save him from engaging in the awful act of delivering Christ to be crucified, an angel was sent to Pilate's wife, and gave her information through a dream that it was the Son of God in whose trial her husband was engaged, and that He was an innocent sufferer. She immediately sent a message to Pilate, stating that she had suffered many things in a dream on account of Jesus and warning him to have nothing to do with that holy man. The messenger, pressing hastily through the crowd, placed the letter in the hands of Pilate. As he read, he trembled and turned pale, and at once determined to have nothing to do with putting Christ to death. If the Jews would have the blood of Jesus, he would not give his influence to it, but would labor to deliver Him. —*Early Writings*, p. 173.

“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person: see ye to it.” In fear and self-condemnation Pilate looked upon the Saviour. In the vast sea of upturned faces, His alone was peaceful. About His head a soft light seemed to shine. Pilate said in his heart, He is a God. Turning to the multitude he declared, I am clear of His blood. Take ye Him, and crucify Him. But mark ye, priests and rulers, I pronounce Him a just man. May He whom He claims as His Father judge you and not me for this day's work. Then to Jesus he said, Forgive me for this act; I cannot save You. And when he had again scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 738.

Pilate then wrote an inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and placed it upon the cross, above the head of Jesus. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.” . . .

[The priests] said, “Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews.” But Pilate was angry with himself because of his former weakness, and he thoroughly despised the jealous and artful priests and rulers. He replied coldly, “What I have written I have written.”

A higher power than Pilate or the Jews had directed the placing of that inscription above the head of Jesus. In the providence of God it was to awaken thought, and investigation of the Scriptures. The place where Christ was crucified was near to the city. Thousands of people from all lands were then at Jerusalem, and the inscription declaring Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah would come to their notice. It was a living truth, transcribed by a hand that God had guided. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 745.

Wednesday, November 13

The Witness of Thomas

When Jesus first met the disciples in the upper chamber, Thomas was not with them. He heard the reports of the others, and received abundant proof that Jesus had risen; but gloom and unbelief filled his heart. As he heard the disciples tell of the wonderful manifestations of the risen Saviour, it only plunged him in deeper despair. If Jesus had really risen from the dead, there could be no further hope of a literal earthly kingdom. And it wounded his vanity to think that his Master should reveal Himself to all the disciples except him. He was determined not to believe, and for a whole week he brooded over his wretchedness, which seemed all the darker in contrast with the hope and faith of his brethren. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

Our Saviour has no words of commendation for those who are slow of heart to believe in these last days, any more than He had for doubting Thomas, who boasted that he would not believe upon the evidence which the disciples rehearsed, and which they credited, that Christ had indeed risen and appeared to them. Said Thomas: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails," "and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." Christ granted Thomas the evidence that he had declared he must have; but He reprovingly said to him: "Be not faithless, but believing." Thomas acknowledged himself convinced. Jesus said unto him: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 696.

Many who are given to doubt excuse themselves by saying that if they had the evidence which Thomas had from his companions, they would believe. They do not realize that they have not only that evidence, but much more. Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, will never realize their desire. They gradually become confirmed in unbelief. Those who educate themselves to look on the dark side, and murmur and complain, know not what they do. They are sowing the seeds of doubt, and they will have a harvest of doubt to reap. At a time when faith and confidence are most essential, many will thus find themselves powerless to hope and believe.

In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers. Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon self-defense, and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." — *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 807, 808.

Thursday, November 14

Our Witness of Jesus

Contemplating the fate of the city he had loved, the soul of Jesus yearned over the child of his care. Unrequited love broke the heart of the Son of God. Little did the multitude know of the grief that weighed upon the spirit of Him whom they worshiped. They saw his tears and heard his groans . . . but they could not understand the meaning of his lamentation over Jerusalem. Meanwhile, reports were brought to the rulers that Jesus was approaching the city attended by a great concourse of people. In trepidation they go out to meet him, hoping to disperse the crowd by means of their authority. As the procession is about to descend the Mount of Olives, it is intercepted by the rulers. They inquire who and what is the cause of all this tumultuous rejoicing. As they, with much authority, repeat their question,—Who is this? the disciples, filled with a spirit of inspiration, are heard above all the noise of the crowd, repeating in eloquent strains the prophecies which answered this question. Adam will tell you, It is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head. Ask Abraham, he will tell you, It is Melchisedek, King of Salem, King of Peace. Jacob will tell you, He is Shiloh of the tribe of Judah. . . . Daniel will tell you, He is the Messiah. Hosea will tell you, He is the Lord God of Hosts, the Lord is his memorial. John the Baptist will tell you, He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The great Jehovah has proclaimed from his throne, This is my beloved Son. We, his disciples, declare, This is Jesus, the Messiah, the Prince of Life, the Redeemer of the world. —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 395.

We have the great principles of salvation revealed in the word of God, which concern our eternal welfare, and our very souls should be all aglow with the love of God. We should be ready to speak forth his praises. Christ should abide in our hearts by faith, that we may learn of him, and be laborers together with him. We should unitedly go forth, determined, through the help of God, to bear testimony to his glory in every act of our life. —*The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1889, par. 10.

We have a most important work to do, the work of obeying Christ and bearing witness of Him. He said to his disciples, "And ye also shall bear witness of Me, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." The disciples were to be honored by bearing witness concerning Christ's mission. They had been with Him constantly and had gained a most valuable knowledge to impart to others. We can not be with Christ in person as were His first disciples, but He has sent His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, and through this power we too can bear witness for the Saviour. —*The Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1900, par. 2.

Friday, November 15

For Further Reading

The Desire of Ages, "In Pilate's Judgment Hall," pp. 723–740;

This Day with God, "Truth Will Triumph," p. 195.