
GABRIEL

FROM THE MEEKEST
TO THE GREATEST



F. T. Wright

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Contents

1. Who is Gabriel?.....	1
<i>Human Vessels</i>	1
<i>Heavenly Vessels</i>	2
<i>The Angel of the Lord</i>	4
<i>Taking Lucifer's Place in Heaven</i>	5
<i>God's Plan for Mankind</i>	7
<i>One of the Redeemed</i>	8
<i>Two Categories of Angels</i>	14
<i>Gabriel Among the Redeemed</i>	15
2. From Moses to Daniel.....	17
<i>The Resurrection of Moses</i>	17
<i>Angel Appearances</i>	20
3. The Work of Gabriel Begins.....	35
<i>Jesus Hands the Work to Gabriel</i>	35
<i>Gabriel Explains Prophecy to Daniel</i>	36
<i>New Testament Appearances</i>	43
4. In the Garden of Gethsemane.....	52
<i>Gabriel Strengthens Christ</i>	58
<i>Gabriel Interposes</i>	63
<i>The Dream of Pilate's Wife</i>	64
<i>Hidden Around the Cross and Tomb</i>	66
5. With the Early Church.....	69
<i>The Resurrection</i>	69
<i>Two Guardian Angels</i>	72
<i>The Entrance into Heaven</i>	75
<i>Deliverances from Prison</i>	75
<i>Director of Missionary Activities</i>	79
<i>Christ as the Angel of the Lord</i>	85
<i>Gabriel as the Angel of the Lord</i>	87
<i>Which One?</i>	87
6. In the Book of Revelation.....	89
<i>Communication through Gabriel</i>	89
<i>The Purpose of the Book of Revelation</i>	91
<i>A Light Bearer</i>	93
<i>One of the Prophets</i>	95
<i>The Many Angels in Revelation</i>	97

<i>A Teaching Role</i>	98
<i>Deeply Involved</i>	99
<i>An Unchangeable Pattern</i>	100
<i>The Sealing Angel</i>	102
<i>The Mighty Angel of Revelation 10</i>	105
<i>Commanding Angels</i>	105
7. The Work of a Covering Cherub	107
<i>Meditation</i>	107
<i>Survey of the Work of Gabriel</i>	108
<i>Who Filled the Vacancy?</i>	110
<i>A Comparison</i>	112
<i>A Period of Training</i>	113
8. Meekness and Humility	127
<i>The Danger of Pride</i>	127
<i>God's Humble Nature</i>	128
<i>The Spirit of the World</i>	130
<i>The Spirit of the Christ-like</i>	131
<i>Keeping the Work of God Foremost</i>	132
<i>The Spirit of the Sports Arena</i>	133
<i>The Humility of Holy Angels</i>	137
9. Pride or Humility: the Factors Involved	139
<i>Not a Works Program</i>	139
<i>The Education of Moses in Egypt</i>	141
<i>The Talents of Moses</i>	142
10. Influences Promoting Humility	153
<i>Not the Work of a Moment</i>	153
<i>Recognizing the Temptation</i>	154
<i>The Preservation of Moses in Egypt</i>	156
<i>The Good Influences</i>	157
<i>An Example for Us</i>	164
11. The Early Education of Moses	166
<i>Our Work and God's Work</i>	169
<i>God as the Problem Solver</i>	170
<i>A Loving, Heavenly Father</i>	171
<i>The Necessity of the New Birth</i>	171
<i>The Work of a Mother</i>	172
<i>A Love of Truth and Justice</i>	175
<i>The Folly of Idolatry</i>	176
<i>Pressure from the Egyptian Priests</i>	178

12. Raised in Egypt.....	180
<i>Class Structures.....</i>	180
<i>The System of Kings.....</i>	181
<i>Preserved by Regeneration.....</i>	182
<i>Identifying with the Hebrews.....</i>	183
<i>The Spirit and the Flesh.....</i>	183
<i>Slaying the Egyptian.....</i>	185
<i>More Training Required Yet.....</i>	186
<i>The New School of Solitude.....</i>	189
<i>Much to Unlearn.....</i>	191
13. A Struggle As for Life.....	196
<i>Individual Effort Required.....</i>	196
<i>Realizing Weaknesses.....</i>	199
<i>Understanding Deficiencies.....</i>	200
<i>Mental and Moral Discipline.....</i>	200
<i>A New Spirit.....</i>	203
<i>A Living Faith.....</i>	204
<i>Intense Preparation.....</i>	206
14. The Use of the Sword.....	209
<i>The Values of Egyptian Discipline.....</i>	209
<i>The Dangers of Egyptian Discipline.....</i>	210
<i>Abraham's Use of Force.....</i>	212
<i>A Revelation of God's Character.....</i>	215
<i>Isaac and Jacob.....</i>	220
<i>Moses Misinterprets History.....</i>	222
15. Fleeing from Egypt.....	223
<i>Lessons in Non-Violence.....</i>	223
<i>The Way of Pride.....</i>	225
<i>A New Environment Needed.....</i>	225
<i>A Master in the Egyptian Way.....</i>	226
<i>Deliverance by Warfare Fails.....</i>	227
<i>The Lord's Remedy.....</i>	228
<i>Two Systems of Conquest Meet.....</i>	229
<i>God's Faithfulness.....</i>	230
<i>The Sin of Unbelief.....</i>	231
<i>The Rebellion in Heaven.....</i>	233
<i>Total Submission to God.....</i>	236
16. Apparently Abandoned.....	238
<i>The Early Life of Christ.....</i>	238
<i>The Baptism.....</i>	241

<i>Sent Into the Wilderness</i>	244
<i>Our Danger</i>	245
<i>A Season of High Faith</i>	246
<i>The Glory Departs</i>	247
<i>A Difference Between Christ and Moses</i>	248
<i>A Time of Desperate Need</i>	250
<i>The Temptation</i>	251
<i>The Same Battle</i>	252
17. Perplexity and Trial	254
<i>Christ Gives Us the Victory</i>	254
<i>Faith in His Power</i>	256
<i>Faith in His Way</i>	257
<i>Faith That Works by Love</i>	260
<i>Reacting to Pressure</i>	264
18. A Training for Heaven	267
<i>God's Education Plan</i>	267
<i>The Time Factor</i>	269
<i>The Reformation Was the Beginning</i>	269
<i>The Stages of Education</i>	272
<i>A Continuing Reformation</i>	274
<i>The Advent Movement</i>	275
<i>Understanding the Objectives</i>	278
19. Schooling the Inner Man	280
<i>The Removal of Earthly Support</i>	280
<i>The School of Adversity and Humility</i>	282
<i>Human Effort Required</i>	288
<i>Relating Correctly to Experiences</i>	290
<i>Enticement and Provocation</i>	292
20. In the Household of Jethro	297
<i>Not by the Will of Man</i>	297
<i>Training Under God</i>	298
<i>The Influence of Jethro</i>	300
<i>A Man of Living Faith</i>	304
<i>Not a Violation of Gospel Order</i>	306
<i>The Training of Egypt</i>	307
<i>A Series of Educators</i>	308
<i>The Role of Godly Parents</i>	310
21. Building an Army	314
<i>Two Classes</i>	314
<i>Parental Responsibility</i>	315

<i>The Importance of the New Birth</i>	316
<i>One Great Purpose</i>	317
<i>The Example of Daniel</i>	318
<i>The Application to Us</i>	326
22. The Influence of Environment	329
<i>Architecture</i>	329
<i>Our Environment</i>	330
<i>Obedience to the Light</i>	333
<i>The Convicting Power of the Holy Spirit</i>	336
<i>Coming to Conviction</i>	338
<i>Deceptive Story-Telling</i>	340
<i>The Struggle to Overcome</i>	342
23. Everlasting Righteousness	344
<i>The Work of Restoration</i>	344
<i>The Problem of Reversion</i>	345
<i>Everlasting Righteousness</i>	352
<i>Temptation is Not Sin</i>	353
<i>Type and Antitype</i>	356
24. Communion with Nature	358
<i>The Suffering Caused to God</i>	358
<i>Hatred of Sin</i>	360
<i>Laying Aside Every Weight</i>	362
<i>Communing with God Through Nature</i>	364
25. Making War in Righteousness	372
<i>God's Character or Satan's?</i>	372
<i>A Manifestation of Love</i>	374
<i>Revelation at the Burning Bush</i>	377
<i>The God of the Patriarchs</i>	379
26. The Burning Bush	385
<i>The Teaching of Symbols</i>	385
<i>The Message of the Burning Bush</i>	386
<i>God the Plan Maker</i>	388
<i>A Revelation of the Incarnation</i>	389
Appendix 1 – Like Unto Me	398
<i>Contents</i>	398
<i>Exodus</i>	400
<i>Leviticus</i>	415
<i>Numbers</i>	416
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	420

<i>Joshua</i>	425
<i>Psalms</i>	425
<i>Matthew</i>	426
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	426
<i>Acts</i>	426
<i>Hebrews</i>	429
<i>Jude</i>	429
Appendix 2 – Camp Meeting Report.....	431
<i>The Camp Meeting in Dickendorf</i>	431
Appendix 3 – A Personal Testimony.....	433



1. Who is Gabriel?

Human Vessels

IN HIS infinite wisdom, God has chosen to use mortal, human messengers which are likened to earthen vessels as receptacles for costly treasure. Obviously, the fragile, unattractive vessels of potter's clay represent the humanity of weak, fallen, sinful human beings, while the treasures in those vessels are the inestimable riches of eternal light and life. Never has so much in value been entrusted to the care of custodians so poor, a point which can be appreciated only in proportion to one's capacity to evaluate the treasure.

From our limited, human determination of values, it would seem a mistake to entrust so much wealth into clumsy, bungling, inefficient, human hands when God had other and apparently better options. For instance, He could have chosen the glorious human nature with which Adam and Eve were blessed before the fall when they were dressed in beautiful garments of light.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45:

As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health and glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam's height was much greater than that of men who now inhabit the earth. Eve was somewhat less in stature; yet her form was noble, and full of beauty.

The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them.

That garment of glowing light was a revelation of the conditional immortality within them, and of the mighty physical, mental, and spiritual powers in their possession. Today, we who have never known in ourselves the incredible vitality with which Adam and Eve were blessed, have but the faintest concepts of what effective people they were.

Consider their incredible level of vital force which is rated by Inspiration at twenty times that known to men and women of the present time.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 138-139:

God endowed man with so great vital force that he has withstood the accumulation of disease brought upon the race in consequence of perverted habits, and has continued for six thousand years. This fact of itself is enough to evidence to us the strength and electrical energy that God gave to man at his creation. It took more than two thousand years of crime and indulgence of base passions to bring bodily disease upon the race to any great extent.

If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct. At the time of Christ's first advent the race had degenerated so rapidly that an accumulation of disease pressed upon that generation, bringing in a tide of woe and a weight of misery inexpressible.

To be endowed with twenty times the vital force now known to human beings, means that among all else with which they were blessed, they had twenty times the electrical energy in the brain and therefore, as many times the intellectual power. If God's messengers were equipped today with such capacities, what tremendous advantages would be at their disposal. With what mighty power they would present the message of living righteously provided they also possessed equivalent spiritual might!

Heavenly Vessels

One of the best ways in which to obtain a correct conception of the vessels God might have chosen in which to place His treasure, is to consider the power revealed by angels on some of those rare occasions when they have appeared visibly before godly men.

Nowhere is this better displayed than when "the mightiest of the Lord's host," descended to the earth to call Christ forth on His resurrection morning. Prayerfully picture the scene:

The Desire of Ages, p. 779-780:

The night of the first day of the week had worn slowly away. The darkest hour, just before daybreak, had come. Christ was still a prisoner in His narrow tomb. The great stone was in its place; the Roman seal was unbroken; the Roman guards were keeping their watch. And there were unseen watchers. Hosts of evil angels were gathered about the place. Had it been possible, the prince of darkness with his apostate army would have kept forever sealed the tomb that held the Son of God. But a heavenly host surrounded the sepulcher. Angels that excel in strength were guarding the tomb, and waiting to welcome the Prince of Life.

Matthew 28

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.

Clothed with the panoply of God, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

⁴ And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power, are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth.

The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, "Son of God, come forth; your Father calls You." They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, "I am the resurrection and the life." As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.

Notice that there are two categories of angels involved in the resurrection scene apart from the hosts of evil angels. The first were the “angels that excel in strength” who “were guarding the tomb, and waiting to welcome the Prince of Life.” Their vigil began with Christ’s internment, and continued at the sepulcher until Christ arose.

The Angel of the Lord

Then there is this other angel who did not spend the weekend on earth, but descended to the grave early on the morning of the first day of the week. This special angel is called:

Matthew 28

² ...the angel of the Lord.

And he was so mighty that his approach generated an earthquake.

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

⁴ And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

He is no mortal warrior, but is the immortal, mightiest of the Lord’s host. The speed at which he covered the distance between heaven and earth is almost infinitely beyond human computation, for we do not know the immense distance to be covered between his place in God’s presence and the tomb of Christ.

But it is revealed to us that, in all, the journey only occupied a very short period of time. We know this from the statement which informs us that the time it took Daniel to utter the prayer recorded in *Daniel* 9:1-19, was the time the angel Gabriel took to fly swiftly from heaven to earth. Daniel recalled the experience in these words:

Daniel 9

²⁰ Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,

²¹ Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

²² And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

²³ At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.

It was at the beginning of Daniel's supplication that the messenger of God was commanded to go to the prophet and answer his prayer. Empowered to fly swiftly, he departed heaven and reached Daniel before he had finished his prayer. Any supposition that Gabriel was close to Daniel when he was ordered to the prophet's side, is dispelled by the following statement which certifies that the mighty angel came quickly all the way from heaven to earth.

The Sanctified Life, p. 48:

As Daniel's prayer is going forth, the angel Gabriel comes sweeping down from the heavenly courts to tell him that his petitions are heard and answered.

It is no wonder then that:

The Great Controversy, p. 512:

As God's messengers they go forth, like "the appearance of a flash of lightning" (*Ezekiel 1:14*), so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight.

Taking Lucifer's Place in Heaven

But the real understanding of the status and might of this mightiest of the Lord's host is better understood when we learn who he is. The key statement which opens the door to the positive identification of this mightiest of the Lord's host, is found in the words:

The Desire of Ages, p. 780:

This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell.

No doubt at this point many will say that it is Gabriel who is the mightiest of the Lord's host, the one who now occupies the place from which Satan fell, and this would be entirely true, but there is the need for further documented, identification to be established. There is more to be learned about this powerful being. Let us now establish beyond all doubt that it was Gabriel who filled the vacancy created by Lucifer's defection.

Documentary verification of Gabriel's being the mighty angel who filled the vacancy left by Satan's defection is provided by assembling the information contained in two statements. Firstly, we consider a statement informing us that it was Gabriel who came to comfort and strengthen Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1123:

In the supreme crisis, when heart and soul are breaking under the load of sin, Gabriel is sent to strengthen the divine Sufferer, and brace him to tread his blood-stained path. And while the angel supports His fainting form, Christ takes the bitter cup, and consents to drink its contents. Before the suffering One comes up the wail of a lost and perishing world, and the words come from the blood-stained lips. "Nevertheless, if man must perish unless I drink this bitter cup, your will, not mine, be done."

In this next quotation we learn that the "mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell," is the one who came to comfort and strengthen Christ in Gethsemane. Therefore, that angel was Gabriel.

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God.

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and *the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell*, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love.

He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

So then, Gabriel is the mighty angel, who, standing in God's presence, occupies the position from which Satan fell. There can be no doubt about this, for the evidence is clear, but, if at this point you cannot see this without any problems, go back over the last few paragraphs, until you are fully persuaded that Gabriel is the mighty angel who now occupies the position from which Satan fell.

God's Plan for Mankind

Once this understanding is incontrovertibly established in your mind, you are ready for the next conclusions to be drawn from the available evidences by which we are informed that, in the divine plan, those vacancies are to be filled, not by unfallen angels, but by the redeemed from this earth. There are a number of statements confirming this. Here are some of them:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1082:

God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word.

The Faith I Live By, p. 114:

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift His burdens, who yearn for souls as He yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord.

Satan is well aware of the plan of God to fill the positions vacated by himself and his followers. As he views the sad condition of the struggling people of the Lord, and compares them with the glorious beings he and his angels once were, he is moved to scornful accusation:

The Review and Herald, January 9, 1908:

Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God.

“Are these,” he says, “the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another.”

One of the Redeemed

What is the conclusion which must be drawn from the fact that the vacancies left by Satan and his angels are to be filled by the redeemed, and the other fact that Gabriel now occupies the place once filled by Satan himself? From this information we must conclude that Gabriel is one of the redeemed, every one of whom will be higher than the unfallen angels.

Since Gabriel, who took Lucifer's place, is the highest of all the angels at the time when there were three redeemed men in heaven, then Gabriel must be one of those redeemed. Just as Melchizedek is Enoch's new name, so Gabriel is the new name of the redeemed one who took Lucifer's place. But which one is he?

Gabriel's first recorded appearance on this earth is in the days of Daniel where he is introduced to us by name. Daniel records the event in these words:

Daniel 8

¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.

By this time, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah had all been taken to heaven, the only three to be so blessed during the Old Testament period.

1. ENOCH

Of the three, Enoch could not be Gabriel, for we know that his new name is Melchizedek. Therefore Gabriel has to be either Moses or Elijah, though we are left with no definite statement as to which of the two is Gabriel. Instead, from the assembly of the information available we are able, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to determine the answer to this question.

The work of Enoch, Moses, and Elijah differed, both while they were on earth and as they continued their ministry in heaven, especially while the great controversy continues. At the same time, the roles they fill, both in heaven and on earth, are harmonious, complementary, and compatible.

Enoch, during his earthly life and thereafter in heaven, revealed the special ministry of gospel order through the office of the royal priesthood.¹ Together with Elijah, he typified those who will be translated without seeing death.

¹ See the book, *Melchizedek*, by F. T. Wright.

2. ELIJAH

In the case of Elijah, the emphasis was on reformation, the establishment of strict temperance and purity in diet, dress, deportment and so forth. He is the type of John the Baptist who was commissioned by God to prepare the people for the first advent of Christ, and of the people today who make up the fourth angel's movement whose divinely appointed mission is to prepare all who will respond, for the second advent.

Counsels on Health, p. 72:

The prophet Malachi declares,

Malachi 4

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.

Here the prophet describes the character of the work. Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ, are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first advent.

The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things. The self-denial, humility, and temperance required of the righteous, whom God especially leads and blesses, is to be presented to the people in contrast to the extravagant, health-destroying habits of those who live in this degenerate age.

It was a very great work which was executed by both Elijah and John the Baptist, and is in the process of being performed by the Elijah people of the last days. In all three cases, it is a work designed to transform human beings into the image of God, thus fitting them for a place in heaven.

3. MOSES

It was also a very great work done by Enoch and Moses, but of the three, Enoch, Moses and Elijah, it is clearly witnessed that

Moses was the greatest. It is very important that we know that he was, as it is written:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 475:

After this experience, Moses heard the call from heaven to exchange his shepherd's crook for the rod of authority; to leave his flock of sheep and take the leadership of Israel. The divine command found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouth-piece for God.

But he accepted the work, putting his whole trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, fitted for *the greatest work ever given to man*. Of him it is written:

Deuteronomy 34 [ARV]

¹⁰ There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face.

Elijah, as is stated in this next reference, was the greatest since the days of Moses:

Prophets and Kings, p. 224:

As Elijah's successor, Elisha, by careful, patient instruction, must endeavor to guide Israel in safe paths. His association with Elijah, *the greatest prophet since the days of Moses*, prepared him for the work that he was soon to take up alone.

Moses is the only prophet in history who actually talked with God face to face, as he did on Mt. Sinai, from which communion he emerged from God's presence with his face clad in radiant light so brilliant that the people could not bear the sight. He had to wear a veil in order to move among them.

Enoch walked with God in the pathway of communion and perfect obedience; to Elijah, God spoke His instructions; but to Moses a level of intimacy was achieved which permitted that mightiest of all the prophets except Christ, to walk right into God's fiery presence and not be consumed. For a total period of eighty days and nights interrupted halfway by the insurrection in

the camp, he remained enveloped in that indescribably glorious power and life-charged Presence.

The principle was being enacted that to him who had much, more was being given. It would be impossible for us to have any true and just concept of the tremendous spiritual elevation which would have resulted from this experience. It would have to be experienced to be understood, and none of the rest of us have ever experienced such intense fellowship with God over so long a period of time, and therefore have not known the incredible power of such communion in expanding and elevating every part of our being. But Moses knew it, because he had experienced it.

Truly, of the mighty three, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, Moses ascended to the highest levels of spiritual power. Those greatest of men grasped out for power, not for self-glorification, nor that they might rule over and control their fellow men, but that they might better serve God and perishing humanity. That is true greatness, the quality lost by Satan and all those who follow him.

4. JOHN THE BAPTIST

It must not be overlooked that John the Baptist was rated by Christ as the greatest of those born of women:

The Review and Herald, January 18, 1898:

John was the greatest prophet born of women.

Matthew 11

¹¹ Verily I say unto you, [Christ declared,] among them that are born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.

¹⁰ This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, which shall prepare your way before you.

He was sent by God to prepare the way for His only begotten Son...

This seemingly introduces a contradiction, for in other places it is declared that Moses was the greatest of the prophets as he certainly was, but in this Scripture, that position is accorded to John the Baptist by Christ himself. However, in John's case, he must be

the greatest in some special sense, for in the last half of the verse just quoted, his greatness is superseded by those who are least in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 11

¹¹ Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the special sense in which Christ ascribed greatness to John the Baptist. The object of our study is to determine who of Moses and Elijah is Gabriel. John the Baptist cannot be that mighty one for he was not even born when Gabriel appeared to Daniel, and later to his father Zacharias in the temple. He was sleeping in his grave when Gabriel came sweeping down from heaven to earth to call both Christ and him from their respective tombs. So, there was no possibility of John the Baptist's being Gabriel.

But why do I spend so much space proving that, apart from Christ, Moses was the greatest man ever to live on the earth? It is because the one who will be the greatest and mightiest in heaven will firstly be that on earth. If he is not that on earth, he certainly will not be that in heaven. Again, Lucifer was the greatest of all created beings until he fell, so that it is fitting that he who would fill the position of the greatest, must himself be the greatest.

Now then, on the resurrection morning, "the mightiest of the Lord's host" came down to call Christ from the tomb. It is further stated that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 780:

This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell.

This incredibly wonderful being can be none other than Moses, who, on his arrival in heaven, was given his new name, Gabriel, became the mightiest angel, stands in God's presence, and quite properly inherited the position from which Lucifer fell. From this

moment on, Moses, himself now a mighty angel, stood in a different relationship to the created angels from that in which he had previously stood.

Two Categories of Angels

Thus there emerges the realization that there are two general categories of angels. Firstly, there are those who were created by God to service the universe. Of these Paul wrote:

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

These angels are extremely numerous and are very powerful.

The Great Controversy, p. 512:

Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, were the heavenly messengers beheld by the prophet Daniel. The apostle Paul declared them “an innumerable company.”

Man was created “a little lower than the angels,”² but, through his fall, has been dragged down to such depths of degradation, that he is now far below the unfallen angels. The loyal and holy angels have confirmed their decision not to join them in such base apostasy. Fallen man will never become angels unless uplifted by God’s saving grace.

When they are, their elevation from the depths to which sin has dragged them, and their exaltation to the heights of glory to which the gospel will take them, will be so significant that they will be positioned far, far above the angels who have never fallen as it is written:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1113:

Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen.

² *Hebrews 2:7.*

This is the second kind of angel. They are not born as created angels, but as humans who are not angels, after which they become angels through the power and process of redemption. If man had never sinned, these potential angels, after a qualifying period of test and trial, would have risen to the same level as the created angels.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1082:

God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to re-populate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word. Adam was to be tested, to see whether he would be obedient, as the loyal angels, or disobedient.

Thus faithful, loyal, righteous humans would have become angels. The entrance of sin did not frustrate this plan, but instead, extended it. Now, through the power of the plan of salvation, redeemed men become angels on a much higher level than created angels. Those redeemed humans who are already in heaven are angels, and all the redeemed are destined to be classified as angels when and as they are admitted to Paradise.

Gabriel Among the Redeemed

To confirm this definition of redeemed men as angels, we have but to note that he who is called the "angel Gabriel," is in fact a redeemed human. Let us look to two facts in regard to this.

From among the earliest references naming Gabriel, is the revelation that, at that time, namely Daniel's day, he was next in rank to Christ, the highest position to which a redeemed created being can be elevated.

The Desire of Ages, p. 234:

It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel.

The second point is that he occupied...

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

...the position from which Lucifer fell...

Now the incontrovertible fact is that, for Gabriel to be next in rank to the Son of God, and to occupy the position from which Satan fell, at the time when there were three redeemed men in heaven, then he himself had to be, not just one of those redeemed humans, but the greatest of the three. If he was not himself at that time a redeemed human, he could not have then ranked next to Christ, nor could he have occupied Lucifer's position, for one of the three who were in fact redeemed humans would have held the position instead.

Therefore as surely as in Daniel's day, Gabriel ranked second only to Christ, and filled the vacancy left by the departed devil, so surely then was he a redeemed human. No unfallen angel in heaven can rank higher than even the very lowliest redeemed human once that redeemed human has ascended to heaven.

So, before Gabriel became Gabriel, that is, while he was still Moses and before he became an angel, he firstly had sinful, mortal human nature, and was lower than the least of the angels. This remained so up till his resurrection and ascension. Then when blessed with glorified, immortal human nature thereafter through all eternity, he became the angel Gabriel...

The Desire of Ages, p. 780:

...the mightiest of the Lord's host.

2. From Moses to Daniel

Meditation

The understanding that Gabriel is in fact Moses, immortalized and glorified, is a realization which cannot but bring great blessing and wonderful inspiration to God's true people.

For one thing, we are given a revelation of how great is the power in the angels who lead out in carrying forward God's work on this earth. When Gabriel's feet touched the earth on the resurrection morning, it generated a mighty earthquake; he rolled aside the ponderous stone as if it had been a pebble; the Roman guard fell to the earth like men struck dead; and myriads of evil angels fled in terror.

No wonder God can promise that one of us will put a thousand to flight, and two of us will cause ten thousand to flee. In the light of this, if the Lord is for us, then who can stand against us?

We are soon to be engaged in the closing battle of the great controversy when evil angels working through wicked men, will pit their combined powers against holy angels and God's people. The better we become acquainted with the magnitude of the forces on our side, the stronger will be the living faith so vitally necessary for our gaining the victory. It is wonderful to know that, if the power of Gabriel is so great, Christ's is even greater.

The Resurrection of Moses

TO US it is a well known fact that Moses was raised from the dead, and taken to heaven a relatively short time after his death, which, occurring just short of Israel's crossing of the River Jordan, deprived him of the joy and satisfaction of leading God's people into the promised land. The following statements reveal that he was not long to remain in his grave before being resurrected:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 478:

But he was not long to remain in the tomb.

Early Writings, p. 164:

Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life *before his body had seen corruption*. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven.

His was a secret death and burial, at which no human being was present. Christ and holy angels were the only persons who

were there, this restriction being imposed to prevent the unsanctified in the camp from committing idolatry.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 477-478:

Deuteronomy 34

⁵ So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

⁶ And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knows of his sepulcher.

Many who had been unwilling to heed the counsels of Moses while he was with them would have been in danger of committing idolatry over his dead body had they known the place of his burial. For this reason it was concealed from men. But angels of God buried the body of His faithful servant and watched over the lonely grave.

The resurrection of Moses is a highly significant one, for it was the first occasion on which a person who had been locked in the prison house of death had been set free. Enoch had escaped death by being translated, but in Christ, Moses conquered it.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 478-479:

Had not the life of Moses been marred with that one sin, in failing to give God the glory of bringing water from the rock at Kadesh, he would have entered the Promised Land, and would have been translated to heaven without seeing death.

But he was not long to remain in the tomb. Christ himself, with the angels who had buried Moses, came down from heaven to call forth the sleeping saint. Satan had exulted at his success in causing Moses to sin against God, and thus come under the dominion of death. The great adversary declared that the divine sentence—"Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return" (*Genesis* 3:19)—gave him possession of the dead. The power of the grave had never been broken, and all who were in the tomb he claimed as his captives, never to be released from his dark prison house.

For the first time Christ was about to give life to the dead. As the Prince of life and the shining ones approached the grave, Satan was alarmed for his supremacy. With his evil angels he stood to dispute an invasion of the territory that he claimed as his

own. He boasted that the servant of God had become his prisoner. He declared that even Moses was not able to keep the law of God; that he had taken to himself the glory due to Jehovah—the very sin which had caused Satan’s banishment from heaven—and by transgression had come under the dominion of Satan. The arch-traitor reiterated the original charges that he had made against the divine government, and repeated his complaints of God’s injustice toward him.

Christ did not stoop to enter into controversy with Satan. He might have brought against him the cruel work which his deceptions had wrought in heaven, causing the ruin of a vast number of its inhabitants. He might have pointed to the falsehoods told in Eden, that had led to Adam’s sin and brought death upon the human race. He might have reminded Satan that it was his own work in tempting Israel to murmuring and rebellion, which had wearied the long-suffering patience of their leader, and in an unguarded moment had surprised him into the sin for which he had fallen under the power of death.

But Christ referred all to His Father, saying, “The Lord rebuke you.” *Jude* 9. The Saviour entered into no dispute with His adversary, but He then and there began His work of breaking the power of the fallen foe, and bringing the dead to life. Here was an evidence that Satan could not controvert, of the supremacy of the Son of God. The resurrection was forever made certain. Satan was despoiled of his prey; the righteous dead would live again.

In consequence of sin Moses had come under the power of Satan. In his own merits he was death’s lawful captive; but he was raised to immortal life, holding his title in the name of the Redeemer. Moses came forth from the tomb glorified, and ascended with his Deliverer to the City of God.

In the death, resurrection, glorification, ascension, and subsequent ministry of Moses as the angel Gabriel, “the mightiest of the Lord’s host,”³ the Lord of glory was doing all these things according to the principles of gospel order. He was building the kingdom both in heaven and upon earth as God would have it built. Therefore the study of the ministry of the glorified Moses as

³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 780.

Gabriel, is very much the study of gospel order, and one which will bring incredible blessings to those who receive divine enlightenment on this subject.

By these revelations, the infinite love of God for the human family is laid open in a new, wonderful, and winsome way:

- The incredible power with which the Almighty will endow His beloved children is displayed before our awestruck senses;
- Our understanding of the plan of salvation will be immeasurably extended; we shall see beyond the confines of this earth to the limitless glories of God's universe;
- To us gospel order will become much more essential in order that the work may be finished;
- Our faith will be revitalized; and our confidence in the ultimate victory of righteousness over iniquity absolutely reassured.

These are just a few of the blessings which, developing out of this study, will greatly advance our preparation for receiving the latter rain.

When we see for ourselves the incredible heights to which the gospel has elevated Moses, we will better understand what that selfsame gospel—the living, creative power of the Omnipotent One himself—can and will do for us now and in eternity. Inspired with confidence and hope we will obtain a fresh grasp on Omnipotence, and thus be better braced with the might needed to conquer every foe. So decisive will the future encounters against the forces of evil be in favor of God's people, that the end will speedily arrive, and sin with all its attendant woe and suffering be terminated forever.

Angel Appearances

But such an enlightening course of study would never have been possible had not God commissioned Gabriel to appear to men more frequently than any other angel known to us by name. To

assist us in understanding this, let us make a brief survey of many of the occasions subsequent to the fall, when a heavenly visitor actually appeared visibly to members of the human family.

I will not list the much more numerous occasions when God spoke to men either directly or through a vision, as distinct from actual appearances. Whenever possible, we will identify the heavenly visitor. I will not claim to have produced a complete list, for that will not be necessary in order to meet the needs of this study.

It may seem to some that to make such a list is a tedious and relatively pointless exercise, but it will be found that when the list is complete, it will reveal some valuable truths on gospel order and life in heaven. Therefore, we will proceed with the task.

1. ABRAHAM IN SHECHEM

The first time after the flood that a heavenly visitor is reported to have appeared to one of God's children, was when Abraham had arrived in Shechem and encamped there after his long journey from Horan and Ur.

Genesis 12

⁷ The Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto your seed will I give this land.

The heavenly visitor who appeared to Abraham on this occasion was the Lord, who could be none other than Jesus Christ, himself, who was able at this time, to leave His post in the heavenly sanctuary because Enoch, in his office of the king priest, Melchizedek, maintained the sanctuary service in His absence.

2. ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK

The second person who came down from heaven to appear for a short while among men was Melchizedek who went out to meet Abraham on his return from his successful battle against the Elamite king.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 136:

Another who came out to welcome the victorious patriarch was Melchizedek, king of Salem, who brought forth bread and

wine for the refreshment of his army. As “priest of the most high God,” he pronounced a blessing upon Abraham, and gave thanks to the Lord, who had wrought so great a deliverance by His servant. And Abraham “gave him tithes of all.”

We know from our previous studies that Melchizedek is Enoch,⁴ who, upon his translation to heaven became “king of Salem,” and the “priest of the Most High God.” On the occasion referred to here, he, in the course of his ministry, returned to earth for a short time in order to provide a revelation to God’s children in these last days especially, of the ultimate outworking of gospel order. So then, the second visitor to earth was Enoch under his new and eternal name, Melchizedek.

3. HAGAR

The next appearance of a heavenly being was by an angel to Hagar. After she had conceived by Abraham, she despised her mistress, Sarah, who was not prepared to bear such insolence, but “dealt harshly with her.” *Genesis* 16:6. Whereupon Hagar fled from the camp. It was then that an angel from heaven appeared to her in human form.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 145:

She made her way to the desert, and as she rested beside a fountain, lonely and friendless, an angel of the Lord, in human form, appeared to her. Addressing her as “Hagar, Sarai’s maid,” to remind her of her position and her duty, he bade her,

Genesis 16

⁹ Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands.

Yet with the reproof there were mingled words of comfort.

¹¹ The Lord has heard your affliction.

¹⁰ I will multiply your seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

And as a perpetual reminder of His mercy, she was bidden to call her child Ishmael, “God shall hear.”

⁴ These are published in the book, *Melchizedek* by F. T. Wright.

This is an interesting case, for it demonstrates that one does not necessarily have to be in a lofty state of spiritual experience in order to receive a visit from a heavenly being.

4. ABRAHAM AND THE PROMISE OF ISAAC

The next recorded appearance of a heavenly being was again to Abraham when he was ninety-nine years old, Sarah was ninety, and Ishmael was thirteen.

Genesis 17

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am Almighty God; walk before me and be blameless.

It was on this occasion that the covenant between Abraham and God was renewed, the birth of Isaac was foretold, and the rite of circumcision introduced. Again, it was the Lord who came to earth in human form.

5. ABRAHAM AND HOSPITALITY

As well as these specific appearances, Abraham was especially privileged in that, on a regular basis, angels visited with him, as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 138:

God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from him, and he became an intercessor with God for sinners. His interview with the angels presents also a beautiful example of hospitality.

6. ABRAHAM AND SODOM

This brings us to the next specific appearance when three men appeared to Abraham, one of whom without question was Christ, the only begotten Son of God. They had come to the earth over the matter of the immediately imminent destruction of Sodom.

Genesis 18

¹ Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

² So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

³ And said, My Lord, if I have now found favor in your sight, do not pass on by your servant.

Following the meal which Abraham served them, two of the three men departed in the direction of Sodom, but the third paused long enough firstly to announce the awful fate of the wicked city, and secondly to promise that no righteous one would perish. Who He was that made these announcements and promises is made clear in these words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 139:

Two of the heavenly messengers departed, leaving Abraham alone with Him whom he now knew to be the Son of God.

Upon their arrival in Sodom, the two angels who had been with Christ and Abraham, were welcomed by Lot as well as being seen by some of the people of that wicked city. This appears to be the final occasion when a heavenly being appeared to Abraham or one of his kindred.

7. JACOB LEAVING MIDIAN

To Jacob returning under God's direction to Canaan from his uncle Laban's place in Midian, was given the next sighting of heavenly beings come down to earth.

Genesis 32

¹ So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

² When Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's camp. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 195:

Again the Lord granted Jacob a token of the divine care. As he traveled southward from Mount Gilead, two hosts of heavenly

angels seemed to encompass him behind and before, advancing with his company, as if for their protection.

Jacob remembered the vision at Bethel so long before, and his burdened heart grew lighter at this evidence that the divine messengers who had brought him hope and courage at his flight from Canaan were to be the guardians of his return. And he said, "This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim"—"two hosts, or, camps."

The heavenly visitors on this occasion were created angels though Christ could have been among them as their leader.

8. JACOB – WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL

The eighth appearance followed very quickly. The news reached Jacob and his company of returning followers that Esau had rejected all their friendly overtures and was advancing on them with murderous intentions. Jacob, very much aware that his own sin was the cause of putting the entire company in jeopardy, and fearful of the deadly outcome, determined to spend the entire night in prayer. Hardly however, had he commenced his supplications, than:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 197:

Suddenly a strong hand was laid upon him.

Thus commenced a struggle which was to continue until the breaking of the new day, when Jacob finally recognized who his attacker was. It was none other than Christ himself. We are provided with more than enough evidence to prove this point.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 197:

The struggle continued until near the break of day, when the stranger placed his finger upon Jacob's thigh, and he was crippled instantly. The patriarch now discerned the character of his antagonist. He knew that he had been in conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this was why his almost superhuman effort had not gained the victory. It was Christ, "the Angel of the covenant," who had revealed himself to Jacob.

That is clear enough, as are the following evidences:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 197:

The Angel tried to release himself; He urged, "Let me go, for the day breaks;" but Jacob answered, "I will not let You go, except You bless me." Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

Jacob "had power over the Angel, and prevailed." *Hosea 12:4*. Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea.

The fact that he would have been destroyed had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, indicates that the greatness of the shielded power in the Angel was that of the Almighty. No person in sinful, mortal flesh can survive in the presence of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, without personal protection such as would be lost by those with a boastful, presumptuous confidence.

Notice too that, by having power over the Angel, he prevailed with the Majesty of heaven, who, in this case, was none other than Christ.

9. THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL

A great deal of time was to elapse before the next appearance when angels taught the elders of Israel and Moses that he was God's chosen one to lead His people to Canaan. Here is the record of that ministry:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people.

10. THE BURNING BUSH

Moses, mistaking the true nature of his commission, thought that the work was to be done by force of arms, with the result that he had to spend forty years of special training in the wilderness of Midian. At the end of that time, Christ appeared to him as a fire in a bush unconsumed by the blaze. While He did not appear in this encounter as a visible person, we will still include it in our list.

11. ON MT. SINAI

Likewise, included here is the personal meeting on Mt. Sinai of Moses and Christ.

12. IN THE SANCTUARY

We must not overlook the frequent manifestations of God through the sanctuary, when the Lord communicated His will to His chosen and faithful.

13. BALAAM

Next came several appearances of Christ, the Lord, to Balaam, the apostate prophet bent on personal gain. The first of these was as follows:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 439:

In the night season the angel of God came to Balaam with the message,

Numbers 22

¹² You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people: for they are blessed.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 440:

In the night season the Lord appeared to Balaam and said,

Numbers 22

²⁰ If the men come to call you, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto you, that shall you do.

It was in direct disobedience to Christ's instruction that Balaam set out for the land of Moab, but he was accordingly not permitted to complete the journey to King Balak without resistance.

Twice the angel of God appeared before the donkey and his rider, was seen by the animal, but was not discerned by the human, until the Lord's third appearance.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 442:

The eyes of Balaam were now opened, and he beheld the angel of God standing with drawn sword ready to slay him. In terror "he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face."

We will combine these three appearances of Christ to Balaam, for they all belong to the same event. Furthermore, there is no doubt about the identity of the Angel who is variously called, "the Angel of the Lord," "the Messenger of God," and "the Lord." He can be no one else but Christ, for He is the Lord.

14. JOSHUA

The next appearance of a heavenly visitor to this earth took place shortly after Israel's crossing of the Jordan River, when Joshua withdrew from the encampment of his people to seek God's instruction for the conquest of Jericho.

Patriarchs and Prophet, p. 487-488:

To reduce Jericho was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan. But first of all he sought an assurance of divine guidance, and it was granted him. Withdrawing from the encampment to meditate and to pray that the God of Israel would go before His people, he beheld an armed warrior, of lofty stature and commanding presence, "with his sword drawn in his hand." To Joshua's challenge,

Joshua 5

¹³ Are you for us, or for our adversaries?

—the answer was given,

¹⁴ As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.

The same command given to Moses in Horeb, "Loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place whereon you stand is holy," revealed the true character of the mysterious stranger. It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel. Awe-stricken, Joshua fell upon his face and worshiped, and heard the assurance,

Joshua 6

² I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor,
—and he received instruction for the capture of the city.

In this paragraph, we are clearly informed that the visitor from heaven was Christ, himself.

15. GIDEON

The next visitation was the appearance to Gideon of “the Covenant Angel.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 547. It was a time of deep, dark apostasy. Having removed God’s protection from themselves, the children of Israel were terribly oppressed by the Midianites until, after a time, they turned toward the Lord in penitence. The response from on high was to raise up a deliverer in the person of Gideon.

There came the day when he, the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, received the divine call to his work.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 546:

To Gideon came the divine call to deliver his people. He was engaged at the time in threshing wheat. A small quantity of grain had been concealed, and not daring to beat it out on the ordinary threshing floor, he had resorted to a spot near the winepress; for the season of ripe grapes being still far off, little notice was now taken of the vineyards. As Gideon labored in secrecy and silence, he sadly pondered upon the condition of Israel and considered how the oppressor’s yoke might be broken from off his people.

Suddenly the “Angel of the Lord” appeared and addressed him with the words,

Judges 6

¹² Jehovah is with you, you mighty man of valor.

Who is this “Angel of the Lord” who appeared to Gideon? Gideon was confident that He was the Covenant Angel, but desired confirmation of his conviction.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 547:

Gideon desired some token that the one now addressing him was the Covenant Angel, who in time past had wrought for Israel. Angels of God, who communed with Abraham, had once tarried to share his hospitality; and Gideon now entreated the divine Messenger to remain as his guest. Hastening to his tent, he prepared from his scanty store a kid and unleavened cakes, which he brought forth and set before Him.

But the Angel bade him,

Judges 6

²⁰ Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth.

Gideon did so, and then the sign which he had desired was given: with the staff in His hand, the Angel touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and a flame bursting from the rock consumed the sacrifice. Then the Angel vanished from his sight.

The miraculous consuming of Gideon's offering was the sign to the warrior that the one commissioning him was in fact the Covenant Angel, who was no less a person than Jesus Christ. This is plainly confirmed by Jacob's recognition of this fact on his night of wrestling:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 197:

It was Christ, "the Angel of the covenant," who had revealed himself to Jacob.

There are numerous other references confirming that Christ is the Covenant Angel, or the Angel of the Covenant.

16. MANOAH AND HIS WIFE

The next visible manifestation of a heavenly being was when Christ, the Covenant Angel, visited Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, to announce the birth of him who was destined, with God's blessing, to deliver Israel.

Firstly, the Angel came visibly to Manoah's wife announcing to her the forthcoming birth of her son, and giving her strict instruction in the temperate habits she must follow before the child was born, and into which he was to be trained thereafter.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 560:

The woman sought her husband, and, after describing the Angel, she repeated His message. Then, fearful that they should make some mistake in the important work committed to them, the husband prayed,

Judges 13

⁸ Let the Man of God which You did send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

These two consecrated people did not really understand how truly great their Messenger really was, as it is written:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1006:

Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ. They looked upon Him as the Lord's messenger, but whether a prophet or an angel, they were at a loss to determine. Wishing to manifest hospitality toward their guest, they entreated Him to remain while they should prepare for Him a kid. But in their ignorance of His character, they knew not whether to offer it for a burnt-offering or to place it before Him as food.

17. DAVID

It seems that the next appearance of a visitor from heaven was when, toward the end of his reign, David sinned by numbering Israel as a manifestation of personal pride and against the remonstrances of the leaders of the nation.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 747:

The numbering was not finished when David was convicted of his sin.

Through the prophet Gad, the Lord offered the disobedient king the choice of one out of three punishments for his iniquity—three years of famine; three months of defeats by his enemies; or three days of destroying pestilence. He chose the last.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 748:

The land was smitten with pestilence, which destroyed seventy thousand in Israel. The scourge had not yet entered the capital, when:

1 Chronicles 21

¹⁶ David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem.

I failed to find any definite identification of this angel known only as the “angel of the Lord,” who is usually Christ.

18. ELIJAH

An angel of the Lord appeared to Elijah after his terrified flight from Jezreel following the showdown on Mount Carmel. After running till he was totally spent, the prophet slept until awakened by an angel who provided him with a nourishing meal.

Prophets and Kings, p. 166:

After Elijah had partaken of the refreshment prepared for him, he slept again. A second time the angel came. Touching the exhausted man, he said with pitying tenderness,

1 Kings 19

⁷ Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for you.

⁸ And he arose, and did eat and drink.

And in the strength of that food he was able to journey “forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God,” where he found refuge in a cave.

On his arrival at Mount Horeb, Elijah was again visited by a heavenly messenger.

Prophets and Kings, p. 167:

Elijah’s retreat on Mount Horeb, though hidden from man, was known to God; and the weary and discouraged prophet was not left to struggle alone with the powers of darkness that were pressing upon him. At the entrance to the cave wherein Elijah had taken refuge, God met with him, through a mighty angel sent to inquire into his needs and to make plain the divine purpose for Israel.

19. ELISHA

The next appearance on my list of heavenly visitors prior to the introduction of Gabriel by name, was the revelation of the encircling guard of protecting angels around Dothan, in which city were Elisha and his servant.

Prophets and Kings, p. 257:

Between the servant of God and the hosts of armed foemen was an encircling band of heavenly angels. They had come down in mighty power, not to destroy, not to exact homage, but to encamp round about and minister to the Lord's weak and helpless ones.

20. IN THE FIERY FURNACE

The next occasion on record of a heavenly visitor to this earth, before Gabriel began his series of appearances, was the presence of Christ in the fiery furnace where he was clearly seen even by the wicked Nebuchadnezzar.

Once again, we are left in no doubt about Christ's being the visitor, for He is named as such in the following statement:

Prophets and Kings, p. 508-509:

But the Lord did not forget His own. As His witnesses were cast into the furnace, the Saviour revealed himself to them in person, and together they walked in the midst of the fire. In the presence of the Lord of heat and cold, the flames lost their power to consume.

21. DANIEL'S VISION

The last visitation of heavenly beings to this earth before Gabriel is mentioned by name, is found in *Daniel* 7. Here the prophet is given a revelation of future events in the form of winds, waters, beasts, horns, and times. Daniel, finding himself unable to unravel the mystery of this symbolic presentation, yet realizing something of the vital importance of it all to the people of God, yearned to know what it all meant.

Evidently, there were several heavenly beings who had come down to earth that night, for it states that Daniel asked "one of

those who stood by,” what was the significance of what had been shown to him as it is written:

Daniel 7

¹⁵ I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

¹⁶ I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things.

We are not informed of the name of this being from heaven who responded to Daniel’s plea by interpreting the prophecy. It could have been the Messenger of the Covenant still, or it could have been Gabriel beginning his work as the one who had filled the vacancy created by Lucifer’s fall. As we are not informed as to who the interpreter was, and as it does not affect the point being made here, we will not speculate as to whom he might have been.

This concludes the first portion of our survey of the visible visitations of heavenly beings to this earth. It covers the period from early times until Gabriel is introduced by name in *Daniel* 8:16. It has been seen that, in the majority of cases during that period, Christ himself, “the Angel of the Lord,” “the Covenant Angel,” “the mighty Angel,” the One who went with Israel and led them unerringly through the desert and into the Promised Land, is the One who showed himself on most of these occasions.

But from Daniel’s time on, there is an evident change. For the most part, not Christ, but Gabriel is the visitor from heaven who appears to the people of the Lord. The work done by Christ before Daniel’s day was done by Gabriel thereafter.

3. The Work of Gabriel Begins

Meditation

When we see the incredible beauty, awesome power, unblemished perfection, undeviating integrity and utterly reliable faithfulness of the holy angels, we are apt to think that the Lord's work would be brought to a swift and satisfactory termination if only the preaching of the gospel were given to them. Instead, the fearful responsibility has been laid upon human beings cursed with enfeebled physical, mental, and spiritual powers. Their most remarkable capacity is to blunder along never learning from, but always repeating the same mistakes generation after generation.

It must be unbelievably painful for the angels to witness these endless repetitions of mistakes, the fatal preoccupation with the gathering of earthly treasure at the expense of the heavenly, and the wicked unbelief of those who should be strong in faith. How saddened they must be to see souls lost who might have been saved, and worse still, to witness the deadly influence of those in positions of trust who by their evil lives actually lead others to perdition.

On the other hand, there has always been a sprinkling of faithful ones who live lives of victory over sin. These bring great joy to the angels who are exceedingly happy to work with and through these righteous men and women.

Jesus Hands the Work to Gabriel

IN OUR survey thus far, we have seen that, up until the time Gabriel made his first identifiable appearance on this earth, Christ is the One who, time and again, visited this planet as the Messenger from on high.

He was the One who walked and talked with Abraham, and revealed himself to a succession of dedicated, godly people including Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, the parents of Samson, and others. He is the One who manifested himself as the great Leader in command of the work and interests of God's church on earth, and the One who appeared in the fiery furnace to the astonishment of King Nebuchadnezzar.

The actual identity of the visitor from heaven was not always made known, but, whenever during that period his identity was revealed, it was almost always Jesus Christ, the covenant Angel, but never Gabriel.

However, subsequent to Gabriel's first recorded visit to this earth when he appeared to, and spoke with Daniel, the man "greatly beloved," it was no longer Christ who appeared upon earth, but usually Gabriel.

I say this despite the fact that the visitor from heaven to earth was not always identified by name. But, there is no need for Gabriel to be named every time he came down, for, once we perceive his divinely appointed responsibilities, we are quick to recognize the one performing that work. When we do, we shall be blessed with the knowledge of the solemn and glorious position and work of him who, in the days when he was Moses, chose to identify with the oppressed people of God at the expense of the riches and power that Egypt offered to him.

As we complete our survey of the occasions when a messenger from heaven appeared upon earth from the first appearance of Gabriel, to the second advent, we will find that the same work executed on earth by Christ up until Gabriel's visitations, was performed by Gabriel thereafter. We will learn that Christ filled the position vacated by Lucifer, until Moses, the angel Gabriel, was ready to fill it. Then Christ simply handed over the position and the responsibilities it entailed to Gabriel, the redeemed Moses.

But, before the conclusions to be drawn from these facts are unraveled, let us complete our survey, beginning with Gabriel's being directed to attend to Daniel's need of an explanation of the prophecy which had just been unfolded to him, and continuing until the second advent.

Gabriel Explains Prophecy to Daniel

The revelations of prophecy given in Daniel follow a consistent pattern.

1. The prophecy is presented in its entirety, with no space being given for the interpretation of the symbols portraying future events.

2. This is followed by an angel being commissioned to explain the prophecy itself.

There appears to be an exception to this in *Daniel 2* where no angel appears visibly to give the interpretation. But, according to the gospel order pattern as outlined in *Revelation 1:1-2*, we can know that an angel was given the interpretation to give to *Daniel* in chapter 2. The angel was just not visible and went unmentioned.

1. DANIEL 8

After the vision of *Daniel 7* and shortly before Babylon's cataclysmic destruction, Daniel received the still more detailed information about future events which are recorded in *Daniel 8:1-14*.

Once again, the prophecy was presented without any explanation of its meaning being provided at this stage. As before, Daniel quite rightly would not rest satisfied until an explanation had been given to him of this wonderful unfolding of future events. In response to this great need, the Almighty commissioned Gabriel to supply what was required, which he did:

Daniel 8

¹⁵ Now it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.

¹⁷ So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.

This is the earliest reference by actual name to Gabriel in the Scriptures. Here he is revealed as the instructor of the earthly messenger of God, and through him of the people of God. His specific explanation of the parade of beasts and their horns is recorded in the remainder of the chapter.

What is missing due to Daniel's being unable to endure any more of the awful revelation of the future sufferings of God's peo-

ple, is an interpretation of the time period involved. That was left till a later date.

In the meantime Babylon fell, and Medo-Persia ruled the world. On the basis of the prophecy and promise made by God through Jeremiah and recorded in *Jeremiah 25*, Daniel naturally expected that the fall of Babylon would result in the return of the Jews to their homeland.

But this did not immediately eventuate. Instead, their captivity was continued under the new world ruler. In deep anxiety for the future of God's work, Daniel reviewed the sins of Israel, identified with his people in their transgressions, and sought light on the whole matter.

God heard and answered that earnest petition by sending the needed information via the gospel order channels as set out for us in:

Revelation 1

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

² Who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all things that he saw.

There is the established order: God, the infinite Source, gives the light to Jesus Christ, who reveals it to the angel, who imparts it to the prophet, who informs the people.

So it was in Daniel's day. God gave the light to Jesus Christ who directed Gabriel to impart it to the prophet, Daniel, who recorded it for the rest of us.

2. DANIEL 9

Here is the record of Gabriel's being the messenger from heaven who was sent to provide Daniel with the explanation of the remainder of the prophecy—the portion setting out the time element of the 2300 evenings and mornings:

Daniel 9

²⁰ Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,

²¹ Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

²² And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

²³ At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.

The mighty angel, Gabriel, then proceeded to detail the events to transpire during the 490 years of probationary time allotted to the Jewish people as a nation.

In this continuation of his service to God's church on earth, Gabriel is again specifically named as the messenger angel. Through the study of this beautiful and remarkable ministry, there is opened before our wondering gaze a greater awareness of the matchless provisions made to ensure our salvation. This will become clearer as we move along.

3. DANIEL 10 TO 12

The next appearance of Gabriel coincided with a crisis hour in the history of God's church. The time had arrived when the Lord's people were due to be released from their captivity, but King Cyrus, under the baleful influence of the prince of darkness, was resisting the divine will. It was a time for earnest agonizing prayer even though Daniel was unable to comprehend all that was going on behind the visible world.

For three full weeks, he supplicated the throne of God while he afflicted his soul by abstaining from pleasant foods, meat, and wine during the entire period. As well, he did not anoint himself throughout that span of time. Such protracted and intense supplication is an indication of how heavily his burden for the cause of God rested upon him. Well would it be for the cause of the Lord

today if the members of Christ's body were to carry the cause of God upon our hearts as earnestly as Daniel did.

But how shall we enter into such a powerful experience? Obviously, we cannot generate such intensity of purpose in ourselves. The stimulation for the entry into agonizing prayer such as absorbed Daniel's time, concentrated interest, and physical strength, must come wholly from above. Such prayers are inspired by the Holy Spirit through the word. The better we understand the prophecies dealing with the issues which the church must victoriously contest, and the better we understand the nature and power of the forces pitted against it, the more we shall enter into such soul-searching supplication.

In response to Daniel's petitions there was granted to him a vision of Jesus Christ in all His incredible glory. It was the same vision later given to John on Patmos. Note that the effect upon both men was the same—Daniel was prostrated on the ground in a deep sleep, while John fell to the ground as if dead.⁵

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1173:

No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. Our Lord now comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days. This knowledge was given to Daniel and recorded by Inspiration for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

But it was not Christ who taught to Daniel the great light now recorded in the latter part of *Daniel* 10, and the whole of chapters 11 and 12. This work proved to be that of another messenger angel, not Christ who is here named:

Daniel 10

¹³ ...Michael, one of the chief princes.

⁵ Compare *Daniel* 10:5-9, with *Revelation* 1:12-17.

There are some who have difficulty in accepting that Christ is one of the chief princes, preferring that He be called, “the chief Prince.” In *Revelation* 19 He is in fact called:

Revelation 19

¹⁶ ...King of kings and Lord of lords.

Again, He is...

Jude

⁹ ...Michael, the Archangel.

All these expressions are quite correct. There were three other king priests or princes in heaven in Daniel’s day of whom one was Moses, the chief prince after Christ. The other two, Enoch and Elijah, were, along with Christ and Moses, the four chief princes, though not all of equal greatness.

It is very likely that other chief princes were added to this classification from the special resurrection which coincided with Christ’s ascent from the grove. It would not surprise me to learn that the twenty-four elders are classified in heaven as chief princes. Still others will be added in the general resurrection. The mistake must not be made of assuming that the expression “chief princes” means equally chief.

We need now to identify the one sent to convey to Daniel and through him to us, the information now contained in *Daniel* 10-12. Nowhere in these verses is he actually named, but this does not mean that his identity must remain hidden from us. On the contrary, it is but a simple matter to determine that it was Gabriel who spent time revealing these great prophecies to the attentive prophet.

We can be very sure of this, for Gabriel had been instructed to...

Daniel 8

¹⁶ ...make this man understand the vision.

The vision referred to was that which is written down in *Daniel* 8:1-14. Gabriel obediently proceeded to do that which was now

exclusively his responsibility—the impartation to Daniel of the interpretation of the symbolic language of the prophecy.

He began with the information now contained in *Daniel* 8:17-27, but because Daniel was overwhelmed by what was revealed to him, Gabriel was not able at that time to complete his work. Quite a few months passed by before he returned to the prophet to complete his first coverage of the prophetic message of the vision of *Daniel* 8:1-14, by presenting the details of the 490 years.

But even then, Gabriel had not finished the work given to him, and would not be until he had imparted the light contained in *Daniel* 10-12.

A careful look at these two chapters quickly informs us that no vision is involved, yet the messenger from heaven referred Daniel to “the vision” in these words:

Daniel 10

¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

Thus the teacher from heaven announced that he had come to finish the task assigned to him, and as certainly as he did the work assigned to Gabriel, he was in fact Gabriel, for there are no usurpers in God’s kingdom.

Should there be any doubt about this, the following statement will confirm the point that Gabriel is as much the teacher in *Daniel* 10-12 as he was back in *Daniel* 8 and 9.

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

The words of the angel, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,” show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said,

Daniel 10

²¹ There is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your prince.

The fact that there was none that holds with Gabriel in these things except Christ is a positive declaration that the angel who cared for Daniel's needs is second only to Christ in the structure of the kingdom. Without a shadow of doubt, that is the position of Gabriel, the glorified Moses.

New Testament Appearances

1. ZACHARIAS

There are a number of statements which declare that Gabriel is the highest angel in heaven. I will quote one here and others later:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 379:

On heaven's record of noble men the Saviour declared that there stood not one greater than John the Baptist. The work committed to him was one demanding not only physical energy and endurance, but the highest qualities of mind and soul. So important was right physical training as a preparation for this work that *the highest angel in heaven* was sent with a message of instruction to the parents of the child.

The "highest angel in heaven" who instructed the parents of John the Baptist was no one other than Gabriel in person, as is confirmed in this brief statement:

Temperance, p. 173:

About the time of Christ's first advent *the angel Gabriel* came to Zacharias with a message similar to that given to Manoah.

As Christ in the time of the Judges, brought a special prophecy of the birth of the deliverer, Samson, to Manoah and his wife, so Gabriel brought the prediction of John the Baptist's birth to Zacharias and Elizabeth. Here is the story of it:

Zacharias was a truly godly priest who was married to Elizabeth.

Luke 1

⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

They were an elderly couple whose lives had never been blessed with children. From time to time, he went to Jerusalem to serve in the temple according to the time of his order. The occasion come when...

¹¹ ...an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

The aging priest was afraid of the awesome messenger from heaven, until reassured by the angel who proceeded to announce the birth and mission of John the Baptist:

¹³ But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

As Sarah disbelieved the prediction of Isaac's birth to her and Abraham, so Zacharias disbelieved the angel for the same reasons. They were much too old, and had never been able to produce a child anyway. The angel then introduced himself by name:

Luke 1

¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

The Desire of Ages, p. 98:

To the question of Zacharias, the angel said,

Luke 1

¹⁹ I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto you, and to show you these glad tidings.

Five hundred years before, Gabriel had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. The knowledge that the end of this period was near, had moved Zacharias to pray for the Messiah's advent. Now the very messenger through whom the prophecy was given, had come to announce its fulfillment.

There can be no question about the identity of this angel. He is Gabriel, the immortalized, glorified Moses, who is revealed as being very closely involved with the children of God in their movement toward the Promised Land. This is a very comforting revelation.

In stating these facts, I warn against losing sight of Christ's superior position and power, and of the danger of transferring the glory and honor due to Christ alone, even to one as great and mighty as is Moses. At the same time, we need to understand the role which Moses, the angel Gabriel, is effectively filling. It is wonderful to know he is not light years away on some distant galaxy unconcerned about our plight, but is working with all his impressive powers for us, his brethren.

2. MARY

The next recorded appearing of Gabriel was to Mary, who was to become the mother of Jesus.

Luke 1

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

²⁷ To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!

²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

³⁰ Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man?

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relation has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.

³⁸ Then Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

3. THE SHEPHERDS

The conception of Jesus took place as predicted, but no more was seen of the angel Gabriel until the birth of the Saviour, when he led the angel hosts in proclaiming to the shepherds that Christ was born as is revealed in the following statement.

The Desire of Ages, p. 779-780:

Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth. The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to earth.

It has already been established that he who is "the mightiest of the Lord's host," is Gabriel, the glorified Moses who now holds

the position vacated by Satan. Here we learn that this wonderful person, together with a host of other angels, announced the joyful tidings that Christ was born in Bethlehem.

4. CHRIST'S GUARDIAN ANGEL

The evidence that Gabriel was totally involved in the affairs of God's work on earth is revealed in the fact that he was Christ's guardian angel during the Savior's ministry on earth. This is made known in the description of Christ's spectacular resurrection.

We pick up the story where Mary, having found the tomb empty, hurries to inform the disciples.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 199-200:

Mary then hastened with all speed to the disciples, and informed them that Jesus was not in the sepulcher where they had laid him. While she was upon this errand, the other women, who waited for her at the sepulcher, made a more thorough examination of the interior, to satisfy themselves that their Lord was indeed gone. Suddenly they beheld a beautiful young man, clothed in shining garments, sitting by the sepulcher. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone, and who now assumed a character that would not terrify the women who had been the friends of Christ, and assisted Him in His public ministry.

But notwithstanding the veiling of the brightness of the angel, the women were greatly amazed and terrified at the glory of the Lord which encircled him. They turned to flee from the sepulcher, but the heavenly messenger addressed them with soothing and comforting words:

Matthew 28

⁵ Fear not; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified.

⁶ He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

⁷ And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and behold, He goes before you into Galilee; there shall you see Him; lo, I have told you.

As the women responded to the invitation of the angel, and looked again into the sepulcher, they saw another angel of shining brightness, who addressed them with the inquiry:

Luke 24

⁵ Why do you seek the living among the dead?

⁶ He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

⁷ Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

These angels were well acquainted with the words of Jesus to His disciples, for they had been with Him in the capacity of guardian angels, through all the scenes of His life, and had witnessed His trial and crucifixion.

This statement makes it plain that two angels remained at the sepulcher after Christ had been raised and had departed the scene. He had a busy day before Him, including a journey to heaven and back. One of the two angels is identified as he who rolled away the ponderous stone which sealed the tomb. That was Gabriel who, with the other angel “had been with Him in the capacity of guardian angels.”

The star which guided the wise men to Bethlehem...

The Desire of Ages, p. 60:

...was a distant company of shining angels.

Without a doubt, Gabriel was the leader in command of that shining company. He too would have been responsible for the messages of warning which diverted the wise men from calling on the murderous Herod on their way home; and of directing Joseph and Mary to depart Bethlehem for Egypt where they remained in safety until Herod died. Then the angel directed the little family to return to the land of Israel.

Being Christ’s guardian angel, Gabriel was our Savior’s constant companion and protector. Now that the role of Gabriel is better understood, we can see his work being faithfully and effectively performed throughout Christ’s entire lifetime, and we mar-

vel as we realize that this magnificent being possessing such incredible powers is actually the redeemed Moses. What a wonderful view of our future the capacities and achievements of this mighty angel open before our astonished and admiring senses!

5. IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

So then, it was Gabriel who, with other angels, ministered to the dying Christ after the devil had thrice failed to tempt Him to sin.

The Desire of Ages, p. 131:

After the foe had departed, Jesus fell exhausted to the earth, with the pallor of death upon His face. The angels of heaven had watched the conflict, beholding their loved Commander as He passed through inexpressible suffering to make a way of escape for us. He had endured the test, greater than we shall ever be called to endure.

The angels now ministered to the Son of God, as He lay like one dying. He was strengthened with food, comforted with the message of His Father's love and the assurance that all heaven triumphed in His victory.

Warming to life again, His great heart goes out in sympathy for man, and He goes forth to complete the work He has begun; to rest not until the foe is vanquished, and our fallen race redeemed.

6. THE TRANSFIGURATION

The outstanding manifestation of heavenly beings on the earth during Christ's ministry was the meeting of Moses and Elijah with Christ on the top of the mount of transfiguration. Before the Redeemer was looming the dreadful horror of His coming trial, to face which He needed special strengthening. To obtain this He drew aside to the mountaintop to pray where He supplicated the throne of the Omnipotent...

The Desire of Ages, p. 420:

...for strength to endure the test in behalf of humanity. He must himself gain a fresh hold on Omnipotence, for only thus can He contemplate the future.

The coming fearful ordeal must also be borne by His precious disciples, who likewise needed a fresh hold on Omnipotence in order to successfully endure what was soon to burst upon them as a great surprise. Jesus was fully aware of His great need and theirs, for which reason, He prayed also for them.

The Desire of Ages, p. 420-421:

The Saviour has seen the gloom of His disciples, and has longed to lighten their grief by an assurance that their faith has not been in vain. Not all, even of the twelve, can receive the revelation He desires to give. Only the three who are to witness His anguish in Gethsemane have been chosen to be with Him on the mount.

Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes, and that His disciples may be strengthened to behold it. He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that He is of a surety the Son of God, and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption.

In response, two glorified beings, Moses and Elijah, appeared and held communion with Jesus. They brought the assurance that Christ's work would not be in vain. Moses' presence there was the proof that victory over sin and the grave was already guaranteed, while Elijah's being there, previewed the translation of the 144,000 to heaven without seeing death.

The ministry of Moses and Elijah that night was vital to the success of Christ's redemptive mission. They showed that they did not go to heaven to spend their time in idleness or selfish pleasure, but to continue the work in which they had been engaged on earth.

A question which arises at this point is:

“Why were these two visitors to earth from heaven presented under their earthly names, and not under their new names?”

Firstly let us remind ourselves that everyone who is taken to heaven is given God's new name for that person.

Revelation 2

¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.

This promise is not confined to those living in the Pergamos period, but is for all overcomers. Therefore, both of the men who communed with Christ on the mountain had new names. We know the new name of Moses is Gabriel, but Elijah's new name remains undisclosed. This means that God, in organizing the transfiguration, had the option of calling them either by their original or by their new names. For reasons best known to himself, He chose to use their old names. I believe the time will soon come when the reason will be revealed.

It is time to move on now to Gabriel's role in Gethsemane, at the resurrection of Christ, and as John's instructor in *Revelation*. All this will be the subject of our next chapters.



4. In the Garden of Gethsemane

Meditation

The Desire of Ages, p. 297:

With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love.

What a marvelous privilege is offered us to work under the guidance and protection of eager angels in the incomparable ministry of saving the lost and perishing. If we only realized the full scope of our opportunities:

- We too would be as eager as the spotless messengers of God to bring the glad tidings of salvation to men and women everywhere.
- We would really strive to put away sin in its every form so that there would not be the slightest hindrance to the effective working of divine power.
- We would guard the thoughts until we could, when obliged to walk and work in the midst of a sinful world flaunting its outrageous defiance of righteousness and truth, be one who sees not and hears not.

For and through those who achieve such total insulation from the corrupting influences of the sinful world, the Lord will do marvelous things. Then the world will behold with awe and amazement what the Lord can do through the humblest of instruments once they are purified from all sin, and filled with the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit.

IN OUR survey of the identifiable ministries of Gabriel, who is in reality the resurrected, ascended, immortalized, and glorified Moses, we have come to the night of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. We shall see that Gabriel, that is, Moses, had an extremely important position to fill on that critical occasion, a position which he alone, of all the creatures in the universe, could fill.

Subsequent to His institution of the Lord's Supper, the Saviour and His disciples had walked from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane. During the time thus occupied, Jesus seized the opportunity to impart such light to them as would strengthen them to successfully meet the tests they would face that night. However, as they approached and entered the Garden:

The Desire of Ages, p. 685:

[He] became strangely silent. He had often visited this spot for meditation and prayer; but never with a heart so full of sorrow as upon this night of His last agony. Throughout His life on earth He had walked in the light of God's presence. When in conflict with men who were inspired by the very spirit of Satan, He could say,

John 8

²⁹ He that sent me is with me; the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.

But now He seemed to be shut out from the light of God's sustaining presence. Now He was numbered with the transgressors. The guilt of fallen humanity He must bear. Upon Him who knew no sin, must be laid the iniquity of us all. So dreadful does sin appear to Him, so great is the weight of guilt which He must bear, that He is tempted to fear it will shut Him out forever from His Father's love. Feeling how terrible is the wrath of God against transgression, He exclaims,

Matthew 26

³⁸ My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

It is impossible for any human being to understand the incredible soul agony through which the Saviour passed that night, and its destructive effects on His physical and mental resources. Two major powerful forces assaulted His entire being, and threatened to destroy Him:

1. The awful accumulated weight of the sins of the entire world, the terrible darkness of which robbed Him of confidence that His supreme sacrifice would bring Him victory in the struggle against sin and the devil;
2. The sense of the loss of His Father's presence and approval. If only He could have been aware of His Father's close support and blessing, He could have immediately risen above the dense darkness, and the deep depression, and fulfilled His mission with the confidence induced by a shining faith.

Instead, the ordeal was so severe that, from the moment of their nearing the Garden, the collapse of His vital forces under the

overpowering weight of the condemning power of sin began. Jesus was learning by the things which He suffered that sin itself is the destroyer, for it was surely destroying Him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 685-686:

As they approached the garden, the disciples had marked the change that came over their Master. Never before had they seen Him so utterly sad and silent. As He proceeded, this strange sadness deepened; yet they dared not question Him as to the cause. His form swayed as if he were about to fall.

Upon reaching the garden, the disciples looked anxiously for His usual place of retirement, that their Master might rest. Every step that He now took was with labored effort. He groaned aloud, as if suffering under the pressure of a terrible burden. Twice His companions supported Him, or He would have fallen to the earth.

Through His Spirit-inspired and enlightened study of the Scriptures, Christ had gained an accurate but not entirely total understanding of what He must endure when the accumulated guilt of mankind would be laid upon Him, but even He was surprised beyond expectation at the sheer horror of it all as it is written:

The Signs of the Times, August 14, 1879:

Christ was amazed with the horror of darkness which enclosed Him. The temptations of Satan were almost overpowering. These words,

Matthew 26

³⁹ O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, —were borne upon the sympathizing air, to His disciples, in tones of startling agony. The sins of a lost world were upon Him, and a sense of His Father's anger in consequence of sin was crushing Him.

In this hour of desperate need, the Redeemer longed for some assurance that His sacrifice would in fact be worthwhile, that His sufferings would be appreciated by the perishing, and that by this means the kingdom of darkness would be overthrown.

But, instead, Satan was present to press on Him the witness of circumstances in the worst possible light. He held up before Jesus the unbelief and hostility of His chosen people; the depth of iniquity into which the heathen had sunk; and, worst of all, the undeniable fact that those who were nearest and dearest to Him, did not understand His mission, and would forsake Him when He needed them most.

It was then that He staggered back to where He had left the disciples hoping that they would be earnestly praying, but He found them asleep. Awakening them, He appealed for watchfulness unto prayer, while He returned to His own resort for importunate supplications.

When, on His second return to them He found them sleeping, He left them in that state, while He went back to make His irrevocable decision either to proceed with the salvation of man as planned, or to leave him to perish.

To make this choice on the right side would be the costliest commitment of all, and one which, in the fierce intensity of that desperate hour, He came within a hair's breadth of not making. How easily He could have shed the entire responsibility, and returned to His Father, where all is peace and joy, and where there is no suffering, and He almost did. It was so close that:

The Desire of Ages, 690-693:

The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to my Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus,

Matthew 26

⁴² O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him.

He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission:

Matthew 26

⁴² If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done.

This brings us to the revelation of Gabriel's vital participation in the drama. So great was the expenditure of Christ's physical resources needed to make this choice, so immense was the suffering involved, and so immeasurable the weight of sin which had to be borne during the decision making process, that it left Him actually dying, as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen.

This means that, unless something was done immediately, Christ would have died as the great Sacrifice for sin right there in the obscurity of the Garden, and the darkness of the night. If this had been the way it happened, the loss to God's cause would be incalculable. It would not be too much to say that God would have been robbed of that total victory so necessary for the restoration of eternal peace and perpetual security throughout the universal kingdom. Every possible question which could ever be raised against the divine government had to be publicly an-

swered both by declaration and by demonstration, a requirement which could not have been met by a lonely and secret death in a silent garden in the depth of the night.

There would have been no trial by which the Roman and the Jew as representatives of all mankind throughout all time, would have exposed themselves for what they were, while providing the opportunity for Christ and His righteousness to appear in their true character. There would have been no Calvary where sin at its ugly worst was revealed face to face with righteousness at its radiant best.

Yet all this was essential to the true and complete success of the plan of salvation. The Saviour had to be lifted up so that He could be seen by every man, in order that he might draw all men unto Him, as He himself explained to Nicodemus:

John 3

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Later, He was to repeat this teaching to a public audience:

John 12

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.

³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

So it was that, under no circumstances could sin be permitted to prematurely exact its penalty by killing the Son of God in the lonely recesses of the Garden, in the secrecy of the dark night. But there was something which could be done, if the necessarily qualified person were willing and available to do it. While the awful penalty for sin could not be diverted from the Saviour of mankind, He could be strengthened to endure the forces beating

upon Him and be preserved to reach the cross. But who would the Father send?

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God.

No way of escape from the responsibility of bearing the sins of the entire world so that whosoever will might be saved, was found for the Son of God. No relief could be granted Him for so much as a fleeting instant of time. Yet something had to be done, for, otherwise, Christ would die before the designated time, in which case the plan of salvation would fail.

Once the guilt of all mankind had been laid upon Him, the full burden of it had to be carried by Him without a single moment for rest until He could cry: "It is finished!" The only alternative was for Him to discard the load entirely and return to His Father, but had He made even one move in this direction, all would have been lost.

Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 101:

Well was it for the children of men that the angel's errand was not to notify the Saviour that His thrice repeated prayer, "Let this cup pass from me," had been granted. Then indeed might the disciples have slept on, locked in the slumber of hopeless despair.

Gabriel Strengthens Christ

But there was something else which could have been done. Somebody had to be sent by His almighty Father to impart to the Redeemer the strength necessary to see the battle through to a satisfactory conclusion. This was the most critical moment in eternal history. How would the Omnipotent, Omniscient One meet this crisis? Whom could He send on a mission of such immeasurable importance that the continuation of the kingdom depended on

the right decision being made, and the correct action being taken? It was a moment of unparalleled interest for the angels.

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of Satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.

The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption.

How would the Almighty meet this crisis and break this impasse? He did it by sending Moses, the angel Gabriel, to the Saviour's side:

The Desire of Ages, p. 693-694:

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ.

The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.

But how was it that this angel could adequately minister to the Saviour, and the others could not? It was because as Moses, the angel Gabriel had experienced in himself the conflict with sin, and had gained the victory over it and the devil. Because of this, he could enter into the sufferings of Christ as no unfallen angel could ever do:

Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 100-101:

The angels who did Christ's will in Heaven were anxious to comfort Him; but it was beyond their power to alleviate His sorrow. They had never felt the sins of a ruined world, and they beheld with astonishment the object of their adoration subject to a grief beyond all expression.

This statement offers clear proof that the angel Gabriel is a redeemed human being, for otherwise, he could never have "felt the sins of a ruined world." In that case he would have been as powerless to bring consolation to Jesus as were the angels who had never fallen.

It is to be noted that the action of the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, did not remove the burden of Christ's mission from Him, even though the dramatic change in His condition, physically and mentally, would seem to indicate that. This is made clear in the next paragraph.

The Desire of Ages, p. 694:

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in no wise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His blood-stained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man.

This incredible transformation in the Saviour is well worth some very serious study and there will be much more on it later in this series. It demonstrates the marvelous power of living faith, for, while at first, Jesus could not see through the spiritual dark-

ness which enveloped Him, and therefore was robbed of the inspiration of believing that His sacrifice would not be in vain, Moses,—the angel Gabriel,—was able to assure Him that the victory was certain. He would not die for nothing.

Thus it was that, even though His agony did not cease, depression and discouragement left Him, and calmness and serenity took their places, and death was held at bay. This was the situation which existed from then on until Christ's death on Calvary.

There can be no doubt about Moses, the angel Gabriel, being the one who came to help Christ in the Garden. Note once more the words describing his coming to the Saviour's side:

The Desire of Ages, p. 693:

In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, *occupying the position from which Satan fell*, came to the side of Christ.

Already we have learned in this series of studies that Gabriel is the angel who now occupies the position once belonging to Lucifer, and that he is Moses. Therefore, when we find Moses revealed to us subsequent to his resurrection, we are to recognize him to be Gabriel, the mightiest angel of the hosts of God; and every time we find Gabriel at work among God's people on earth, we are to know that we are seeing the redeemed, immortalized Moses fulfilling his divinely appointed responsibilities.

This mightiest of the angels was called upon again and again to prosecute the most important work in the cause of truth. We could only expect then that he would be the one to bring desperately needed consolation to Christ in the hour of His greatest need. See how lovingly and comfortingly it was administered in the Garden. What wonderful love there must have been each one toward the other as described in this paragraph:

The Signs of the Times, October 17, 1900:

Christ overcame Satan on every point. The wily foe could not induce Him to swerve from His allegiance to His Father.

Luke 4

⁸ Get behind me, Satan, [Christ said;] for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.

The Captain of our salvation overcame for us; Satan left the field a conquered foe. But the strain upon Christ had left Him as one dead.

Matthew 4

¹¹ And, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.

Their arms encircled Him. Upon the breast of the highest angel in heaven His head rested. Divine consolation flowed into His soul. The foe was vanquished. Humanity was placed on vantage ground. Christ had conquered. Those who became partakers of the divine nature would be able to resist the temptations of the enemy.

The arrival of the shining angel startled the disciples into wakefulness. What they saw further reveals the person of Gabriel, the glorified Moses, the glory of his person, and the effect of his presence. It makes very inspiring contemplation.

Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 101-102:

The disciples were suddenly aroused from their slumber by a bright light shining upon and around the Son of God. They started up in amazement, and beheld a heavenly being, clothed in garments of light, bending over their prostrate Master. With his right hand he lifted the head of the divine sufferer upon his bosom, and with his left hand he pointed toward Heaven. His voice was like the sweetest music, as he uttered soothing words presenting to the mind of Christ the grand results of the victory he had gained over the strong and wily foe. Christ was victor over Satan; and, as the result of his triumph, millions were to be victors with him in his glorified kingdom. . . .

The glorious vision of the angel dazzled the eyes of the disciples. They remembered the mount of transfiguration, the glory that encircled Jesus in the temple, and the voice of God issuing from the cloud. They saw the same glory here revealed, and had

no further fear for their Master, since God had taken Him in charge and an angel was present to protect Him from His foes. They were weary and heavy with sleep, and again they dropped into unconsciousness.

When one considers the state in which Christ was before the victory was gained, one is exceedingly grateful that He was able to display none of these symptoms of soul agony once the mob arrived and thereafter throughout His so-called trial and very real crucifixion. Instead, He carried himself throughout the entire proceedings like the mighty conqueror He in fact was.

Gabriel Interposes

From the very outset He let it be known to those with the honesty and integrity to see it, that He was giving himself in willing sacrifice. The priests and rulers might imagine that they were bringing Him to trial, condemning Him to death, and carrying out the execution of the sentence, but they could do only what He permitted them to do. Nobody compelled Him to sacrifice himself for the salvation of sinners.

He, with the assistance of Moses, the mighty angel Gabriel, gave a convincing demonstration that His cruel persecutors had no power to do anything to Him without His consent. This demonstration was provided as soon as the crowd arrived to arrest Him. It was effortlessly accomplished by the angel's making a single pass between Christ and His wicked accusers. We know who this angel was, for we are informed that He was...

The Desire of Ages, p. 694:

...the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus.

It was Moses,—the angel Gabriel,—who had done that. The appearance of the mighty angel, and its effects on the crowd, are described in the following paragraph:

The Desire of Ages, p. 694:

No traces of His recent agony were visible as Jesus stepped forth to meet His betrayer. Standing in advance of His disciples

He said, "Whom do you seek?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am He." As these words were spoken, the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus moved between Him and the mob. A divine light illuminated the Saviour's face, and a dove-like form overshadowed Him.

In the presence of this divine glory, the murderous throng could not stand for a moment. They staggered back. Priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, fell as dead men to the ground.

The angel withdrew, and the light faded away. Jesus had opportunity to escape, but He remained, calm and self-possessed. As one glorified He stood in the midst of that hardened band, now prostrate and helpless at His feet. The disciples looked on, silent with wonder and awe.

What was revealed to those hardened transgressors was just a little of the awesome power wielded by one angel before whom they found themselves powerless to even stand upon their own feet, but fell like men dropping dead. They should therewith have been convinced that they were dealing with the Son of God over whom they had no power.

But, so stubborn, blind, and deceived were those men that nothing could control the master passions which bound both their souls and bodies. In their fiendish hatred, they had become bereft of all power to reason. Gone was any ability to evaluate the situation in which they had placed themselves.

We can be certain that Moses, the mighty angel Gabriel, remained very close to Jesus during the long hours of His trial, but kept himself hidden from human sight. He would have longed to have delivered his beloved Saviour from the murderous mob, but he understood that these things had to be in order to exterminate sin from the universe, and bring deliverance to the repentant.

The Dream of Pilate's Wife

Between Gethsemane and Calvary I find but one visible manifestation of an angel at work. This was when, during Christ's second arraignment before Pilate, an angel appeared to the Roman governor's wife to warn him through her, as to who Christ really was.

The Desire of Ages, p. 732:

Even now Pilate was not left to act blindly. A message from God warned him from the deed he was about to commit. In answer to Christ's prayer, the wife of Pilate had been visited by an angel from heaven, and in a dream she had beheld the Saviour and conversed with Him.

Pilate's wife was not a Jew, but as she looked upon Jesus in her dream, she had no doubt of His character or mission. She knew Him to be the Prince of God. She saw Him on trial in the judgment hall. She saw the hands tightly bound as the hands of a criminal. She saw Herod and his soldiers doing their dreadful work.

She heard the priests and rulers, filled with envy and malice, madly accusing. She heard the words,

John 19

⁷ We have a law, and by our law He ought to die.

She saw Pilate give Jesus to the scourging, after he had declared,

John 18

³⁸ I find no fault in Him.

She heard the condemnation pronounced by Pilate, and saw him give Christ up to His murderers. She saw the cross uplifted on Calvary. She saw the earth wrapped in darkness, and heard the mysterious cry,

John 19

³⁰ It is finished.

Still another scene met her gaze. She saw Christ seated upon the great white cloud, while the earth reeled in space, and His murderers fled from the presence of His glory.

With a cry of horror she awoke, and at once wrote to Pilate words of warning. While Pilate was hesitating as to what he should do, a messenger pressed through the crowd, and handed him the letter from his wife, which read,

Matthew 27

¹⁹ Have nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.

We are not directly informed as to who this angel was by name, but I would certainly expect it would have been Moses, the angel Gabriel. To him had been given the most important work of supporting Christ throughout the agony in the garden, His arrest, and trial up to this point, so, quite properly, he would continue in that role, and therefore was the angel who appeared to Pilate's wife.

Hidden Around the Cross and Tomb

From this point until the cry, "It is finished," the angels remained hidden from human sight. Be assured though that there were multitudes of them with the Father around the cross.

The Desire of Ages, p. 753-754:

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

Once Christ was laid in His tomb, there were no further manifestations of angels until the resurrection morning. This does not mean that the angels had abandoned the scene. On the contrary, both good and evil angels in large numbers were present at the tomb.

Satan's purpose was to keep the Saviour forever imprisoned in the dark dungeon of eternal death, to which end, he deployed as many of his followers as possible around the sepulcher. The devil well understood that:

The Great Controversy, p. 489:

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.

To Satan then, it was a matter of the utmost importance that Christ be prevented from rising on the third day, though how he hoped to achieve that is a profound mystery. When on the cross at the moment of His death Christ had cried, “It is finished!”:

The Desire of Ages, p. 758:

Satan was defeated, and knew that His kingdom was lost.

So then, once Christ had died the Conqueror, and Satan realized he was defeated, he understood quite well that there was no hope of his surviving the sentence of eternal death. There was no real point in continuing the struggle; nothing to be gained by attempting the impossible task of holding the Saviour in the tomb.

Yet the enemy posted his evil hordes of powerful, fallen angels around the stone-sealed sepulcher with the specific command to prevent Christ’s resurrection at any cost. It would require only one angel, the mighty Gabriel,—the resurrected Moses,—to put every evil angel to uncontrolled flight!

But why did the devil behave as if he still had before him the possibility of succeeding? He did so because it is a characteristic of his never to admit defeat, no matter how hopeless the situation appears to be. More than once, by this means, he has turned virtually total defeat into remarkable victories.

An outstanding example of this is provided by Jezebel, Ahab’s queen, to whom her husband brought a detailed account of the day’s activities on Mount Carmel. It was a day when, for Jezebel, everything had gone from extreme disaster to worse than that. Her priests had failed to ignite their sacrifice, whereas Elijah’s short, simple, but powerful prayer had brought down fire so intense that it consumed the sodden wood and sacrifice, licked up the water in the trench, and even consumed the stones of the altar.

As one person, the people acknowledged the true God, while six hundred priests of Baal, Jezebel’s elite forces, were slain. Then, in response to Elijah’s importunate prayers, the desperately

needed rain flooded the land, the blessing which all the people recognized as coming from Elijah's God, and not from Baal.

The stage was set for the execution of the wicked queen, and the initiation of a glorious reformation in Israel! Jezebel and her lord, the devil, had lost the battle and it was time for them to flee, but instead of acting as though all had been lost, they behaved as though the day had been all theirs. Boldly, defiantly, and with authority, she pronounced the death penalty on Elijah, who bolted in terror before the power and fury of the enraged queen. Thus she turned defeat into victory and effectively prevented the mighty reformation which God had designed should take place.

But, it was a different outcome on the resurrection morning when Satan's demons were forced to flee much to the devil's dismay.

Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, p. 193:

Satan was bitterly incensed that his angels had fled from the presence of the heavenly angels, and that Christ had conquered death, and shown by this act what his future power was to be. All the triumph that Satan had experienced in witnessing his own power over men, which had urged them on to insult and murder the Son of God, fled before this exhibition of the divine power of Christ. He had dared to hope that Jesus would not take up his life again; but his courage failed him when the Saviour came forth, having paid the full ransom of man, and enabled him to overcome Satan in his own behalf in the name of Christ, the Conqueror. The arch-enemy now knew that he must eventually die, and that his kingdom would have an end.

In this mighty victory over the prince of darkness, Gabriel played a significant role. Of that we shall read in our next chapter.

5. With the Early Church

Meditation

We are very much aware that Christ gave His people the commission to preach the gospel to every person on the globe. We are also very conscious that the task is an enormous one, so much so that, even though Jesus said that we are to undertake the work in the knowledge that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth, its accomplishment seems far beyond the faintest hope of achievement. We stagger before the sheer magnitude of the task on the one hand, and despair because of our enfeebled state on the other.

But, now that the incredible power of Gabriel who was once a mortal man like any of us, is unfolded before our astonished vision, we are able to obtain a revised, much more hopeful assessment of our prospects of finishing the work. Here we see a glorious being with the capacity to roll aside a large stone as if it were a pebble, and to cause a band of hardened priests, soldiers, and others to fall to the ground like dead men simply by only partially revealing his presence to them.

It is true that even during the period of the outpouring of the Latter Rain, we will not be endowed with power to match that possessed by Moses now that he is the angel, Gabriel, but all of his power is devoted to our protection, and to the certain success of the work. Now we can understand how:

Leviticus 26

⁸ Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

ONCE more we resume our survey of heavenly visitors to the earth.

The Resurrection

Without doubt, the grandest arrival of Gabriel, the redeemed Moses, onto this earth was at the resurrection of our wonderful Saviour. What awesome power and incredible capacities are revealed on this occasion of uninhibited triumph and overflowing happiness for all the loyal angels, but with what dismay and fury the glorious event was viewed by the evil angels.

Though, during the resurrection scenes, Gabriel is not mentioned by name, we now know him well enough to recognize him when we see him. Thus, when we read of him arriving at the sepulcher described as:

The Desire of Ages, p. 780:

...the mightiest of the Lord's host,...he who fills the position from which Satan fell,...who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth,"

–we know very definitely and positively that he is none other than Gabriel, the glorified, immortalized Moses. Thus he is readily identified in the following description of Christ's resurrection:

The Desire of Ages, p. 779-780:

Matthew 28

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.

Clothed with the panoply of God, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

Matthew 28

³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth.

The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, "Son of God, come forth; your Father calls You." They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, "I am the resurrection and the life." As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1110:

Before anyone had reached the sepulcher, there was a great earthquake. The mightiest angel from heaven, he who held the

position from which Satan fell, received his commission from the Father, and clothed with the panoply of heaven, he parted the darkness from his track. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. As soon as his feet touched the ground it quaked beneath his tread.

The Roman guard were keeping their weary watch when this wonderful scene took place, and they were enabled to endure the sight, for they had a message to bear as witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. The angel approached the grave, rolled away the stone as though it had been a pebble, and sat upon it. The light of heaven encircled the tomb, and the whole heaven was lighted by the glory of the angels. Then his voice was heard, "Your Father calls You; come forth."

This was not the last we see of Gabriel at the sepulcher on that momentous morning. While the Saviour was not seen again at the tomb until He appeared to Mary, Gabriel, together with a second angel whom we will soon learn was Elijah, remained at the grave to inform those of Christ's beloved followers that He had truly risen. We know that one of them was Gabriel, the man Moses, because he is identified in the next statement as "the angel who rolled away the stone."

The Desire of Ages, 788-789:

The women had not all come to the tomb from the same direction. Mary Magdalene was the first to reach the place; and upon seeing that the stone was removed, she hurried away to tell the disciples. Meanwhile the other women came up. A light was shining about the tomb, but the body of Jesus was not there.

As they lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid. They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps.

Matthew 28

⁵ Fear not, [he said;] for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified.

⁶ He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

⁷ And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.

Again they look into the tomb, and again they hear the wonderful news. Another angel in human form is there, and he says,

Luke 24

⁵ Why do you seek the living among the dead?

⁶ He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

⁷ Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Two Guardian Angels

The next appearance of heavenly beings was at the ascension of Jesus. As He rose from among His disciples, He soon became enclosed by a retinue of shining angels, whereupon they lost sight of Him. At this moment,

The Desire of Ages, p. 831-832:

While the disciples were still gazing upward, voices addressed them which sounded like richest music. They turned, and saw two angels in the form of men, who spoke to them, saying,

Acts 1

¹¹ You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

From what we have learned about Moses, the powerful angel Gabriel, we would expect that one of these two angels was he. So he was, as the next paragraph verifies by stating that these were the same two angels who had been seen at Christ's resurrection. One of those was identified as...

The Desire of Ages, p. 780:

...the mightiest of the Lord's host,...he who fills the position from which Satan fell.

Only one angel can answer to these specifications—Gabriel, the redeemed Moses.

The Desire of Ages, p. 832:

These angels were of the company that had been waiting in a shining cloud to escort Jesus to His heavenly home. The most exalted of the angel throng, they were the two who had come to the tomb at Christ's resurrection, and they had been with Him throughout His life on earth. With eager desire all heaven had waited for the end of His tarrying in a world marred by the curse of sin.

The time had now come for the heavenly universe to receive their King. Did not the two angels long to join the throng that welcomed Jesus? But in sympathy and love for those whom He had left, they waited to give them comfort.

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

So, these two who remained behind to comfort the disciples on Ascension Day are identified by the fact that they were “the most exalted of the angel throng.” Therefore, they both must have been redeemed human beings, for no created angel could ever be the most exalted in heaven while in the presence of a redeemed human. Only those who are the begotten sons of God can experience the highest exaltation as spoken of here.

Of them both, Moses was more exalted, for he was the greatest Christian on earth, and is the mightiest in heaven. But who was the second mightiest who stood there with Gabriel? His identification is not difficult to determine. All we have to do is to add one more piece of information, for of these two it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 793:

These angels had been with Christ as guardian angels throughout His life on earth. They had witnessed His trial and crucifixion. They had heard His words to His disciples. This was shown by their message to the disciples, and should have convinced

them of its truth. Such words could have come only from the messengers of their risen Lord.

Obviously, the second angel had to be either Enoch or Elijah, for, at this time, they and Moses were the only redeemed human beings who had been taken to heaven. So then, we have but to ask:

Beside Moses, which of the two—Enoch and Elijah, “had been with Christ as guardian angels throughout His life on earth?”

Only once during Christ’s earthly ministry was the curtain which separates the seen from the unseen drawn back to reveal which two of the three were Christ’s special companions and guardians. That was when Jesus was glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. It is evident then that the second angel with Gabriel at both Christ’s resurrection and ascension, was Elijah, for, if he had been Enoch, then it would have been Moses and Enoch who would have appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, instead of Moses and Elijah.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1096:

The Father chose Moses and Elijah to be his messengers to Christ, and glorify him with the light of Heaven, and commune with him concerning his coming agony, because they had lived upon earth as men; they had experienced human sorrow and suffering, and could sympathize with the trial of Jesus, in his earthly life.

Elijah, in his position as a prophet to Israel, had represented Christ, and his work had been, in a degree, similar to that of the Saviour. And Moses, as the leader of Israel, had stood in the place of Christ, communing with him and following his directions; therefore, these two, of all the hosts that gathered around the throne of God were fittest to minister to the Son of God.

Therefore, they were the two who were selected to be Christ’s guardians and companions during His life on earth.

The Entrance into Heaven

Moses' participation in the triumphant return of Christ to heaven was revealed to him just before he died. He went to sleep knowing the part he would fulfill in escorting Jesus home, and opening heaven's gates to Him:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 476:

He [Moses] saw Him [Christ] lying in Joseph's new tomb. The darkness of hopeless despair seemed to enshroud the world. But he looked again, and beheld Him coming forth a conqueror, and ascending to heaven escorted by adoring angels and leading a multitude of captives. He saw the shining gates open to receive Him, and the host of heaven with songs of triumph welcoming their Commander. And it was there revealed to him that he himself would be one who should attend the Saviour, and open to Him the everlasting gates. As he looked upon the scene, his countenance shone with a holy radiance.

Thus Moses experienced in glorious reality that which to him had been prophesied and promised just before He died. It was not as a feeble, mortal human that he escorted his beloved Friend Jesus from earth to heaven, but as Gabriel, the mightiest of the hosts of the Lord. He was one of those who opened the gates and welcomed the Saviour home.

No doubt he, Elijah, and Enoch, together with the multitude of freshly resurrected saints, were appointed leading positions of responsibility in the inauguration of Christ as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Once that was accomplished, the Holy Spirit descended in early rain power on the waiting, praying disciples on the earth below, and a new era of great light and power was initiated in which holy angels were involved.

Deliverances from Prison

Their visible appearances during the apostolic period served to deliver certain of the apostles from prison, and to give directions needed to bring salvation to various individuals, but in no case was the angel named, yet enough information is given about him

to positively identify him. One would justifiably expect that Moses would be just as closely involved with the people of God on earth after the ending of Christ's earthly ministry as he was before it.

1. RELEASE OF PETER AND JOHN

The first visible participation of an angel in the history of the apostolic church, was the release of Peter and John from prison. These two leading disciples had healed the lame man at the temple at the hour of prayer when the greatest number of people were present. Tremendous interest was immediately generated and, in the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaimed a living Saviour.

The thoroughly alarmed priests and temple rulers had them arrested and imprisoned for the night. Next day they were questioned by a company of priests including Caiaphas. Peter answered them boldly and, without hesitation, declared that they proclaimed salvation through Christ alone.

In response, after drawing aside to council together, the temple dignitaries forbade them to preach in Christ's name, and then released them.

2. DELIVERANCE OF THE APOSTLES

There soon followed the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, which caused even greater respect for God's cause. Multitudes were healed of different diseases, together with those tormented by unclean spirits. Filled with indignation, the high priest and his fellow Sadducees arrested the apostles and locked them in the "common prison," intending to try them in the morning.

Acts 5

¹⁹ But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out.

In *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 79-80, the heavenly rescuer is not referred to as "an angel of the Lord," but is designated "the angel of the Lord." Here is the statement:

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 79-80:

The God of heaven, the mighty Ruler of the universe, took the matter of the imprisonment of the disciples into His own hands, for men were warring against His work. By night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and said to the disciples,

Acts 5

²⁰ Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

3. DELIVERANCE OF PETER

There were at least two further deliverances from prison recorded in *Acts*. In one, Peter was delivered; in the other, Paul and Silas were. Both were attributed to the work of “the angel of the Lord.”

The imprisonment of Peter was the work of Herod, but not the one who had John the Baptist executed and shared with Pilate in the trial of the Saviour. That was Herod Antipas. It was Herod Agrippa who put James to death, and who, when he saw how this pleased the Jews, had Peter cast into prison with the intention of murdering him too. But in the depth of the night, the angel of the Lord led him to freedom.

The Review and Herald, May 4, 1911:

On this last night before the proposed execution, a mighty angel is sent from heaven to rescue Peter. The strong gates that shut in the saint of God open without the aid of human hands. The angel of the Most High passes through, and they close noiselessly behind him. He enters the cell; and there lies Peter, sleeping the blessed, peaceful sleep of innocence and perfect trust. The light that surrounds the angel fills the cell, but does not waken the apostle.

At the touch of the angel’s hand, Peter is awakened, his chains fall off without rousing the guards, the doors in their turn are silently unchained and unlocked to let them pass, and then are as silently chained and locked behind them. Soon Peter is safely outside in the open street fully aware that he has been saved by the angel of the Lord, here called the angel of the Most High.



4. DELIVERANCE OF PAUL AND SILAS

The next deliverance from prison was that experienced by Paul and Silas at Philippi. At this place these two men had preached the gospel with mighty power, much to the fury of certain men who made a great deal of financial profit from...

Acts 16

¹⁶ ...a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination.

She earned much profit for her masters by telling fortunes. For many days, she followed the missionaries around while loudly declaring:

¹⁷ These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.

Eventually, Paul called upon the evil spirit to come out of her which it did. Thus was ended her capacity to earn money for her masters, a development which enraged them so much that they had Paul and Silas arrested and brought before the magistrates. They and the multitude became mightily stirred up and ordered that the Lord's messengers be thoroughly beaten, and cast into prison with, their feet in the stocks.

Early Writings, p. 204:

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and I saw that immediately the angel of God loosed everyone's bands.

Once again the angel of the Lord was an active participant in the drama without any direct identification of him being provided. However, we are not left entirely without any indication of his identity. Of this we will have more to say very shortly. But first we will look at the angel of the Lord in another role, that of director of missionary activities.

Director of Missionary Activities

We will limit ourselves to three examples—the conversions of the Ethiopian, Paul, and Cornelius. In each of these, the angel of the Lord appears, and carries out a significant work in bringing salvation to the lost.

1. THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN

After Christ's ascension, His followers, in obedience to His command, first preached the message in Jerusalem. This generated fierce persecution which scattered the believers. It was thus that Philip found himself preaching the truth in Samaria with wonder-

ful success as he reaped the harvest sown there by Jesus Christ. For a short time, Peter and John joined Philip in Samaria, before returning to Jerusalem. Then,

Acts 8

²⁶ The angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

²⁷ And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet.

Acting on these instructions, Philip successfully won the Ethiopian to Christ. The message was carried to his homeland by the Eunuch, where it did a mighty work. Thus the living truth was established in Ethiopia through the co-ordination of the angel of the Lord and the human messenger.

2. THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS

One of the greatest obstacles which had to be overcome even by the apostles themselves, was the deeply inculcated notion that salvation was only for the Jew. It was believed that the Gentiles were without hope. Christ himself had worked hard in order to correct this error, but, even though He commissioned them to...

Matthew 28

¹⁹ ...make disciples of all the nations...

And even though they were filled with the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, they still clung to their prejudices against the Gentiles. It is an amazing revelation of the power of preconceived opinions to shut out the light of truth.

But, in it all, the angel of the Lord was working to dispel the darkness and make Jew and Gentile one in Christ. In this regard, a splendid opportunity was provided when Cornelius the Roman hungered and thirsted after righteousness. He was...

Acts 10

² ...a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

To this fine person was given the visible ministry of the angel of God:

³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, Cornelius!

This beautiful being instructed him to send men to Joppa to invite Peter to come and teach them what they should do to serve God. Cornelius was quick to obey.

Next day, as the messengers sent by Cornelius neared the house in which Peter was lodging, the apostle was given the vision in which a great sheet filled with all kinds of unclean beasts, birds, and creeping things was let down before him. Then he was directed to kill and eat from this supply, but though he was very hungry, he objected on the grounds that he had never eaten anything unclean.

¹⁵ And a voice spoke to him again the second time, What God has cleansed you must not call common.

¹⁶ This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Without the least doubt, the voice heard by Peter was the voice of the angel of God who had visited Cornelius, for:

The Signs of the Times, April 13, 1904:

Immediately after the interview with Cornelius the angel went to Peter, who, weary and hungry from journeying, was praying upon the housetop of his lodging-house in Joppa.

In obedience to the directions given by the angel of the Lord, Peter went to the home of the centurion, preached the gospel to him and his household, and witnessed the gift of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles just as He had been on Jewish believers. The victory gained was a mighty step forward in the

building of God's kingdom on earth. Once again it was achieved by the coworking of the human agent and the angel of the Lord.

The Signs of the Times, April 6, 1904:

We are to be laborers together with the angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our cooperation; for man must be the channel to co-operate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in whole-hearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love.

3. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

In the dramatic conversion of Saul, the vital role of the angel of the Lord is again revealed. Initially, it was Christ himself who appeared to the fierce persecutor, when, nearing Damascus, blinding light shone around Saul and his companions. The heavenly being who then spoke to the stricken traveler, announced himself as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the crucified One, and was recognized as such by Saul.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 115:

Filled with fear, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light, the companions of Saul heard a voice, but saw no man. But Saul understood the words that were spoken, and to him was clearly revealed the One who spoke—even the Son of God. In the glorious Being who stood before him he saw the Crucified One. Upon the soul of the stricken Jew the image of the Savior's countenance was imprinted forever. The words spoken struck home to his heart with appalling force. Into the darkened chambers of his mind there poured a flood of light, revealing the ignorance and error of his former life and his present need of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

But after this initial revelation by Christ of himself to Saul, all further communications between Christ and the future apostle to the Gentiles, were channeled through the angel. This is not explicitly stated in every reference describing the passage of messages from the Saviour to Ananias in regard to supplying the needs of Saul. On the contrary, most statements simply say that

the Lord instructed Ananias to go to Saul in his hour of need. Here is a typical example:

Early Writings, p. 200-201:

Ananias feared that there might be some mistake in this matter, and began to relate to the Lord what he had heard of Saul. But the Lord said unto Ananias,

Acts 9

¹⁵ Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

¹⁶ For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Ananias followed the directions of the Lord, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said,

¹⁷ Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

If this was the only statement available to us, we would naturally conclude that the Lord Jesus spoke directly to Ananias, but this next reference explains what happened in more detail by stating that the Lord spoke through His angel to Ananias:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 431:

Said the Lord, through His angel, to Ananias:

Acts 9

¹¹ Behold, he prays.

The angel informed the servant of God that he had revealed to Saul in vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias can scarcely credit the words of the angel, and repeats what he has heard of Saul's bitter persecution of the saints at Jerusalem. But the command to Ananias is imperative:

Acts 9

¹⁵ Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

4. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

There is one more appearance in apostolic times which we shall not overlook. It occurred when Paul was shipwrecked on the way to Rome. After fourteen days and nights during which there was no abating of the fury of the storm, the angel of the Lord appeared to Paul in the night to assure him that no lives on board would be lost. This information he conveyed to the ship's company:

Acts 27

²¹ But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

²⁴ Saying, Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.

²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island.

Once again, the angel of the Lord is not identified, but for reasons that will be given shortly, we would expect him to be Gabriel whom we would also believe to be Paul's guardian angel. It is very probable that Elijah was a companion guardian angel of Paul, along with Gabriel, just as the two of them had watched over Christ during His earthly ministry.

Thus the angel of the Lord filled a very important position during the apostolic period, just as he did before and since. Under the command of the Almighty, through the ministry of Christ, he cared for the needs of the church on earth. This is not to claim that he did this mighty work all by himself alone. Rather, he did it through the multitudes of holy angels under his command.

Christ as the Angel of the Lord

But who is this mighty angel, the angel of the Lord, who is seen ministering to believers in the early Christian church, but who did not announce himself by name to Peter or any of the others as Gabriel did to Zacharias and to Mary?

When we read the title, “the angel of the Lord,” we tend to believe that this refers to Jesus Christ, and, in some cases at least it does. One such instance is found in the parable of Joshua and the Angel which is recorded in *Zechariah* 3:1-10. There without question Jesus Christ is titled “the Angel of the Lord.” Here is the reference:

Zechariah 3

¹ Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

It is clearly stated in the Spirit of Prophecy that the Angel of the Lord in this reference is Christ:

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 274:

Zechariah’s description of Joshua, the high priest, is a striking representation of the sinner for whom Christ is mediating that he may be brought to repentance. Satan is standing at the right hand of the Advocate, resisting the work of Christ, and pleading against Him that man is his property, since he has chosen him as his ruler.

Whereas in the parable he is Satan who stands at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord to oppose Him, in the Spirit of Prophecy it states that Satan stands at the right hand of the Advocate. We know who the Advocate is. He is Christ. Therefore, the Angel of the Lord in this parable is none other than Christ.

But this was not the only occasion when Christ was revealed as the Angel of God. It was the Angel of the Lord who visited and instructed the future parents of Samson, Manoah and his wife.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 560:

To the childless wife of Manoah “the Angel of Jehovah” appeared with the message that she should have a son, through whom God would begin to deliver Israel.

At first the childless couple did not know that the Angel of the Lord who had visited them was in fact Christ.

The Signs of the Times, September 15, 1881:

Manoah and his wife knew not that the One thus addressing them was Jesus Christ. They looked upon him as the Lord’s messenger, but whether a prophet or an angel, they were at a loss to determine. Wishing to manifest hospitality toward their guest, they entreated Him to remain while they should prepare for Him a kid. But in their ignorance of His character, they knew not whether to offer it for a burnt-offering or to place it before Him as food.

Before departing from them, however, their Angelic visitor left them in no doubt as to His true identity.

The Signs of the Times, September 15, 1881:

The answer was,

Judges 13

¹⁸ Why do you ask after my name, seeing it is secret?

Perceiving the divine character of his guest,

¹⁹ Manoah took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord; and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

Fire came from the rock, and consumed the sacrifice, and as the flame went up toward heaven,

²⁰ ...the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

There could be no further question as to the character of their visitor. They knew that they had looked upon the Holy One, who, veiling His glory in the cloudy pillar, had been the guide and helper of Israel in the desert.

So we might point to other references confirming that the Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ, but these are sufficient to establish the point that Jesus Christ is the angel of the Lord.

Gabriel as the Angel of the Lord

But He is not the only One to be so named, for redeemed men who have already been resurrected or directly translated to heaven, are also known as “the angel of the Lord.” The best examples are provided by the angel Gabriel who is commonly presented as the angel of the Lord.

He was the angel of the Lord who appeared to Zacharias, and Mary, declaring himself to be Gabriel. See *Luke* 1:5-45. Again, on the resurrection morning, he was the angel of the Lord who descended in mighty power to call Jesus from the tomb. This mightiest of all angels of the Lord next to Christ, is, as we have learned, none other than Gabriel, according to the key evidences found in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 779-780.

Which One?

In the broader and more general sense, every holy angel whether he be a created angel, or a redeemed human being, is an angel of the Lord. So then, when we read about the angel of the Lord doing God’s work at various times and places in the apostolic period, we know that the person alluded to falls into one of these classifications. But the question is: which one?

Our survey so far has demonstrated that up until the fiery furnace in Daniel’s day, the Angel of the Lord who came to earth to take care of God’s affairs was Christ. But, from that time forward, the minister from heaven was Gabriel, at least wherever identification was provided. In the ministry of the Lord through His angel in the times after Pentecost, such identification is not provided, nor is it necessary.

It should be obvious that Gabriel would, by virtue of who he was—the one who filled the position left vacant by the fall of Lucifer—continue after Pentecost, the work which he had done be-

fore the outpouring of the early rain. Once he had been resurrected, ascended to heaven, and fitted to fill the vacancy, Christ would have surrendered His temporary occupation of that post to Moses on a permanent basis. This being so, Christ would not after Pentecost, have reverted to the role He filled before Daniel's time when He temporarily filled the place left vacant by Lucifer.

Therefore, the angel of the Lord who visited the earth from time to time after Pentecost was Gabriel. He was the one who delivered the apostles from prison, and directed their steps to souls needing the gospel. This is certain, because we observe that he performed the same works after Pentecost as before. He identified with and cared for the needs of God's people in New Testament times just he had done in the wilderness before his death.

To complete our survey, there remains the study of the part Gabriel, "the mightiest of the Lord's host," is filling in these last days. That will be the study of the next chapter.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 341-342:

His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.

6. In the Book of Revelation

Meditation

The history of God's church is a sad one of repeated failures and missed opportunities. Long, long ago the end could have come, and the saints all be gathered home, but the sad fact is that we are still in this sin-cursed world, still waiting for the Latter Rain to fall, still looking for our Lord to appear.

In the light of these facts we must conclude that, whatever it is that has prevented the movements of the past from achieving the victory, it must be eliminated from the movement of the present if we are to succeed where they failed. This requires every believer's searching the inspired records of human history until they are absolutely satisfied that they understand just what the deficiency is, and how to remedy it.

And then, in the fullness of the power of importunate prayer, while possessed of the awful fear that we will fall short of the promise of entering into His rest, let us make the coming of the kingdom the one supreme work of our lives.

We will need to realize that it will require total commitment of all that we have and are in order to measure up to the sheer magnitude of the task lying ahead, for nothing less will suffice to reveal God's character at its radiant best and expose sin at its ugly worst. The hour is now too late for the church to fail again.

NOW we come to a most interesting, inspiring, and encouraging aspect in the ministry of Gabriel, in which we see him doing the same work in the New Testament as he had done in the Old.

Communication through Gabriel

In the Old Testament era tremendous light was revealed to Daniel in the form of visions and dreams which he did not understand. The command was therefore given to Gabriel to...

Daniel 8

¹⁶ ...make this man understand the vision.

In obedience to this command, Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, explained the prophecies to the earthly messenger in considerable detail. Firstly, he received the light from its Source through Christ, and then communicated the truth to Daniel who recorded it for our instruction.

What the book of *Daniel* is in the Old Testament, *Revelation* is in the New. It is fitting therefore, and in harmony with gospel order, that Gabriel should be the messenger commissioned to explain the *Revelation* to John, seeing that he had been the one who tutored Daniel. That he did so is made plain in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

The words of the angel, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,” show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said,

Daniel 10

²¹ There is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your Prince.

Of Gabriel the Saviour speaks in the *Revelation*, saying that

Revelation 1

¹ He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.

And to John the angel declared,

Revelation 22 [RV]

⁹ I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brethren the prophets.

Wonderful thought—that the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men.

So it is that twice in *Revelation*, Gabriel, the redeemed, resurrected, immortalized Moses, is identified as the messenger and tutor through whom the light contained in *Revelation* has been made available to those who need it most, namely Christ’s warriors on the battlefield of this earth. The first such intimation is contained in:

Revelation 1

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him, to show His servants things which must shortly take place. and He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

² Who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all things that he saw.

³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The Purpose of the Book of Revelation

Revelation is not, as some suppose, a book filled with nothing more than a series of predictions of historical, military, political, and religious events. It is much more than that. It is the revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ. By it we are enabled to comprehend the beauty and glory of His character, the perfection of His ways of restoring the kingdom, the absolute capacity of His power, and the certainty of His success.

Some may have difficulty in seeing this in view of the space given in both *Daniel* and the *Revelation* to the beasts which symbolize the domineering powers opposed to Jehovah. Some might be more inclined to title these books the “Revelation of the Antichrist” rather than the “Revelation of Jesus Christ.” But let all be assured that this book is in fact the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For, the better the dreadful power of the forces of darkness both to deceive and to destroy are exposed, the more gloriously is the mastery of Christ over His foes unveiled. His arch enemies are filled with cunning and deceit, but He is shown to be Truth Triumphant, demonstrating in the fate of His utterly defeated enemies that truth is eternally enduring, and righteousness cannot be conquered.

It is made plain in *Daniel* and the *Revelation* that evil will be exploited to the point where every possible form of it will have been developed to the fullest possible degree. In the soon coming final confrontation, Satan, together with all his antichristian supporters, will exhaust in their desperate last bid for supremacy, all that evil has to offer.

The Almighty Redeemer will succeed in forcing Satan and his science of iniquity to bring on to the ultimate battlefield, all their secrets, mysteries, pretensions, and disguises, where the mighty

Champion of all champions will unmask them for what they are—nothing but a ministry of everlasting death, the abomination which makes desolate.

Better than we do, we need to understand the power, cunning, experience, wisdom, and determination acquired by the prince of darkness through six thousand years of the most diligent study into the forces of evil, and his employment of them in the struggle of the ages.

The Great Controversy, Introduction ix-x:

The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit.

But as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down “having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.” *Revelation* 12:12. He will work “with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 *Thessalonians* 2:9.

For six thousand years that mastermind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict.

And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord’s second advent; and a people are to be prepared to stand before Him at His coming, “without spot, and blameless.” 2 *Peter* 3:14. At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days.

A Light Bearer

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is the complete and completely effective answer to this masterpiece of rebellion, and it was through Jesus Christ and Gabriel that it was all communicated to us. God is the infinite Source of this marvelous light, which in turn, He communicates to Jesus, who channeled it to His angel, Gabriel, who revealed it to the apostle John during the period of his exile on the Isle of Patmos, who recorded it all so that we, upon whom the end of the world has come, will understand precisely what we face and how to meet it.

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

Wonderful thought—that the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men.

What a glorious experience and wonderful privilege it was for John to be personally taught by the mightiest angel of the Lord's host! What a life restoring inspiration it was for him as this beautiful being unfolded the outworking of the principles of righteousness in the deadly conflict with the powers of darkness, and made it clear that truth would be triumphant, and evil would be eternally eradicated from the universe.

Some indication of the powerful impact of the messages unfolded to him through Gabriel is provided by John's spontaneously casting himself at the angel's feet to worship him. This happened a second time even though Gabriel had told the prophet he was not to do that. The first of these two occasions came when the angel was describing heaven's exultation over the fall of Babylon; the second when he was describing the glories of the new earth. *Revelation* 19:1-10; *Revelation* 21:1-27; *Revelation* 22:1-11.

Early Writings, p. 230-231:

The angel from heaven came to John in majesty, his countenance beaming with the excellent glory of God. He revealed to John scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the history of the

church of God and brought before him the perilous conflicts which Christ's followers were to endure. John saw them passing through fiery trials, made white and tried, and, finally, victorious overcomers, gloriously saved in the kingdom of God.

The countenance of the angel grew radiant with joy and was exceeding glorious, as he showed John the final triumph of the church of God. As the apostle beheld the final deliverance of the church, he was carried away with the glory of the scene and with deep reverence and awe fell at the feet of the angel to worship him.

The heavenly messenger instantly raised him up and gently reproved him, saying,

Revelation 19

¹⁰ See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The angel then showed John the heavenly city with all its splendor and dazzling glory, and he, enraptured and overwhelmed, and forgetful of the former reproof of the angel, again fell to worship at his feet. Again the gentle reproof was given,

Revelation 22

⁹ See you do it not for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Picture what a thrilling experience this was for the aging, deeply dedicated apostle. Firstly the angel from heaven came to him in majesty, his countenance beaming with the excellent glory of God. Let it be remembered that this angel witnessed of himself:

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.

When a human being stands in the presence of God, he begins to absorb the glory of the Almighty until his face becomes radiant with light. This had happened to Moses when he had spent forty days in God's presence on Mount Sinai. On his return to his people, he found that they could not bear to look on his face, for it was shining with a brightness which they could not endure. In or-

der to speak with any of the people, he had to wear a veil over his radiant countenance.

With what much greater brightness Gabriel would have come to John the Beloved on Patmos from, not a mere forty days and nights, but from over a thousand years of standing in the unveiled presence of the Deity! This mighty angel would have appeared to the apostle as a being of indescribable beauty shining with glorious light, and blessed with incredible vitality, commanding authority, spotless purity, and perfect righteousness. No wonder it states in *Early Writings* that the angel came to the prophet in majesty.

It is a wonderful testimony to the level of John's spiritual experience that he could look upon the mighty angel without difficulty. Rather, he became totally absorbed in the angel's unfolding of the future trials and victories which awaited the people of God before the final consummation was achieved.

Early Writings, p. 230:

[Then] the countenance of the angel grew radiant with joy and was exceeding glorious, as he showed John the final triumph of the church of God.

Imagine the inspiration flowing like a flood from the enraptured Gabriel and encompassing the awestruck John. It is no wonder that the aging apostle looked upon Gabriel as being Christ himself, and accordingly fell down to worship him.

Quickly, the glowing angel raised John to his feet with the gentle instruction not to worship any other than God. This immediate and positive response from Gabriel demonstrates he had lost none of the humility which he had when he was Moses, the meekest man who ever lived.

One of the Prophets

Now we can understand Gabriel's declaration to John:

Revelation 19

¹⁰ I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The second time he expressed himself in the same manner:

Revelation 22

⁹ For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.

In these two statements, Gabriel clearly classifies himself as one of the long line of prophets whom God sent to His people after the fall of man. He identified himself as being John's fellow servant, one together with those who have the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy.

Without any doubt, this is entirely true, for, when Moses was not yet taken to heaven, was still only Moses, and was not yet Gabriel, he was one of the prophets, a fellow servant with all the other prophets of whom he was the greatest.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1113:

Moses was the greatest man who ever stood as leader of the people of God. He was greatly honored by God, not for the experience which he had gained in the Egyptian court, but because he was the meekest of men. God talked with him face to face, as a man talks with a friend.

If men desire to be honored by God, let them be humble. Those who carry forward God's work should be distinguished from all others by their humility. Of the man who is noted for his meekness, Christ says, "He can be trusted. Through him I can reveal myself to the world. He will not weave into the web any threads of selfishness. I will manifest myself to him as I do not to the world."

When Moses died, his ministry as a prophet did not come to an end, for, soon he was raised to life and taken to heaven to continue the same work on a higher level, under his new name, Gabriel. But, even though on a higher level, he was still a prophet

and a fellow servant of all the prophets who succeeded him. It is for this reason that he was sent to Daniel and to John to minister the prophetic word to each in turn. Gabriel then occupies the same significant role in the transmission of the light contained in *Revelation* as he did in *Daniel*.

The Many Angels in Revelation

In *Revelation* many angels are brought to view without being named.

- There are the seven angels of the seven churches, who are the ministers of those churches. Their being firmly held in Christ's hands signifies that they operate in strict obedience to His authority and leadership.
- There are the four angels who hold in check the four winds of strife until the sealing is over, and the other angel who bids them hold. See *Revelation 7*.
- There is the special angel seen ministering in the heavenly sanctuary as revealed in *Revelation 8:1-6*. In response to his ministry, seven angels with trumpets sound forth in succession.
- Then there is the mighty Angel with the little book open in His hand who proclaims that "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets." *Revelation 10:7*.
- An angel conveyed the information contained in *Revelation 11:1-3*, after which we see the seven angels of *Revelation 14* and *18*.
- Seven plague administering angels are brought to view in *Revelation 16*, one of whom gives the information found in *Revelation 17*.
- In *Revelation 19:10* is recorded John's attempt to worship Gabriel, followed by the second attempt recorded in *Revelation 22:8-9*.

- The angel with the key to the bottomless pit is spoken of in *Revelation 20*.
- One of the seven angels who pour forth the seven last plagues opens before John’s eyes the glories of the New Jerusalem, and the earth made new. See *Revelation 21:9-27; 22:1-5*.

A Teaching Role

The angels listed above are not all the same persons, nor is there sufficient information supplied about each one of them to positively identify them all. But, because of the stipulation laid down in the first verse of the book that the revelation of Jesus Christ would be sent by the angel whom we now know to be Gabriel, we can be sure that wherever in *Revelation*, an angel is seen in a teaching role, the tutor is certainly Gabriel.

An excellent example of this is supplied when one of the angels who carried the bowls filled with the seven last plagues, came to John and revealed to him the glory of the New Jerusalem. Here is the record of it:

Revelation 21

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

The angel then proceeded to give a detailed description of the Holy City and the new earth.

According to the principle just stated—namely that wherever in *Revelation* an angel is seen in a teaching role, the tutor is certainly Gabriel—this angel must be Gabriel, for here he appears in just such a teaching role. Full confirmation that this angel who, with six others carried and poured out the seven last plagues, is Gabriel, is supplied in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 99:

The words of the angel, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,” show that he holds a position of high honor in the

heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said,

Daniel 10

²¹ There is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your Prince.

Of Gabriel the Saviour speaks in the *Revelation*, saying that:

Revelation 1

¹ He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.

And to John the angel declared,

Revelation 22 [RV]

⁹ I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brethren the prophets.

Wonderful thought—that the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God, is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men.

From the information supplied in this quotation, it is clear that Gabriel is the angel by whom the light contained in *Revelation* was sent to John.

Revelation 1

¹ He sent...it by His angel unto His servant John.

We also learn from this statement that Gabriel declares himself to be John's fellow servant, and of his brethren, the prophets.

The angel who was one of the seven holding vials in which are contained the seven last plagues, came to John to teach him more about the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Therefore he was Gabriel. The same angel announced to John that he was his fellow servant, and of his brethren, the prophets. This is further evidence that this angel is Gabriel.

Deeply Involved

We have come to understand through various evidences, that Gabriel is the redeemed human, Moses, who joined the godly Enoch up there, and who has been joined in heaven by Elijah, and the numerous other redeemed humans who were taken up when Christ returned there.

Now we find that he is one of the seven plague-carrying angels. It would then be reasonable to conclude that, seeing one of those seven, namely Gabriel, is a redeemed human, the other six must likewise be redeemed humans.

We understand of course from our knowledge about God's character, that the plagues are not poured out in the sense that they are actions of arbitrary punishment, but are the natural result of man's willful violations of God's holy law. But for the fact that up until the present time, those plagues are contained within their vials, or in other words, are kept under control by angels of whom Gabriel is one, this earth would be speedily desolated as it will be when those plagues will fall unrestrained on the shelterless heads of the wicked.

Already the signs of impending ruin are becoming increasingly evident in the more and more frequent and destructive calamities ravaging the earth. What we see is but a sampling of the horrors which are soon to ravage the whole earth.

What is impressive is that into the hands of redeemed humans, with Gabriel among them, has been committed this responsibility. It is wonderful to know that those of the human family who are already immortalized are intensely interested in the welfare of their brethren still in this world of sin. We are thus still further assured that we are not alone.

An Unchangeable Pattern

There are occasions when, in the presentation of the messages in the revelation to John, it appears that the light is given by Christ directly to John, and not through the Lord's angel, Gabriel. But this cannot be, for were this so, it would make the first verse in the book to be error, instead of its being the immaculate truth which it is.

Let us be established on the truth that every ray of light recorded in the *Revelation* and emanating from God the eternal, infinite Source, flows through Jesus Christ and through the angel

Gabriel, before it reaches us through the prophet. That is heaven's established order from which the eternal Father will not deviate in the least.

One example of a message appearing to come from Christ directly without passing through Gabriel, is found in the very first chapter, and reads as follows:

Revelation 1

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

¹¹ Saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, and, What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

Gabriel most certainly is not the "Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," those being titles which are applicable to Christ alone.

On hearing the voice, John turned to see who had spoken to him, and saw the Person of Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt about the identity of this glorious Being, for the description of Him fully fits no other.

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

¹³ And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

It is of great interest to note that a virtually identical revelation of Christ was given to Daniel after he had spent three intensive

weeks in soul-searching prayer. The prophet describes the vision of Christ which he received as follows:

Daniel 10

⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz:

⁶ His body was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of His words like the voice of a multitude.

The Sanctified Life, p. 49-50:

This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel.

There are at least two revelations of an angel who is definitely Jesus Christ. I refer to the sealing angel of *Revelation 7*, and to the mighty angel of *Revelation 10*.

The Sealing Angel

Firstly, we will identify the sealing angel of whom it is written:

Revelation 7

¹ After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

³ Saying, Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

Reference has already been made to the seven plague angels releasing the fearful forces of destruction on those who will have spurned the offer of salvation. The plagues which are said to be poured out are the unleashing of the calamities now held under control by the four angels. The details of these are as follows:

Maranatha, p. 266:

John sees the elements of nature—earthquake, tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God’s church. The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads.

Thus the four winds which are held in check are defined as the forces of nature and of humanity. It is logical to conclude that, just as the seven plague angels are redeemed humans, so must the four angels be redeemed humans who hold back the winds of strife. Certainly they have the power to do it. We can know this first of all by the fact that Satan, even as a fallen angel, can control the elements as far as God permits, as the following statement proves:

The Great Controversy, p. 589:

While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast.

If Satan, who has been greatly weakened through six thousand years of debilitating rebellion, can still exercise such great power as he does, then much greater power is at the disposal of the redeemed humans who have become holy angels. They certainly have the capacity to hold the four winds of strife until directed to cease this protective ministry.

As an indication of how much superior are the powers possessed by sinless redeemed angels than those possessed by Satan and his evil hordes, we need only look at the wild scattering of Satan's hosts when a single angel, Gabriel, appeared at Christ's tomb. They who had stationed themselves under the devil's command to ensure Christ would never be raised again, did not offer even token resistance.

The mightiest Angel who gives the four angels instructions to continue holding the winds of strife in check, is Christ himself:

Manuscript Releases, vol. 15, p. 221:

John's attention was called to another scene:

Revelation 7

² And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

Who is this? The Angel of the covenant. He comes from the sunrising. He is the Dayspring from on high. He is the Light of the world.

John 1

⁴ In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

This is the One Isaiah describes:

Isaiah 9

⁶ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

He cried, as One who had superiority over the hosts of angels in heaven,

Revelation 7

² ...to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea,

³ Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Only Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, can fully answer to this description.

The Mighty Angel of Revelation 10

Another angel in *Revelation* who is Christ, is the angel of Chapter 10.

Revelation 10

¹ And I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on His head, His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire.

² And He had a little book open in His hand. And He set His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the land.

It is plainly and definitely stated that this angel is the Archangel, Jesus Christ:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 971:

The mighty angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth.

The controversy has waxed stronger and more determined from age to age, and will continue to do so, to the concluding scenes when the masterly working of the powers of darkness shall reach their height. Satan, united with evil men, will deceive the whole world and the churches who receive not the love of the truth.

But the mighty angel demands attention. He cries with a loud voice. He is to show the power and authority of His voice to those who have united with Satan to oppose the truth.

It must be remembered that, while “the mighty angel who instructed John” was the King of kings at work, this instruction came to John *through* Gabriel. It is not always easy to decide whether a certain angel is Christ or one of the redeemed. This is because the ransomed, glorified ones, being “joint-heirs with Christ,” are so like Him that to see the one is to see the Other.

Commanding Angels

It might appear too that a single angel manages his work unassisted, as in the case of one angel per church, or one angel per

plague. But, those are the commanding angels under the charge of each one of whom is an army of workers. That is the way heaven's work force is organized. In a number of statements such as this one describing what took place in the Garden of Gethsemane, it is made clear that in God's order, companies of angels work under the direction of commanding angels.

Early Writings, p. 168:

The disciples feared for their own lives, and they all forsook Him and fled. Jesus was left alone in the hands of the murderous mob. Oh, what a triumph for Satan then! And what sadness and sorrow with the angels of God!

Many companies of holy angels, each with a tall commanding angel at their head, were sent to witness the scene. They were to record every insult and cruelty imposed upon the Son of God, and to register every pang of anguish which Jesus should suffer; for the very men who joined in this dreadful scene are to see it all again in living characters.

For us who are fighting our way forward, it is comforting to know that great hosts of powerful angels guard us on our way.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 154:

We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels. It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the cooperation of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim, and angels that excel in strength, stand at God's right hand,

Hebrews 1

¹⁴ ...all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

7. The Work of a Covering Cherub

Meditation

So much has happened in the world with such rapidity over the immediate past few years, that it is powerfully evident that we have but little time remaining in which to prepare for what is coming on the earth as an overwhelming surprise.

This is no time to be drifting along in the same old pattern of spiritual apathy which affected so many of our forefathers, but is a time when we must develop a communion with the heavenly powers which is very real and very effective. We must be achieving living, effective answers to prayer.

I suggest you take *The Desire of Ages*, p. 362-363, and as you read these pages, ask yourself very seriously if your spiritual life is as pictured on these pages. If it is, then seek for an even greater blessing, but, if it is not, then let anxiety over your spiritual destitution drive you to discover the nature of your need and how it is to be supplied. Ruthlessly strip from your life, every hindrance to spiritual progress, while pleading with the Lord to teach you how to gain the living reality of the experience described on these pages.

Do not delay this work for an instant, nor expect that you will immediately enter into the promised blessing. Only persevering prayer can win through.

WE HAVE now completed a survey of the appearances on this earth of three angels in particular:

1. Christ under the name Michael the Archangel,
2. Moses under the name Gabriel, and
3. Elijah whose new name remains unknown to us for reasons best known to the Lord of glory.

We did not include the appearing in Abraham's day of Enoch under his new name Melchizedek, because that is available in another book.⁶

I wish to stress once again that I did not attempt to discover and present every single instance when an angel appeared on earth, for I am satisfied that more than enough witnesses were called to reveal and confirm the truths now being opened before us.

⁶ See the book, *Melchizedek*, by F. T. Wright.

We are now ready to learn some very beautiful and inspiring truths through the information gathered from this survey. We shall obtain new strength and courage when we view the incredible power, beauty, capacities, and dedication of these mighty visitors from heaven, who once were men like ourselves.

When they were men, they were encased in mortal, sinful flesh and blood, and confined to this sin-cursed earth even as we are. But, liberated from mortality, they are enabled to render services in the great controversy which will be a major factor in Christ's gaining the ultimate victory in the struggle against the powers of darkness.

As we become more aware of the role of these mighty beings and how much we owe to them, we will be enabled to work in closer cooperation with them, and thus our own ministry will be rendered much more effective and profitable. Heaven is brought near to earth, and our hearts are made glad.

So then, it has been established that Gabriel is the glorified, immortalized Moses and that he occupies the position once filled by Lucifer, the covering cherub. This immediately raises the question:

“Who filled that position between the time when Lucifer vacated it, and the time when Moses was taken to heaven, or was it left vacant until Moses became qualified to fill it?”

Obviously, before he was born or during his life on earth as a man, Moses could not replace Lucifer. Not until he became a fully qualified mighty angel could this ministry begin. Therefore, some other angelic being had to fill that vacancy until Moses became qualified to do so. Once he did become so fitted, he did the same work which Lucifer would have done in this sinful world, if, not he, but some other angel had fallen from grace.

Survey of the Work of Gabriel

This means that we need to firstly identify the work which Moses as Gabriel did once he fully occupied the position of covering

cherub; and then look back and see who did the same work before Moses' time came. This is a relatively simple exercise which will reveal the value of our making a survey of angelic visitations to this earth.

The earliest appearance of Gabriel is when, in Daniel's time, he was commissioned to give the prophet such information as would enable him to understand the vision. In the course of these duties, he battled with the Persian king for the release of the Jewish captives, and, when extra assistance was needed, Michael came to his aid, and the victory was gained.

It was Gabriel who announced the births of both John the Baptist and Christ, and led the herald angels in their song of rejoicing over the birth of Jesus, and announced the glad event to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. He, with a large company of shining angels, was the glorious star who led the wise men from the east to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and who revealed the true character and intentions of Herod to them, with the counsel to return home without reporting to the wicked king.

He and Elijah were Christ's guardian angels throughout His entire earthly sojourn, a ministry which made the flight into Egypt a safe one. It was Gabriel who in Gethsemane strengthened Christ, who walked with Him through His arrest and trial, and came down on the resurrection morning to call Him from the tomb. It is obvious that it was Gabriel who watched over the church of the Early Rain, guiding the gospel preachers to those who needed salvation and were willing enough to receive it, protecting the believers from extinction, and delivering various ones from prison and death.

Again, it was Gabriel who brightened John's lonely exile on Patmos with the glorious revelations of truth, which are titled: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

All this and much more was the work done by Gabriel as the covering cherub during Bible times. It is the beautiful, loving, caring ministry of the shepherd which he was. How precious the

thought that his forty years of life as a shepherd in Midian, and the next forty years in shepherding the flock of God on the earth, was followed by a lifework eternity long as the shepherd of the church under Christ.

Who Filled the Vacancy?

Having established the work of Moses as Gabriel, the covering cherub, we know what to look for in any being who might qualify as the temporary covering cherub.

We are not to look for some one person cloistered forever in the sanctuary in heaven, for one thing which is made clear by these revelations is that he is not eternally and immovably anchored to the presence of God, as we may tend to think. Moses, as Gabriel, became the covering cherub and fully discharged the responsibilities of that role, without being confined to one place in God's direct presence all the time. As we see, he, the covering cherub, has been, and still is making constant visits to this earth.

He is not the covering cherub only when in God's direct presence, but is that no matter where he may be. For instance, he was the covering cherub when he spoke to Zacharias, who would soon thereafter father John the Baptist. Here is the account:

Luke 1

¹⁹ I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

So then, he, the covering cherub who stood in the presence of God, also stood in the presence of Christians on this earth, performing services essential to the advancement of God's kingdom and its government. The more we learn of this position, the more we realize what a busy, active, and visible person the covering cherub has always been. Consider for instance, the following statement which reveals something of how heavy Lucifer's responsibilities were:

The Signs of the Times, April 28, 1890:

Lucifer was the covering cherub, the most exalted of the heavenly created beings; he stood nearest the throne of God, and was most closely connected and identified with the administration of God's government, most richly endowed with the glory of His majesty and power. The prophet writes of his exaltation, saying:

Ezekiel 28

¹⁴ You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

It is clear from this that the role of covering cherub is not an inactive one, and does not consist of being anchored to one spot in the direct presence of God. How could he be and at the same time be closely involved with the administration of the vast and complex organization of the divine government which encompasses all the infinitely vast galactic systems of which there are at least a billion, each of which in turn, is composed on the average of a billion inhabited solar systems?

Being as he was, the occupant of the highest position which can be filled by a created being, he needed to stand in God's presence from time to time, in order to partake of the divine life, power, and wisdom necessary to carry such incredibly heavy and extensive responsibilities. From such communings with the Most High God, he would visit throughout the reaches of the universe, bearing messages of instruction to the inhabitants thereof.

This explains why we see Lucifer's successor, Gabriel, so active in his frequent visitations to this earth once he had become the new covering cherub. Since Lucifer was the highest and busiest official after Christ in the original kingdom structure, and since his successor, Gabriel, was likewise the highest and busiest administrator in God's kingdom, we must expect that the temporary covering cherub would likewise from his position in God's presence make frequent visits to this earth. So He did.

We would also expect that the position of chief administrator after Christ, could not be left vacant until a replacement had received the necessary qualifications to assume such awesome responsibilities. It would have to be filled immediately even though this meant someone filling in on a temporary basis. And it was.

It is very obvious that the temporary covering cherub was Christ who was fully capable of administering His Father's limitless kingdom. Up until Daniel's day, when Gabriel began his recorded visits to this earth, we find Christ doing the same administrative tasks which were later given to Gabriel to do.

A Comparison

Let a comparison be made between the ministries of Christ and Gabriel as covering cherubs with each occupying the highest positions available to them. Christ occupied the position of supreme ruler with His everlasting Father, while Gabriel stood next to Christ.

The first point we shall consider is that both Christ and Gabriel unfolded future events to God's messengers on earth. Christ the Lord taught Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and others of future events right down to the Saviour's second advent. Let us remind ourselves of some of these prophetic ministries.

Of Enoch it is written:

Lift Him Up, 350:

The Lord opened more fully to Enoch the plan of salvation, and by the Spirit of prophecy carried him down through the generations which should live after the Flood, and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world (*Jude 14*).

To Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, Christ likewise unfolded events which were to transpire far in the future.

In like manner Gabriel opened to Daniel and John the Revelator, quite detailed predictions of future events from their time onward to the making of all things new once more.

As Christ announced the prophesied miracle-births of Isaac, and of Samson, so Gabriel foretold the miracle-births of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

Once again, as Christ was the Shepherd over the church in the period of His being the covering cherub, so did Gabriel exercise the same loving, protective, guiding watchcare over the movement under his charge.

Further comparisons can be made, but I believe this is sufficient to establish the truth that the ministries of Christ and Gabriel as covering cherubs were identical.

The work which Gabriel performed once he became qualified to fill the position of covering cherub, he is still performing, and will continue to perform throughout all eternity. His is the work of the covering cherub who stands in the presence of God under Christ who is the chief Administrator of the government of the kingdom. When, during the interval between the fall of Lucifer and Daniel's time, we see Christ performing the same work, we know without a doubt that Christ was the temporary cherub who occupied Moses' position until he was able to fill it himself.

A Period of Training

This introduces an interesting question in regard to Moses: How long after his resurrection and ascension did he become qualified for the office of covering cherub? How much did he have to learn; what skills did he have to acquire; and with what of heaven's procedures did he have to become familiar before he could relieve Christ of His temporary position, and fill his appointed place himself?

These questions are raised because very close to a thousand years elapsed between the death and resurrection of Moses, and the first recorded appearance of the covering cherub, Gabriel, busily and effectively engaged in the work appointed him. How did Moses spend that millennium of obscurity?

Firstly let us determine that it was in fact a thousand years between the resurrection of Moses, and his appearance in Daniel's day. It was only for a very short period that he remained buried as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, 478:

But he was not long to remain in the tomb.

But how long is that? Was it a few hours, days, weeks, months or years? It could have been any of those. I know that to our minds, these words describe a very short period—days at the most. I also know that what heaven regards as being a short measure of time, we would regard as being quite long. Here is an example which is taken from the time when the Israelites were longing for deliverance from Egyptian slavery:

Patriarchs and Prophets, 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work.

Put yourself back among those bondage-weary people longing for speedy deliverance, and consider what you would have expected on hearing the news that angels had proclaimed that your emancipation “was near.” Would you have concluded from this information that another forty years would pass before you could have expected to be free? I am sure you would not, but would have taken these words to mean that you would be on your way to Canaan before the year was out.

But there is one statement which provides a more accurate measurement of how long Moses rested in his grave before his resurrection.

Early Writings, p. 164:

Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from

him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen. He meekly referred him to His Father, saying, “The Lord rebuke you.”

The corruption of a dead body is decomposition which begins when a man dies and is completed after some days in a hot and humid climate, and takes longer in a cold, dry climate. It is evident from the statement just quoted that the decay of Moses’ body was far from advanced.

The resurrection of Moses took place one thousand five hundred years before he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration as these words testify:

The Desire of Ages, p. 421:

Upon Mount Pisgah fifteen centuries before, Moses had stood gazing upon the land of promise.

From Gabriel’s appearance as Daniel’s teacher until he announced to Zacharias that he would be the father of John the Baptist, was five hundred years, as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 98:

To the question of Zacharias, the angel said,

Luke 1

¹⁹ I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto you, and to show you these glad tidings.

Five hundred years before, Gabriel had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. The knowledge that the end of this period was near, had moved Zacharias to pray for the Messiah’s advent. Now the very messenger through whom the prophecy was given, had come to announce its fulfillment.

So then, if fifteen hundred years separated Moses’ resurrection and his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, and if Gabriel’s announcement to Zacharias was five hundred years after his visible ministry to Daniel, then very close to one thousand

years separated Moses' resurrection and his manifestation to Daniel.

In the meantime, during that thousand years, Christ continued to perform the work of the covering cherub in the course of which He visited Joshua, Manoah and his wife, Gideon, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. It is very clear that Moses definitely was not instated as the covering cherub as soon as he arrived in heaven quite simply because he was not then qualified to carry the enormous responsibilities involved. If, during the period when these visitations took place, Moses had become a qualified covering cherub with the new name of Gabriel, he, at that point of time, would have been installed in that position.

That time eventually came, and, when it did, we see Christ ceasing the work of the covering cherub, and we see Gabriel doing the same work instead. He becomes the visitor to the church where Christ had been before. This is not the setting aside of Christ. He still occupies the position of the great High Priest, and King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is but His bestowal upon another of a position which He only held temporarily.

So, once Gabriel began his ministry involving visits to this earth, right through until the coming second advent of Christ, he is the one who does on earth as in heaven, the work of the covering cherub. There were at least three occasions when Elijah, whom I would also believe to be a covering cherub, joined with Gabriel:

1. On the Mount of Transfiguration;
2. At Christ's resurrection; and
3. At Christ's ascension.

The question now arises:

“What was happening to Moses during that thousand years? Why did not Christ hand over the administration of the universe to Gabriel, instead of His continuing to do the work of the cover-

ing cherub for a thousand years after the resurrection and ascension of Moses?”

We naturally tend to assume that the moment we enter heaven, we will be instantly and miraculously qualified to undertake our appointed work, but it is time to question that concept even though it is evident that in some things we will become instantly competent such as the ability to play a harp and be a beautiful singer. The scene described in the following paragraph confirms this:

Early Writings, p. 288-289:

Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the note, and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains.

Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere.

Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice,

“I behold the travail of my soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”

I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.

What an experience that will be when the redeemed will sing in perfect harmony with such beauty, power, and inspiration as we on earth have never produced. Even so, because continual growth is a law of God's kingdom, our singing and playing will be performed with ever increasing skill and excellence as time passes.

Some no doubt will specialize in music even as some do on earth at the present time. There will be much to learn in regard to the science and technique of music, which will lead to better and still better expressions of our growing experience. It certainly will take a great deal of time, study, and practice to equal the levels of skill acquired by the unfallen angels through their long application of themselves to the achievement of the highest proficiency.

It is clear that time will be needed for the redeemed to grow up to the physical stature possessed by Adam before he fell. Each person will come forth from the grave with the same physical proportions he had when he lived and died, and only when restored to the tree of life will he gradually regain what has been lost, as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 644-645:

All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. But all arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth.

In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave.

Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will "grow up" (*Malachi* 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its

primeval glory. The last lingering-traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ's faithful ones will appear in "the beauty of the Lord our God," in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord.

Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.

For most of us there will be a great deal of growing up to be done, for Adam was more than twelve feet tall.

The Signs of the Times, January 9, 1879:

As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble—perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.

It is interesting to note that, while the redeemed will require time to grow up to their lost stature, Christ, when He returned to heaven, was given immediate restoration. For Him there was no growing up period.

Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, p. 119:

But when He ascended up on high, and led a multitude of captives, escorted by the heavenly host, and was received in through the gates of the city, with angelic songs of triumph and rejoicing, I beheld with admiration and wonder, that He possessed the same exalted stature that He had before He came into the world to die for man. Said the angel, God, who wrought so great a miracle as to make Christ flesh to dwell among men, and will with His almighty power lift up fallen, degenerate, and dwarfed man, and after they are redeemed from the earth, make them "grow up as calves of the stall," could in His infinite power return to His dear Son His own exalted stature, which was His before He left Heaven, and humbled himself as a man, and submitted to the death of the cross.

It is no marvel with the angelic host that their loved Commander, after He had carried out the plan of salvation, and ascended up to Heaven, should take His own exalted stature, and be clothed with majesty and glory which was His before He left Heaven. But it was a marvel with all heaven, that the Father suffered the Son of His bosom to lay aside His glory, and come down to earth, and submit to humiliation, and the agonizing death of the cross to save fallen man.

While Christ's ransomed ones will be better versed in their knowledge of the plan of salvation than those angels who have never known the degradation caused in themselves by sin, and have never experienced for themselves deliverance from its power, they will be far behind when it comes to a knowledge of the sciences which will be essential in the performance of their work.

The greater the responsibility carried by a redeemed soul, the better versed he will have to be in the fields of learning appropriate to his calling. In the case of the angel holding the highest position, he would have to be well informed in practically every branch of learning before becoming qualified to fill the covering cherub's position which, as you have seen,

Signs of the Times, April 28, 1890:

...was most closely connected and identified with the administration of God's government.

When Moses first arrived in heaven, he was far from qualified to be the highest administrator in God's government, for he understood practically nothing compared to the angels who had doubtless spent millions, and possibly billions of years in the most intensive study possible for beings with minds at least twenty times more powerful than the minds common to us today. To what marvelous heights, and depths, and breadths their minds must have penetrated! When we reach heaven, it will be our joy and privilege to receive from unfallen beings the treasures of truth which they have learned through long periods of study, as it is written:

The Great Controversy, p. 677-678:

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

Let us consider a specific science which, among others equally precise, Moses would have had to learn in order to administer his vast dominions. I refer to the extremely complex science of intergalactic flight and celestial navigation.

It must be obvious that Moses knew nothing about these subjects when he arrived in heaven after his resurrection. It would have to have been as a "passenger" of Christ and the shining angels who had buried Moses that he made his first journey to his glorious new home. They understood the science involved, and possessed and knew how to apply the power necessary to take them all back to heaven. What an incredibly new experience that was for him. It was one through which Enoch had already passed, and one which would also be experienced by Elijah and those who were raised when Christ came from the tomb, and by those who shall be taken to heaven at Christ's great second advent.

But, it is not satisfactory for the chief administrator of the universe after Christ, to make his visits throughout the universe on the wings of another angel's knowledge, skill, and power. If it were, then that is how we would see him traveling. Instead, we find him traveling by his own knowledge, skill, and power.

Though the universe is so vast, communication must be constantly maintained at all times, both by the instant transmission of audio and visual communications, and by personal visitation especially when needed to meet and resolve crises in this world of sin. This calls for speeds which make the speed of light seem like a snail's pace. The speed of light is calculated to be 186,000 miles—not per hour—nor per minute—but per second. To give you some idea of how fast that is, let me point out that if you were to travel around the earth at the equator at that speed, you would make almost eight circumnavigations of the globe in the time span of just one second.

On this earth, where travel is so slow, speeds are measured most usually in miles or kilometers per hour, but this is far too small a unit for that needed to measure space. Instead, astronomers talk in terms of light-years. One light-year is the distance light will travel day and night in one year. That means that if a star is fifty light-years away, it would take fifty years for us to reach it traveling at the speed of light. It would also mean that light from that star now visible to us, left that star fifty years ago. Therefore, we would see the star, not where it is today, but where it was fifty years ago.

How many light-years is heaven from this earth? That is a question no man can answer precisely, but some idea can be gained by the fact that heaven is beyond the constellation of Orion according to:

Early Writings, p. 41:

Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space.

Astronomers have measured the distance to the nebula of Orion as exceeding a thousand light-years. Extreme as that distance from us is, Gabriel, and, we assume, the other angels, are able to traverse it in minutes.

This is revealed to us in *Daniel* 9, in which chapter is the record of Daniel's mighty prayer of confession for Israel. That record can be read in a few minutes, but we would allow for this version being much shorter than a verbatim report. Even so, thirty minutes more or less would be long enough for the prayer to be offered.

At the very beginning of Daniel's prayer, Gabriel was instructed to "fly swiftly" to the prophet's side to answer his pleas. He instantly obeyed, and reached Daniel...

Daniel 9

²¹ ...about the time of the evening offering.

The starting point for that rapid flight was heaven itself, as is plainly stated in the following statement:

The Sanctified Life, p. 48:

As Daniel's prayer is going forth the angel Gabriel comes sweeping down from the heavenly courts to tell him that his petitions are heard and answered. This mighty angel has been commissioned to give him skill and understanding—to open before him the mysteries of future ages. Thus, while earnestly seeking to know and understand the truth, Daniel was brought into communion with Heaven's delegated messenger.

So then, during the short interval of time between the commencement of Daniel's prayer, and Gabriel's arrival at his side, this mightiest of all the angels had covered the distance between heaven and earth. Even without knowing the actual length of the journey, we can clearly see that the speed of the angel's flight was many, many times greater than the speed of light.

This is not the only witness to the speed at which the angels travel. As we learned earlier in these studies, Gabriel was on this earth on the night of Christ's arrest and during the next day at least up till the Saviour's death. Apparently he then returned to heaven from where he descended with incredible speed and mighty power before dawn on the first day of the week.

The Desire of Ages, p. 779:

Matthew 28

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.

Clothed with the panoply of God, this angel left the heavenly courts...

...bound for this earth where he arrived just before daybreak. On that same day, Christ refused to receive the homage of His people until He had ascended to His Father. It is clear that He shot up to the presence of the Almighty, received the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted, and returned to earth the same day, for on that selfsame evening, He met with and was revered by His disciples.

This was flight at a speed far in excess of the speed of light, for no one traveling at no greater speed than that, could possibly travel from earth to heaven and back again in one day. Travel at the speed of light would require more than two thousand years to accomplish that which Christ achieved in a single day.

How was such a high velocity reached? It was done as all things are done, that is, by the power of God operated in strict accordance with the His laws. In the field here under consideration, inter-galactic flight and celestial navigation are the sciences involved.

Man's most advanced achievements in flight have taken him to the moon and back, while unmanned space vehicles have journeyed far out into the solar system. These excursions into space are nothing compared to Gabriel's, but even so, the flight-planning involved requires a voluminous amount of mathematical calculations at a level so high that only men of the highest training, aptitude, knowledge, and skill gained through many years of concentrated study, can handle the computations, and only then with the aid of the world's most powerful computers. It takes many years to qualify as a space scientist.

If it requires so many scientific calculations to travel locally in space, what vast scientific capability must be possessed by Gabriel, so that he can navigate through the solar systems and galaxies at such tremendous speeds and with such unerring accuracy! His flight is interestingly described as follows:

The Desire of Ages, p. 779:

The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1110:

Before anyone had reached the sepulcher, there was a great earthquake. The mightiest angel from heaven, he who held the position from which Satan fell, received his commission from the Father, and clothed with the panoply of heaven, he parted the darkness from his track. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. As soon as his feet touched the ground it quaked beneath his tread.

So Gabriel flew along a pathway. He tracked to his destination, for, he parted the darkness "from his track." His track is his flight path, the computation and mapping of which would require the most extensive knowledge, the highest skills, the most adequate education, and the most thorough training. None of this comes without effort in a moment of time, but is the product of the most diligent application of all the powers at our command.

The thousand years more or less devoted to Moses' fitting up for his position once he entered heaven, may seem unnecessarily long until it is noted that he had to learn in that time much at least of what had been accumulated by the loyal angels...

The Great Controversy, p. 677:

...through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork.

How long a time is indicated by the expression, "ages upon ages"? We cannot tell exactly, but it is probably in the millions or even billions of years. When faced with the task of learning that

vast accumulation of truth, a thousand years would seem far too short.

In like manner, the first one thousand years of our life in the heavenly Canaan might be spent in school along with the task of judging the wicked and assessing their punishment.

It is worth noting that Enoch did not appear upon this earth until very close to a thousand years after his translation.

It needs to be understood that heaven is not “vacation land,” but is a busy, industrious place, requiring that the highest levels of administrative and technical skills be achieved...

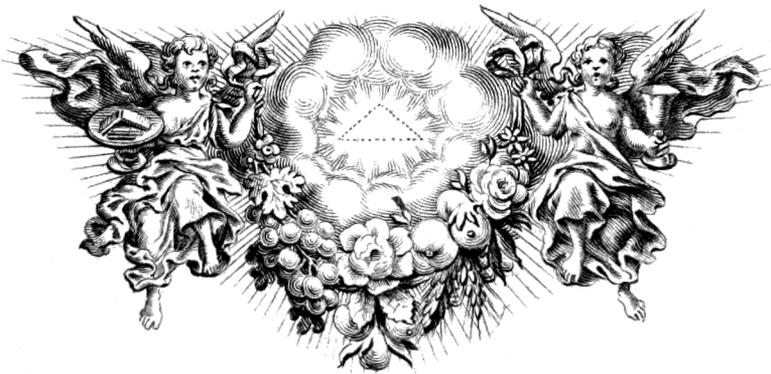
The Great Controversy, p. 425:

...through the grace of God and their own diligent effort.

The Great Controversy, p. 677:

There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

It will be by the grace of God and our own diligent effort that these results will be achieved.



8. Meekness and Humility

THE last chapter closed with the powerful truth that only a humble humanity could work with humble divinity. This is the truth of which we need to be very much aware, and which needs to be kept constantly before us.

The Danger of Pride

In regard to it, we should obey the instruction God gave through Moses to Israel for the continual inculcation of the principles involved, so that we might become fitted to act our part in the coming conflict in which only the humble will be triumphant, while all the proud will perish. Here is that instruction:

Deuteronomy 6

⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart;

⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This requirement was not met by the literal wearing of written versions of these counsels between their eyes, or on their hands, their feet, or their door posts, as many Jews came, in the blindness of their apostasy, to suppose.

Rather, the message from heaven was that these instructions were to be so constantly with them, that every word and action was to be governed by the principles they contained. And every day, these truths were to be rehearsed, not as burdensome, legalistic requirements, but as words of life of fascinating interest to young and old alike.

The need for the constant reviewing of these guidelines is revealed in the incredible capacity of mankind to pledge unswerving allegiance to God today, and then forget all about it tomorrow. This was the tragic, ever-recurring pattern of Jewish behavior, and, if we but cast a searching survey over our own past history, we will see that modern Israel has done no better. Apostasy thrives today as ever it did before.

In the midst of all this confusion, what are we individually doing first of all to detect the presence of pride within ourselves? This is the first necessity, for no one will take measures to eradicate what he does not know is there.

Pride is not easy to recognize. It can be right before our eyes without our identifying it for what it is, for it makes its approach as subtly as a wolf clad in sheep's clothing. Thus it appears to be as harmless as a lamb, leading us to drift along without that constant analysis of the active spirit operating in us. It can go undetected, while reigning within. In practical terms then, how shall we go about discerning the actual presence of pride within ourselves?

God's Humble Nature

To begin this process, we will again study the statement to which reference was made in the last chapter:

The Desire of Ages, p. 19-20:

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says,

John 17

²⁶ I have declared unto them your name,

Exodus 34

⁶ ...merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

John 17

²⁶ ...that the love wherewith You have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

But not alone for His earth-born children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson-book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages.

Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen, that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeks not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto.

The message of this statement is a description of God's holy character of self-sacrificing, self-renouncing love. It is the love which "seeks not her own." Having established this as being the character of God, that selfsame character is described as being "meek and lowly."

Wonderful are the truths to be deduced from these revelations. Hereby, it is declared that there is an inseparable relationship between the love of God, and the humility of God. From this it follows that as surely as God is love, so surely God is humble. He cannot be in a state of self-renouncing love without being, at the same time, meek and lowly in heart. To possess the one glorious attribute, is to be blessed with the other.

Let none of us take a superficial view of these qualities resident within the Everlasting Father. He does not merely act lovingly, nor are His love and humility only a part of Him, for He is love and He is humility, and because He is, loving and humble deeds continually flow from Him to every creature in the universe including His treacherous enemies. It is the living truth that the Lord God Jehovah does what He does because of what He is.

So then, love which is self-abnegation, is humility; while pride, which is self-exaltation, is hatred. The God of heaven together

with those who, by virtue of their being filled with His love and humility, are qualified to work with Him, will, in the end, conclusively demonstrate that love and humility are absolutely permanent and invincible.

The Spirit of the World

The entire, sinful world is activated, not by the love which “seeks not her own,” but by that which seeks her own. Those men and women who do not possess the love and humility of God, are bent on self-service no matter what the cost to others might be, whereas those with God’s humility and love are dedicated to the service of others no matter what the cost to themselves might be.

When the proud spirit which seeks her own activates mankind as it does, strife and contention are sure to erupt, as men use all their powers to secure for themselves the highest place, regardless of the loss and suffering others may be required to bear.

Those who emerge as the winners in these contests for supremacy, are praised to the highest by those who share in the victory gained. For instance, when a skillful general returns with his army from a military campaign by which the nation has been saved from a cruel oppressor, or by which vast territories have been added, or by which his nation has been strengthened and enriched, and by which the rest of the world has been given cause to respect him and his armies, he is honored to the highest degree, even above God himself, by those who have benefited by his exploits.

This is national pride which loads a pressure of temptation on the Christian to respond as the worldling does. War is therefore a time for the Christian to carefully analyze the thoughts and feelings which are stirred within him as the struggle on the battlefields rages back and forth. The honest results of his analysis will reveal whether humility reigns in his heart, or whether pride still has a place there. He will thus be enabled to decide whether or not he is really any different in spirit from the men of the world.

The happiness or dismay felt by those who are not of God is directly related to whether their side is winning or losing. If the news is that a large number of enemy troops have been killed, he feels a definite sense of satisfaction, accompanied by the hope that many more will likewise be destroyed.

There is too, a specific feeling of hatred against his enemies, for they are a threat to all that he considers his. His response is entirely motivated by his own selfish interests. His is not that love “which seeks not her own,”⁷ but one which seeks none but its own. This is destructive pride, not blessed, healing humility.

The Spirit of the Christ-like

What then are the responses which the loving, humble children of the meek and lowly One should expect to find rising from within themselves?

Firstly, there should be very real feelings of great sorrow and pain that there should be a war at all, accompanied by the deepest sympathy for the incredible suffering and loss experienced by those in the actual war zones. We need to be aware that they are people just like ourselves out there, and, if we were exposed to what they have to endure, we would be sympathetic to our own plight.

The truly meek and lowly in heart who are filled with the love which seeks not its own, will find no pleasure in the death of enemy troops, nor will cherish any wish that more will die.

Let each of us closely examine himself to search out what manner of spirit is operating within him. Once you have been alerted as to what to look for, it is a simple matter to detect the presence of the good or evil spirit. For instance, if you find that you greet any victory over one side or the other with any satisfaction whatsoever, then your heart is occupied with pride, for you are seeking your own, and not the other person’s well-being.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Keeping the Work of God Foremost

There is one situation where it is proper to experience positive relief over the outcome of a war, and that is when the triumphant side by winning, best thereby serves the cause of God. For instance, if the opposite side had won in the Second World War, the nations throughout the length and breadth of the earth would have been ruled thereafter by powers hostile to the God of heaven. A cruel, despotic government would have denied human freedom, and thus would have made it impossible for us to freely travel far and wide preaching the gospel. The Second Advent would have been delayed for a very long time.

For very good reason then, during that holocaust, the meek and lowly who sought not their own interests, viewed with concern the seemingly unstoppable advances of those who had initiated the march toward global conquest. Then, when at last the advancing armies were stopped, and then rolled back, the righteous viewed the outcome with thankful relief, not because “their side” had won, but because God’s cause had been saved from a return to the Dark Ages. They could praise the Most High for commissioning His powerful angels to hold back the four winds of strife until the work is finished.

All this may sound like the long-held argument:

“The end justifies the means.”

There would be some validity to that claim, if the war as God’s solution to the world’s problem, had been initiated and directed by Him. But Jehovah did not plan that titanic struggle. They were men who did that, but the Lord would not permit them to wage war unrestrained, for His angels kept the winds of strife under very strict control, and it is right for His children to experience joyful feelings when they see their heavenly Father executing His plans in the best interests of the cause they love so dearly.

An excellent illustration of what actions are proper when faced by the foe who has been exercising his power to confuse, annoy,

distract, and rob the saints of their spiritual experience, is provided in Sister White's attitude toward the Messenger Party in 1855.

This group of fanatical people had formed within the Church and had done great damage to the cause as described by the pen of Inspiration:

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 122:

God's frown has been brought upon the church on account of individuals with corrupt hearts being in it. They have wanted to be foremost, when neither God nor their brethren placed them there. Selfishness and exaltation have marked their course. A place is now open for all such where they can go and find pasture with those of their kind. And we should praise God that in mercy He has rid the church of them.

Such praise to God is very different from having feelings of satisfaction when we hear of the slaughter of "enemy soldiers," or of the exploits of those who did the slaughtering.

The Spirit of the Sports Arena

Let us extend the application of these principles to the sports arena where every possible effort is put forth, and every sacrifice made in a desperate struggle to be the best and the greatest in the world. In the hearts of the athletes, there is no diligent cultivation of the love which does not seek its own, but a dedication to self-exaltation, to be the best and the highest.

Every exhibition of athletic superiority draws tremendous crowds to the sports ground as the people press in to witness the contests which will decide who is the best at the moment. Those at the top receive not only the adulation of the people, but also enormous sums of money. Fame and fortune are theirs, heaped upon them by the adoring multitudes.

All these are facts with which we are familiar, but do we realize the implications of all this? The people are praising not only the man or the woman who has sacrificed everything to reach a

zenith above all other contestants, but more particularly they are acclaiming the system by which they all operate, the seeking of their own no matter what the cost may be to others.

Not every one manifests this spirit to the same intense degree, for in the heart of all but the most abandoned sinners, there still remains a residue of God's love so that to varying extents there is manifest something of that love which seeks not its own, something of the meek and lowly spirit of Jesus.

Bear in mind that not all who seemingly make great sacrifices for others, are manifesting the holy spirit of the dwellers in heaven, for there are counterfeits of the real which are designed by the devil to tempt and destroy.

Those who occupy the position of counterfeiters are unaware of the position they are filling or of the role they are playing. They are sincere but misguided, Jesus described them as blind leaders of the blind:

Matthew 15

¹⁴ Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.

Some may question whether blind leaders can shut the door of mercy against others, for each person has the right and the responsibility of choosing for himself. This is true, but the majority choose to let others influence them against the truth as the following statements verify:

The Desire of Ages, p. 205:

The people were gathering to Christ. The sympathetic hearts of the multitude accepted lessons of love and benevolence in preference to the rigid ceremonies required by the priests. If the priests and rabbis had not interposed, His teaching would have wrought such a reformation as this world has never witnessed.

But in order to maintain their own power, these leaders determined to break down the influence of Jesus. His arraignment before the Sanhedrin, and an open condemnation of His teachings, would aid in effecting this; for the people still had great rever-

ence for their religious leaders. Whoever dared to condemn the rabbinical requirements, or attempt to lighten the burdens they had brought upon the people, was regarded as guilty, not only of blasphemy, but of treason.

On this ground the rabbis hoped to excite suspicion of Christ. They represented Him as trying to overthrow the established customs, thus causing division among the people, and preparing the way for complete subjugation by the Romans.

The Signs of the Times, June 20, 1900:

When Christ was upon the earth, the great mass of the people would have accepted Him had it not been that they were afraid of what the scribes and Pharisees might do. These leaders, sitting in Moses' seat, claiming to know God, saw that Christ was drawing the attention of the people from them. They determined to oppose His work, and, once started in the path of opposition, no evidence had any weight with them.

The wonderful works Christ did were denied. The gracious words which fell from His lips were misstated and misconstrued. By the priests and rulers the rejoicing shown because of His works of compassion and healing were regarded as a personal slight to themselves. The appeals which Christ made, appeals which were freighted with love, the conclusive arguments which He presented, only kindled fires of hatred in hearts that, once convicted, had refused the light. Christ came to His own, but His own received Him not.

He had to forsake Judea in order to preserve His life till the fullness of the time. "After these things," we read, "Jesus walked in Galilee; for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him." So will all act who choose to stand on the side of rebellion.

Those men demonstrated the solemn truth that there is not the slightest compatibility between the spirit of pride which seeks nothing but its own, and the spirit of humility which does not seek its own. The two can never abide together but, when brought into contact with each other, will repel each other. Their objectives are completely opposite from one another.

God's children who must be meek and lowly in order to work with a meek and lowly heavenly Father, need to understand whether their responses to what happens on the sports fields are a revelation of their humility, or a manifestation of their pride.

Of course, their state of humility should be so well developed that they pay not the least attention as to who wins what. Such will not even know what contests are in progress, nor will have the least disposition in themselves to discover what is going on.

But there are those who have not yet come all the way out of Babylon, the capital city of all those who seek their own, and they need to understand that any participation in sport, from being a mere spectator all the way through to world champion, is a cultivation of the spirit in them that seeks its own, and an unfitting of them to work with the meek and lowly angels.

By way of a practical example, let us suppose that a team of male or female champions in a sport in which you are interested, tours your country in a series of contests to see who are the best at the moment. The day comes for the first big game and you, in one way or another, are a spectator. Usually, you choose the side representing your country as the one you want to see win.

So the game begins, and your side establishes an early lead. It is at this point that you must stop and, looking completely away from the game, analyze your personal feelings, that is, make a study of the responses which have been generated in you as a result of this early success. What you will find within yourself should shock you. And what will you find if placed in the situation described here?

You will find that, at that moment, there is nothing your soul desires so much as to see your team, by seeking its own glory, crush the opposing side in humiliating defeat. When it does, you feel a satisfying glow filling your heart and mind. As certainly as you have these responses in this environment, so surely are you supportive of those procedures by which men who are not meek

and lowly in heart, seek to establish themselves in the highest places.

That is the really important point, which I hope that all of you can see. It is again, that, to applaud the efforts of your team to seek its own, is to approve of the objective, and the procedures used to achieve it. It is to declare that God's way of meekness and lowliness is inferior to man's way of using any method available and permitted by the rules, to seek after its own. It is the terrible case of human pride and self-exaltation, being installed in the place of divine humility and self-abnegation. It is precisely what Lucifer sought to do from the beginning of the great controversy until now.

Every time you pass through an experience such as this, there is strengthened the spirit of pride, so that you are increasingly unfitted to work with the humble angels. Let it be said again that only humble humanity can work with humble divinity. There is therefore the most earnest, deep soul-searching and putting away of pride in the lives of every one of us who is determined to be a worker during the Loud Cry period, and beyond into all eternity.

The Humility of Holy Angels

The humility of the holy angels is quite astonishing. Theirs is so great that, instead of being most joyful when they are accorded special privileges, they experience the greatest happiness when others are given the position. Consequently, their every moment is spent in working for the uplifting of others to positions above themselves.

A fine example of this was witnessed to by Sister White in her first vision in which she was taken on a tour of inspection of the glories of the New Jerusalem and the New Earth. In the course of this they approached the temple on Mount Zion which they were about to enter when Jesus informed them that only the 144,000 were privileged to enter this building. Here are her words:

Early Writings, p. 19:

And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, "Only the 144,000 enter this place," and we shouted "Alleluia."

No doubt it was with eager anticipation that Sister White and those with her looked forward to entering that glorious temple, until Jesus advised them that they could not. Only the 144,000 could enter there.

How did they react to this? Did they complain and grumble, murmur and criticize as ancient Israel so often did? Or did they politely, though unhappily acquiesce to the Master's decree?

No! they shouted, "Alleluia." They were just so happy for the 144,000 that they shouted out their gladness of heart. That is an example of the love which seeks not its own, but the other person's exaltation and happiness.

Could you imagine a football team shouting their ecstatic joy when the team opposing them had won the match. Such a response would be unthinkable. Any team behaving after that fashion would be held in contempt by both their opponents and their one time friends. It is no wonder that God's children are a peculiar people.

The humble God, the meek and lowly One is waiting for a humble humanity to make war in righteousness and thus bring destructive pride to its end forever. Ten thousand times ten thousands of humble angels do His bidding each with such humility that they shout "Alleluia," whenever a child of God is privileged, even if the blessing elevates the redeemed one above them.

What a work must yet be done in us before humble divinity will have a humble humanity with whom humble divinity can successfully work. When this is accomplished, how soon will the end come!

9. Pride or Humility: the Factors Involved

BECAUSE only a humble humanity can work with a humble divinity, it becomes critically important that we, like Moses, become the meekest of the meek, and the most loving of the loving. The high honor conferred by Heaven on those who achieve this condition, makes it very clear that the proud will not share heaven with Moses or anyone else.

But the achievement of humility such as is possessed by Christ, Moses,—who became the awesome Gabriel, the “mightiest of the Lord’s host,”—and the sinless angels, is not the result of chance. The fact that one has it, and others do not, is due to the outworking of a number of factors, over some of which we have control and over others we do not.

The ones over which we do not have control usually are those which have a negative or detrimental influence on our lives. It is left with us to recognize these for what they are, to understand what they are doing to us, and to meet them with responses which counterwork the evil working against us.

The better we understand the working of the forces of both good and evil for and against the acquirement of true humility, the better we will understand how to establish and develop the divine graces in our souls. At this stage, we will realize that we will have to really work at the task of becoming truly humble and loving.

Not a Works Program

But this cannot be achieved through a works program. The falsity and futility of this approach were powerfully impressed upon my mind through my observation of the attempt on the part of another well-meaning person to at least give the appearance of being meek and lowly in heart. This man made a set of rules for himself such as:

- Always hold the door open for the other person or persons;

- Never fight for one's rights;
- Never draw the attention of others to one's self;
- Always be prepared to do the menial tasks;
- Always come up smiling especially when persecuted and abused;
- ...and so on.

I have to say that he gave an excellent performance in carrying out his self-assigned program, for he was successful in a disciplined obedience of his rules to a very commendable level, but I found his act neither amusing nor attractive. It was so obviously artificial that it was unreal and actually, to a degree, repulsive.

Divine love and humility are both exceedingly beautiful and attractive, as is evidenced by the effect on men of Christ's transcending love and purest humility. Christ drew all men to himself by virtue of the divine graces within himself.

I am happy to report that, through the power of the gospel, the brother referred to above shed his repulsive, artificial robes of pseudo-righteousness, and has become a man from whom true love and humility shine forth in steady rays. Gentle, sweet, and loving, he now attracts men and women to the Saviour instead of repelling them. To his credit, it must be said that, while he tried to do the right thing in the wrong way, he really tried. He worked at the task with all the powers at his command until he learned how to seek the right thing in the right way. God honored his dedication by divorcing him from the faulty procedures, and teaching him the correct ones. The transformation was beautiful to behold.

Those of us who are seeking to be in Gabriel's company, will find out how to possess and manifest love and humility by studying the lives of those whose development of these graces was outstanding. I refer to Christ, Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist as excellent examples of these.

The Education of Moses in Egypt

Let us begin with Moses who is attributed as being the meekest man who ever lived according to the Scripture:

Numbers 12

³ Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.

The life of Moses may be divided into the following divisions:

1. From conception till birth;
2. From babyhood until his twelfth year;
3. From 12 till 40;
4. From 40 till 80; and
5. From 80 till 120.

Of these periods, the one from 12 until 40, was most conducive to the development of pride, during which years, Satan used factor after factor to establish in him the highest possible levels of self-exaltation. Just think of his situation as the years carried him through his youth into manhood.

He was appointed to be the absolute ruler of the most powerful nation on the earth at that time, which meant he would become the ruler of the world as soon as the reigning monarch died. As their future ruler, he was proudly upheld before the masses who love to have their own king. Surrounded by the pride of the people in him, he was powerfully influenced to take pride in himself.

It was a very heady, exalting, pride-inducing experience through which he must have passed from time to time, to stand in the finest apparel before, and elevated above a million or more adoring people all excitedly chanting their praises of him as the object of their admiration.

There have been many kings down through the centuries who have been weak, incompetent, abusive of the powers at their command, and cruel. These have been unworthy of the love and respect of their people, but it was not so with Moses.

He was a powerful man worthy of the admiration of his people. There was none either in Egypt or anywhere else in the entire world to equal him. This was true not only in his own time, but “in all ages” there has been no one to equal “his intellectual greatness.” Note very carefully the declaration and verification of these facts in the following statement:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer.

What a mighty man he must have been!

The Talents of Moses

I am impressed with his not specializing in one field of learning, skill, and achievement. Instead, his was a broad coverage of arts and sciences. He was pre-eminent as a historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator.

1. HISTORIAN

As a historian, he provides us with the only accurate and reliable record of the origin of this earth and its peoples. While the so-called wise men of the world indulge in foolish speculation about life forming of its own accord over elongated periods of millions of years, Moses' clear exposition reveals the marvelous working of the power of God calling the earth and all there is upon it into existence.

While all other historians flounder around in their efforts at attempting to find the fountain head of the human species, Moses identified it in Eden fresh from the Creator's handiwork. Thence he traces the stream of multiplying human life through the patriarchal period down to the place where Israel was about to enter the Promised Land, correctly identifying those who were loyal to

their Creator, and those who were not, and so on down to the end of his own life.

His contribution to the historical records of early human life fills the first five books of the Bible, which could quite correctly be titled, *The Historical Works of Moses, the Greatest Historian Who Ever Lived.*

There have been many great worldly historians since that time, but none has arisen in this field with the greatness of Moses, a truth which raises the question as to what makes one greater as a chronicler of human history than another?

Moses stands without a peer in this regard as a recorder of human life because first of all his work is completely free from error, a level of accuracy achieved only by those who receive their information by divine inspiration. Secondly, his interpretation of the events surveyed by him was also correct and free from bias, for the same reason.

This was a highly commendable achievement, for the writers of history generally produce very prejudiced accounts of what took place. The ancient Egyptians went so far as to obliterate all records of previous dynasties while replacing them with exaggerated accounts of their own glorious achievements. We can be sure that Moses' high level of integrity would keep him from participating in such practices.

Not only was Moses superior to worldly men in this field but he also surpassed all Christian historians as well.

2. POET

But he was also a poet who stood among men without a peer. So we ask what is it that sets apart the greatest poetry from all other?

There is much which can be said about what poetry is or is not. One definition among others however is that poetry is an art form intended as the means of expressing great truths and intense emotions in the most commanding possible way. Therefore, the

truly great poets themselves must possess powerful intellects by which they have explored the grandest truths, and combined this with the artistry and the power to express those truths in a way which will successfully inspire, encourage, comfort, and bless the ones to whom the poetry is recited.

One of the finest such sublime expressions of human experience is called “The Song of Moses,” for it was composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by that mighty man upon Israel’s deliverance from the Egyptian soldiers who perished in the Red Sea. Sister White describes it as:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 288:

...a triumphant anthem of thanksgiving, the earliest and one of the most sublime that are known to man.

That glorious work of poetic art will be sung by the 144,000 when they have gained the final victory over the last great confederacy of Satan’s forces. It will then be called:

The Great Controversy, p. 649:

...the song of Moses and the Lamb a song of deliverance.

That this poetry possessed the power to inspire the lofty, sublime, and inspiring emotions which are to be found in truly great poetry, is attested to in these words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 289:

This song and the great deliverance which it commemorates, made an impression never to be effaced from the memory of the Hebrew people. From age to age it was echoed by the prophets and singers of Israel, testifying that Jehovah is the strength and deliverance of those who trust in Him.

That song does not belong to the Jewish people alone. It points forward to the destruction of all the foes of righteousness and the final victory of the Israel of God. The prophet of Patmos beholds the white-robed multitude that have...

Revelation 15

² ...gotten the victory, [standing] on the sea of glass mingled with fire,...having the harps of God.

³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

This poem is as timeless as truth itself, and is in fact truth in itself. Therefore, it can never pass away. It was because the Holy Spirit had implanted within Moses a great character of righteousness, that he could be inspired to produce such immortal, powerful, and elevating expressions of light and truth that he is described by Inspiration as being in all ages a poet without a peer.

3. PHILOSOPHER

But this is not all. He was also a philosopher without a peer. A philosopher by definition is one who seeks reason and truth by thinking and meditation. Generally speaking, philosophers are proud men who never come to the knowledge of the truth, for they spurn the Source of light in favor of themselves occupying that position.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 273:

The philosopher turns aside from the light of salvation, because it puts his proud theories to shame, the worldling refuses to receive it, because it would separate him from his earthly idols. Paul saw that the character of Christ must be understood before men could love Him or view the cross with the eye of faith. Here must begin that study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In the light of the cross alone can the true value of the human soul be estimated.

But, while philosophers generally are the proudest of the proud, there are some who are among the meekest of the meek. They are those who realize that men have no light that is inherently theirs, but that all the true light which they do have is given them from above.

Education, p. 73:

Through Christ had been communicated every ray of divine light that had ever reached our fallen world. It was He who had spoken through everyone that throughout the ages had declared

God's word to man. Of Him all the excellences manifest in the earth's greatest and noblest souls were reflections.

The purity and beneficence of Joseph, the faith and meekness and long-suffering of Moses, the steadfastness of Elisha, the noble integrity and firmness of Daniel, the ardor and self-sacrifice of Paul, the mental and spiritual power manifest in all these men, and in all others who had ever dwelt on the earth, were but gleams from the shining of His glory. In Him was found the perfect ideal.

When men seek reason and truth by thinking over the divine revelations, and reasoning from these under the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit, they are true philosophers. In reality, every genuine Christian who receives light, not from himself, but from above through God's appointed channels, is in fact a true philosopher. It is into this class that Moses, the greatest philosopher of all time, must be placed.

As long as the worldly philosophers reject the light of saving truth in favor of their own devisings, they are absolutely certain to develop pride in themselves to a fearful level. One case which illustrates and confirms this point is that of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon.

He was quite a philosopher who spent a great deal of time thinking and reasoning about the play and counter-play of human life, of the rise and fall of nations, and how he might avoid the effects of those forces which bring proud monarchies down from their lofty pinnacles of vaunted greatness to shattered ruins. He wanted to see how he could ensure that his kingdom would never pass away as had others before him.

In His boundless mercy, to save him from becoming incurably proud, God gave the haughty potentate a lesson in true philosophic reasoning. In the wonderful dream of the great image and of the stone which shattered it, He demonstrated to the world ruler how to reason from cause to effect and thus be a true philosopher, with the capacity to obtain a reliable knowledge of the future.

It was an incredibly humbling experience for the king who was so mightily moved by the truths revealed, that he actually bowed low before the lowly captive from Judah.

So it will ever be that a revelation of the Almighty and His enduring truth will humble the proud philosopher, and will fill him with humility. Such was the experience of Moses of which factor in his life, I shall have more to say later. For now, we will pass on with the observation that great philosophers are usually very, very proud people, and the pressure to be one must have rested its weight very heavily on Moses during his twenty-eight years of life in the Egyptian, royal court.

4. MILITARY COMMANDER

Next let us consider the pressure to be filled with pride which was exerted on him as the eminently successful Commander-in-Chief of the then mightiest army on the earth. Once again, let it not be forgotten, that in this field just as in the others we have considered, Moses stands above the great men of all ages as a general of armies.

And there have been some very great generals. To name but a few of them, here are some examples with no attempt being made to compare each one with the others in an effort designed to sort the list in any order of greatness.

I think of Joshua who led Israel in the war which gave Canaan to the Jewish people. Then there was David...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 672:

...a brave general, and had proved himself a wise and successful warrior.

For the most part these were humble men who recognized that God was the Source of their success, that while they believed in the Lord, and strictly obeyed His commands, success was guaranteed. They understood and acted upon the principles laid down in the following paragraph:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey him.

These two mighty men are not even considered to be among the great commanders of history by those worldly philosophers who do not know God. Historians allocate other men to the hall of fame—Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, the Duke of Wellington, George Washington, Irwin Rommel, Bernard Montgomery, and Dwight Eisenhower, to name but a few.

These men, it is true, had much more power at their command than did the generals of Moses' time and earlier. The armies became larger and still larger, and the weaponry more and more destructive as the centuries rolled by, but this did not make things easier for the generals. Mistakes and misjudgments served to result in fearful losses threatening utter defeat.

If a general plans and executes a successful military campaign, all the glory is attributed to him. He is praised and honored, while God is scarcely thought of and only dutifully mentioned. The general is paraded through the main streets of his country's most important cities; the bands are playing; the people are dancing; great excitement charges the air; and all the attention is fixed on the great general at the center of it all.

What a tremendously intense stimulation of the spirit of pride that would be! He would be a rare person indeed who could resist such pressure and remain a truly humble man unaffected by the nation's adulation. Nor am I saying that during the period when Moses was the nation's hero, and he was subjected to all these expressions of praise and honor, that he was able to survive it all unscathed. It was not while he was in Egypt that he was de-

scribed as being the world's meekest man. That accolade was not conferred on him until well over forty years later.

We are not able to estimate to what extent pride had developed in Moses during those twenty-eight years, but we must not expect that he emerged from that period untouched by its deadly influence. It was during the forty-year period which followed that he experienced deliverance from much pride.

Later when he spent a total of eighty days in God's personal presence in the mountaintop, and there beheld the actual glory of God, that the work of making him the meekest man who ever lived was further advanced. Various factors combined over the years to develop in him the love and humility which made him so great, and we will examine these in turn so that we can learn how to be filled with these same attributes.

But firstly, we need to finish our consideration of the list of those qualities wherein he stood without a peer above the men of all ages. So far we have looked at Moses as historian, poet, philosopher, and general of armies. Now it is time to look at him as the peerless legislator, or law maker.

5. LEGISLATOR

Of course, the greatest period of his law making was during his leadership of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land, but at this stage in our study, we are interested in any way in which the responsibility of framing laws for the kingdom of Egypt would have tempted him to be proud.

We do not know to what extent he participated in this work, but we do know that proud rulers make their laws to favor the rich and oppress the poor. As a member of the royal family, and therefore of the ruling class, Moses would have been expected to at least uphold the laws, even if he had had no part in the making of them.

In general, legislators have always been known to be a proud class of people, and Moses, by virtue of his belonging to this class

and of his constant association with such people, would in this respect be subjected to powerful influences designed by the devil to produce great, destructive pride in Moses.

To really appreciate how powerful were the forces working to generate pride in Moses, we only have to consider the fate of other beings who were endowed as was Moses with great power and high position.

One name which springs quickly to our attention is that of Solomon. The son of David and Bathsheba, he was granted the prayer to be blessed with great wisdom so that he might justly and unselfishly serve God and His people. Like Moses, he was endowed with tremendous intellectual might, was a great legislator, but was not a military general, for his father had subdued his enemies. The result was that his was a peaceful reign which promised to make a wonderful beginning into a marvelous future. Sad to relate, however, he failed to preserve his humility, and became instead an oppressive despot:

The Signs of the Times, December 30, 1880:

From the wisest of the rulers, Solomon became a despot. Satan triumphed as this man, who had thrice been called the beloved of his God, became a slave of passion, and sacrificed his integrity to the bewitching power of woman.

Likewise King Saul, who was so humble when called to the throne, lost this grace in exchange for the dreadful evil of self-exaltation when he came into possession of power and riches.

These early crowned rulers of God's people, proved that riches, power, and great honor are much more difficult for men and angels to handle, than are the humble circumstances which are the lot of most people. Only the self-confident who are riding toward a fall anyway, would ever claim that they could handle riches, power, fame, and honor just as well as they could cope with poverty and deprivation.

The records of history reveal an ever repeating pattern of cause and effect in the rise and fall of world powers. The time comes when a new movement is given birth and proceeds by vigorous warfare to establish itself in whatever territory it can conquer.

The rise of the Romans to world dominion is an illustration of these forces at work. In the early stages, there is much privation as the troops endure hardship for the sake of the rich rewards to be gained when the fighting is ended. Then success brings mounting pride, which is further aggravated by a sense of invincibility, which is expressed in wanton dissipation, and inordinate gratification of lustful appetites, such as marked life in Rome at the height of her power, and ruined the life of Solomon.

But there was one who was far more gifted than were either Solomon or Moses, who showed himself unwilling to unselfishly handle great power, fabulous riches, the adoration of his fellows, and the blessing of God. His name was Lucifer. Endowed with gifts of every kind above that of his fellows, he began to see all things as coming from himself instead of from the true Source of all wealth and power. Thus pride developed in him until it destroyed him.

When one considers the terrifying casualty list of those who have begun well, but who, when invested with rich gifts provided them that they might serve God and their fellows more effectively, one marvels that Moses could occupy so high a position for so long, immersed in an atmosphere seething with pride, and emerge from it to become the meekest of the meek, the most loving of the loving. Viewed in this light, he becomes an even more remarkable person.

As Israel marched from Egypt to the Promised Land, so we today are proceeding from spiritual bondage to the heavenly Canaan, but only those shall enter there who have become the humblest people on the earth. Pride finds no vacant places for itself in heaven.

Therefore, our most important work today is to learn from Moses and others how to become the meekest persons on the earth and thus become fit for heaven.



10. Influences Promoting Humility

Meditation

We have been taught the great truth that the potential for the virtually unlimited development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers is implanted by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of every child born-again at conception or soon after. This is the great light of which every parent will take the fullest advantage provided he has received the message on child salvation and truly and enthusiastically believes and applies it.

Yet history provides us with only a few specific examples of parents who, by making the very most of this wonderful opportunity, have produced children of extraordinary capacities for service to God and humanity, and great stability of character.

It would definitely appear that Moses' parents were one such couple as is evidenced by the marvelous heights to which he ascended. What the application of these principles can do for one person, it can do for all the rest. Imagine then what a powerful church God would have on earth when every member was equal to Daniel and Moses for the same reasons! How swiftly then God's work on earth would have been finished!

IN OUR very great desire to learn what true humility is, and how to become endowed with it, we have focused our attention on the life of Moses whom the Holy Bible declares to have been the meekest man ever to have lived on this earth. We would naturally conclude that he would be the meekest man among all other men except for Christ, who is preeminent above all men in all things as are also the Everlasting Father and the Holy Spirit. But among all earthlings, Moses was the meekest.

Not the Work of a Moment

To become that was not the work of a moment, for it takes time, effort, self-sacrifice, faith in God and His Word, the grace of God, and much more, to build a righteous, noble character, in which great humility is a distinguishing feature. This is a realization which seems to dawn with reluctance on our minds, but, unless it does penetrate the long-established barriers against true reformation, we shall be lost. Note these words which were sent to awaken us to our responsibilities:

Messages to Young People, p. 99:

Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.

Paul was acutely aware of each person's need to enter right into this work of self-examination. Said he:

2 Corinthians 13

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves.

Recognizing the Temptation

In this work of heart-searching, each person under the training of the Holy Spirit, must develop the capacity to accurately identify and resolutely deny all those influences which are conducive to the development of pride on the one hand, and which therefore retard the establishment and cultivation of humility on the other.

Jesus realized over and over that His disciples were experiencing serious difficulty because they had not acquired the ability to correctly evaluate the true character of the forces working against them. When He prayed for them, as He so frequently did, He kept this problem very much in mind. One such occasion when He prayed for them with this burden upon Him, was after the feeding of the multitude when the people conspired under the leadership of the disciples to take Him by force and make Him king against His will:

The Desire of Ages, p. 379:

When left alone, Jesus "went up into a mountain apart to pray." For hours He continued pleading with God. Not for himself but for men were those prayers. He prayed for power to reveal to

men the divine character of His mission, that Satan might not blind their understanding and pervert their judgment. The Saviour knew that His days of personal ministry on earth were nearly ended, and that few would receive Him as their Redeemer.

In travail and conflict of soul He prayed for His disciples. They were to be grievously tried. Their long-cherished hopes, based on a popular delusion, were to be disappointed in a most painful and humiliating manner. In the place of His exaltation to the throne of David they were to witness His crucifixion. This was to be indeed His true coronation. But they did not discern this, and in consequence strong temptations would come to them, which it would be difficult for them to recognize as temptations. Without the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind and enlarge the comprehension the faith of the disciples would fail.

It was painful to Jesus that their conceptions of His kingdom were, to so great a degree, limited to worldly aggrandizement and honor. For them the burden was heavy upon His heart, and He poured out His supplications with bitter agony and tears.

Note Christ's analysis of the plight of those men:

But they did not discern this, and in consequence strong temptations would come to them, which it would be difficult for them to recognize as temptations.

As we shall learn as we proceed, one of the positive factors in the development of Moses' humility lay in the fact that he eventually came to the place where he was able to see the real character of the temptations hurled at him, even as Christ was never deceived as to what was the real character of the multitude of subtle inducements to sin which Satan brought to bear upon Him.

We too must be able to unmask sin, the great deceiver, especially since having the capacity to do so is essential to the development of true humility. Our interest in Moses therefore, is concerned among other things, with the factors in his life by which he attained to such humility as to make him so beloved in heaven. Let it never be forgotten that:

Matthew 5

⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

They shall also be blessed with all the intellectual, spiritual, and moral qualities available to mankind as is evident from Moses' experience.

The Preservation of Moses in Egypt

In the last chapter, we looked at that period of his life which was spent in the royal courts of Egypt as the heir to the wealth and power of that mighty nation. Although during that interval of time he did not reach the pinnacle of his greatness, he certainly excelled in all those abilities and capacities so much admired by his subjects, that he faced the danger of becoming highly exalted as was Lucifer before him. But, even then, before he had received the transforming reformation through which he passed as a shepherd in Midian, he was preserved from being swept away by pride in his own greatness.

Without question, this is a most remarkable preservation of a man from being lifted up to his own destruction, and it was also salvation from terrible loss to the cause of God, at a time when the Almighty needed a person with extraordinary abilities, unimpeachable integrity, flawless humility, dauntless courage, living faith, and immovable determination to execute God's holy will.

In Moses was to be found all these qualities and more, which is astonishing enough had all this been achieved under ideal conditions. But it was under the worst conditions then existing that it was achieved.

Moses was taken into Egypt as a twelve-year old boy now placed beyond the reach of his parent's daily influence for the next twenty-eight years. The mind of one so young is still highly impressionable, and the question is: In what spiritual and mental condition would he emerge from that deadly environment?

He came forth at the other end filled with power, established in righteousness, and absolutely loyal to the cause of God. It is one

of the mightiest vindications of the saving power of the gospel ever witnessed in history. What Christian parents could be found who would not desire the same glorious outcome for their children? Indeed what Christian could be found who would not desire the same achievements for himself?

In considering the remarkable preservation of Moses from becoming the victim of deadly pride and its attendant self-exaltation, I am not saying that he emerged from the period completely unscathed, for this would be untrue. At the end of those forty years, he had much to unlearn, and it required a further forty years to accomplish this.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king’s grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.

Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

The incredible struggle described here took place after he had fled from Egypt, and of this we will study more later. For now we are engaged in a search for the factors which enabled him to emerge from his stay in Egypt without being overcome by pride.

The Good Influences

So what were those factors which were sufficient to preserve him through the tremendous pressure of temptation he was compelled to bear while in Egypt? To find the answers, we will firstly consider the influences which molded his life from his conception until his birth.

Moses was the youngest of the three children born to Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi. Aaron, as the following statement verifies, was three years older than Moses.

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 176:

The Lord had informed Moses that Aaron, his brother three years older than himself, would come forth to meet him, and when he should see him, would be glad.

This means that when Moses was placed in the ark of rushes, his brother Aaron was between three and four years of age, and much too young to guard his junior brother. But Miriam was old enough to do so with self-control and tact as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382:

Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people.

My search through the inspired writings has failed to find any details of how old Miriam was in relation to her two younger brothers. I would think from her ability under the Lord's guidance to handle the crisis occasioned by the discovery of the infant sailor, that she could have been in her late childhood or early teens.

Some of you at least may be wondering why I am so interested in the relative ages of these three children. It is very important that we do have this information correct, for it throws light on the reasons for Moses' greatness and his power to withstand the corruptions of Egypt, in contrast to the weakness of Aaron as revealed when at Mount Sinai the people demanded the making of the golden calf, and the evil spirit of jealousy manifested by Miriam over Moses' marriage to Zipporah, as it is written, firstly of Aaron, and then of Miriam:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 316-317:

Such a crisis demanded a man of firmness, decision, and unflinching courage; one who held the honor of God above popular favor, personal safety, or life itself.

But the present leader of Israel was not of this character. Aaron feebly remonstrated with the people, but his wavering and timidity at the critical moment only rendered them the more determined. The tumult increased. A blind, unreasoning frenzy seemed to take possession of the multitude. There were some who remained true to their covenant with God, but the greater part of the people joined in the apostasy. A few who ventured to denounce the proposed image making as idolatry, were set upon and roughly treated, and in the confusion and excitement they finally lost their lives.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 382:

At Hazeroth, the next encampment after leaving Taberah, a still more bitter trial awaited Moses. Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews. "I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (*Micah* 6:4), are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah.

Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people. Richly endowed with the gifts of poetry and music, Miriam had led the women of Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron. But the same evil that first brought discord in heaven sprang up in the heart of this woman of Israel, and she did not fail to find sympathizer in her dissatisfaction.

Never do we find words such as these used to describe either Moses' character or behavior. The charge laid against Miriam is the most serious that can be laid against anyone, for her sin was

the same as that which sprang up in the heart of the first great apostate.

1. DILIGENT TRAINING

What factors then caused the marked differences between the junior members of this family? Here is a first clue. His mother was far more diligent in Moses' training than she was in respect to the older two.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 243-244:

God had heard the mother's prayers; her faith had been rewarded. It was with deep gratitude that she entered upon her now safe and happy task. She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God.

All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children. She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence. She showed him the folly and sin of idolatry, and early taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency.

2. CHILD SALVATION

Priceless as this training was, it alone could not produce a man as great as Moses was. Do you remember what we learned of the intellectual might of Moses:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages.

His superior intellectual greatness was not merely such by comparison with his contemporaries. It would also have to include comparison with the greatest minds among those who lived before the flood when men were giants indeed, and would have to include superiority over Daniel and his three friends who stand

out ten times better than the best in the world of their time. Of Daniel it is written:

The Sanctified Life, p. 46-47:

The wisdom which God had imparted to him was as far superior to the wisdom of the great men of the world as the light of the sun shining in the heavens at noonday is brighter than the feeblest star.

What a comparison! What an effort Inspiration has gone to in order to impart to us some idea of the greatness of the intellectual power God imparts to His people. It is very important though that we never lose sight of the fact that these awesome powers are not given to men and women specially chosen by God to be recipients of His personal favor, but are the product of inviolable laws.

This means that, no matter who the person may be, if the appropriate law has been established as an operating force in that person's life, certain entirely predictable results are guaranteed to follow. One such law is that if the sin master has been eliminated at the moment of conception, or very soon thereafter, and has been replaced by the divine nature, there will be no impairment of the mind of the fortunate little one within whom this miracle of the new birth has taken place.

We can say this with the utmost confidence of being correct in this teaching, for we know that sin is the destroyer of everything it touches. Therefore, if there is no sinfulness present as in the case of the newly conceived who are born-again, there will be no damage done. On the other hand, just look at what its touch has done to the earth, and to those dwelling thereon!

It seems that, down through history, very few have grasped this truth and taken advantage of it, but those who have, have experienced wonderful results. In some cases, the miracle has taken place as the result of clear teaching on the subject. The principles involved in achieving this blessing have been taught by a competent gospel teacher, have been understood by at least some to

whom the instruction has been given, and have been put into effect by obedient people blessed with a shining faith. Truly wonderful have been the results as demonstrated by the lives of such men as Moses and Daniel.

But in other cases, the new-birth seems to happen without the recipients being quite sure how it came upon them or when or where, even though human instrumentalities are always involved to some extent or the other. This is clearly brought out in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 172:

The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes, or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted.

By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher.

Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.

Whether someone came to Amram and Jochebed and spelled out the message of child salvation step by step in detail, or whether they took the necessary steps without being able to name the time or the place when and where the miracle occurred, we do not know, for it has not been revealed.

But from the information contained in the sacred writings, we are able to put together quite an accurate picture of what eventu-

ated. Miriam and Aaron, by being born before the royal edict decreeing that all male children be slain at birth, did not enter the world facing the same terrible danger which attended Moses' prospective arrival. It is a law of Christian life that when the believer faces the greatest danger, his soul is most drawn out in prayer for deliverance. The greater the need, the longer and more earnestly will he pray. This was true even of Christ when He was upon earth as a man.

No doubt, Moses' parents were not perfectly sure just what, in every detail, they were to pray for, and so cast the entire problem on to their all-wise Problem-solver, who, accepting their trust, their great earnestness, their powerful faith, and the purity of their purpose, did for them that which they most desired—the sanctification of their as yet unborn babe.

Thus Moses escaped the impairment of his intellectual powers which is suffered by all the rest of us who have not been born again at conception. The fact that “his intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages,” is clear proof that he was born again from conception. So damaging is the presence of sin as in the cases of those who have not been born again, that the least person born with this blessing is markedly superior to anyone without it. Therefore, if Moses had not been born again from his conception, he could never have been greater than the great men of all ages.⁸

3. CLOSE COMMUNION WITH GOD

Though we will not study the point in detail now, I will mention it in passing. Another mighty factor made an awesome contribution to the elevation of Moses to intellectual greatness and deep humility superior to all others. It was his extremely close communion with God with whom he talked face to face. I think in particular of those eighty days spent in God's presence on the mountain. He would have experienced a tremendous strengthening of

⁸ See the book, *Child Salvation*, by F. T. Wright.

every physical, mental, and spiritual faculty including his humility during those audiences with the Most High.

4. INWARD PURITY

But intellectual greatness alone was insufficient to fit him to remain humble and true during all those years in Egypt. The intellectually great are usually proud people, whereas what God needed in Egypt was a man in whom was combined intellectual greatness and deep humility. Whence would this humility come?

The answer is not difficult to come by. Those who are truly born-again from conception or soon after, escape not only the progressive impairment of the intellectual powers, but also escape the presence within them of the evil spiritual powers as well. One of those evils is the spirit of pride, which feeds on everything which exalts selfishness. Unexpelled pride will always grow vigorously as the evil tree of pride. Growth will only bring more of the same.

But into the truly born-again has been installed the lovely nature of Christ, one of the chief attributes of which is humility. Day by day, this beautiful plant grows larger and increases in beauty. It maintains its purity by rejecting that which is incompatible with itself and thus remains unmoved by that which leads others to self-exaltation.

So it was that Moses acquired from his earliest moments the lovely quality of humility which enabled him to preserve his loyalty to God under the severest of temptations. Even so, as will be brought to light in the next chapter, there was some pride in him needing removal after he left Egypt.

An Example for Us

Thus in the life of Moses we see something so far of the way humility is to be acquired, for the same laws which operated in Moses' life, still operate today.

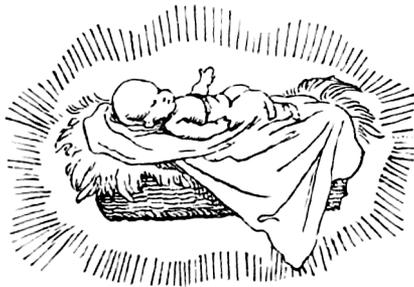
Any person, seeing a measure of the fearful impairment of his intellectual, moral, and physical faculties due to his not being

born-again, may lament that he has been thus deprived of so much. Worse still, he may feel so discouraged by what appears to him to be the limited opportunities for becoming truly humble, that he could give up in despair.

Let all such be of good cheer, for there is no real limit to what may be achieved. Let us instead rejoice in the knowledge that those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, have in them the gift of humility. With strong confidence, let all such become closely acquainted with the heavenly occupant within him while cultivating the new life with all diligence. Then he will join the ranks of those whom heaven regards as great—the truly humble.

The Desire of Ages, p. 512:

Even the babe in its mother's arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we will live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mold our little ones, even from their earliest moments.



11. The Early Education of Moses

IN THE last chapter, it was established that Moses was born again from the moment of his conception or very soon thereafter. Thus he was endowed with the new divine spirit whose very nature is humility, having...

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It might be presumed that once this blessing was conferred on the unborn child, there would be nothing more which could either be desired or needed, and that the parents could now sit back, relaxed in the satisfaction of believing that nothing now could go wrong. After all, does not a good tree bring forth only good fruit?

This type of reasoning is far from the case, for the tiny capsule of life will, at this stage, absorb whatever information is supplied to it, whether good or bad. It just simply has not learned to distinguish between the two. It therefore depends on its parents to unerringly guide it through these trackless waters, firstly during its prenatal days, and then thereafter.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 561-562:

And it was not enough that the promised child should receive a good legacy from the parents. This must be followed by careful training, and the formation of right habits. God directed that the future judge and deliverer of Israel [Samson] should be trained to strict temperance from infancy. He was to be a Nazarite from his birth, thus being placed under a perpetual prohibition against the use of wine or strong drink. The lessons of temperance, self-denial, and self-control are to be taught to children even from babyhood.

So then, once Moses was born again in his mother's womb, the serious task of supplying him with the best possible influences under the circumstances was commenced by his mother in particular. She must have had some knowledge of the wonderful power

of prenatal influence in order to have taken advantage of it as she did. That she did is evidenced by the results achieved in the character development of her third child, the future leader of Israel.

Within her during the prenatal period of Moses, was the very best student a Christian mother can possibly have—a child confined at all times to the classroom, but with a mind uncluttered with error, and very, very eager to learn. How unfortunate that parents regard this vital period as having no special value or importance, when it is their privilege and opportunity to make the absolute most of it.

During this period, every emotion experienced by the mother is likewise experienced by the unborn, who is powerfully influenced to respond in the same way as its parent does. If the mother is of a rebellious spirit, this will soon be developed in the unborn, while, if the mother exhibits the sweet, submissive nature of one who has the new life implanted within, the babe will absorb this same spirit. These will so mold the little one for good or evil that it will shape his entire after life.

This truth is demonstrated in the prenatal influences which were brought to bear on the unborn Moses. Of his godly parents it is written:

Hebrews 11

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

There were two mighty influences which emanated from the lives of Amram and Jochebed around the time Moses was born and thereafter, and they were faith and courage. They were therefore not afraid of the king's command and did not deliver him up to be slain, but carefully concealed him for the first three months of his life.

Here is another indication that he was born again, for he must have kept silent at his parents' command whenever necessary

during that period of time. This level of control of a parent over a child less than three months old would be possible only when the child possessed the spirit of trusting, submissive obedience. A rebellious infant would certainly have lost its life in such a situation.

So, the parents of Moses were full of faith and courage, yet they were not defiant of the king, nor did they sit back and do nothing, while leaving everything to God, but took whatever steps they could without committing sin to keep their precious little one safely hidden from view. They worked on the principle taught by Christ and illustrated in the resurrection of Lazarus:

The Desire of Ages, p. 535:

John 11

³⁹ Take away the stone.

Christ could have commanded the stone to remove, and it would have obeyed His voice. He could have bidden the angels who were close by His side to do this. At His bidding, invisible hands would have removed the stone. But it was to be taken away by human hands.

Thus Christ would show that humanity is to cooperate with divinity. What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man's aid. He strengthens him, cooperating with him as he uses the powers and capabilities given him.

The problem many face is knowing just which part he is to do, and which he is to leave to God. Men, even those who are well-intentioned Christians, have erred terribly by taking upon themselves work which they should have left God alone to do.

One of the most obvious cases was Abram's and Sarai's attempt to bring forth the child of promise by producing Ishmael. Then there was Rebekah's and Jacob's taking steps to ensure that the birthright fell on Jacob and not on Esau. Later came Moses' intervention between a Jew and an Egyptian for the purpose of starting the war which was to liberate Israel.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone.

Our Work and God's Work

But each of these were zealous for the cause of God, and did what human power could do. Wherein then did they incur the divine disapproval? How shall we know that what appears to be our part is in fact the very work which man cannot do, but must leave for God to do? How shall we know that we are to build a tiny boat of rushes, when the child is three month's old?

What is needed in the first instance is an infallible rule which can be very simply applied and here it is:

Any part man is to play must never involve the breaking of the law. If commandment-breaking is a part of the procedure, then it must be automatically rejected.

Look over each of the examples quoted above and it will quickly be seen that law-breaking was involved in each case.

To do what he thought a man ought to do, Abraham had to commit adultery; Rebekah and Jacob had to practice deception; and Moses had to murder. So it will be found with every instance where men have taken God's work upon themselves.

But, if the work should involve the practice of no known transgression, we still need to check the situation very carefully. Begin by establishing that God is the Problem-solver in actual fact. Ask Him to tell you what you are to do, and when a plan forms in your mind, then give it back to Him, to be given up or carried through as His providence shall indicate.⁹

⁹ These procedures are spelled out in detail in the book, *Entering into God's Sabbath Rest* by F. T. Wright.

Those are the procedures which Moses' parents must have followed through with meticulous care so that they did their part, God attended to His, and perfect success was the outcome. Humbly they approached God with their problem, in response to which God worked a miracle of concealment made possible by their living faith in their heavenly Father.

God as the Problem Solver

When at the end of the three month period it was no longer possible to conceal the child, a fresh solution was required. You can be sure the idea of floating the lusty youngster on the Nile did not come from Amram or Jochebed. For one thing, the Nile is famous for its man-eating crocodiles; for another, anyone could come down and find the baby with disastrous possibilities.

What they would have done would have been to have presented the growing problem to the Lord, who would have given them the solution of committing him to a tiny boat ride on the river. They would then have given the plan back to the Lord to be carried through or given up as His providence indicated. When it became clear that the author of the plan was the great Problem-solver, faith and courage spurred them to action. Still unafraid of the king's decree, they proceeded to build the little craft.

That was their part of the deal, that which they could do, while the Lord provided the protection and guidance which determined just where the launching would take place. This the parents did not have the power to do, nor could they arrange the rendezvous with the princess.

Thus baby Moses was surrounded with faith, and courage, and certainly with humility which gave him the comforting assurance that his parents, knowing very well what, under God's guidance, they were doing, were in command of the situation. Parents represent God to their children who gain their first and most lasting impressions of God's character from the character exhibited by their mothers and fathers.

If the parents are unsure of themselves and approach a problem with uncertainty as to what should be done for the best, trying first one course of action after another, the perceptive little ones sense this. Their response is naturally one in which confidence in both God and their parents will be lacking.

A child needs parents who are so connected to God as their infallible Problem-solver, that they know what to do in every step in life. The little ones will develop great faith in the marvelous competence of God as their personal Problem-solver even from their earliest moments.

A Loving, Heavenly Father

Again, if the rulers in the family govern by forceful means, the children will see our gracious, loving heavenly Father as an exacting, intolerant, despotic ruler just waiting for them to make a mistake so He can punish them.

On the other hand, if the fathers and mothers truly love each other and their children from hearts imbued with the lovely character of Jesus, they will give a very different representation of the Eternal One.

In the case of Moses, there was for him the blessing of parent's strong in faith, fragrant with love, beautiful in their humility, gracious in their submissive obedience, and fearless in their gentle refusal to obey the king's command. It is no wonder that he grew to be the mighty man he became when both his prenatal and postnatal environments were charged with such living power.

The Necessity of the New Birth

Let me remind you though that, valuable a factor as was the training provided by his environment, it would all have been worse than wasted if he had not been cleansed from the old carnal mind, the sin master, and filled with the new life which is the divine nature.

We must never permit ourselves to lose sight of the balance required here, as is illustrated by the thorn bush and the good tree.

No matter how desirable the environment might be, it will never change a thorn bush into an apple tree. First, the thorn bush must be rooted out and replaced by another and opposite kind of tree, the apple tree. Then and only then will the favorable and desirable result be achieved when the good environment is introduced. Otherwise, the end product will only be a bigger and thornier thorn bush.

In like manner, no matter how excellent, alive, and pure the training of a child might be, if that child is not born again, the effort expended is worse than wasted. This is why unregenerate children who have been subjected to a good Christian education are often worse than those who have had neither the rebirth nor a Christian environment.

Moses fortunately had both, for he was born of parents who themselves were born again, and who knew how to establish the same experience in this child destined to true greatness. They also understood how to train their precious charge so as to bring out the very best in his new nature. It was because of this very early training that Moses never feared the face of man, yet became the meekest man who ever lived.

The Work of a Mother

Amram's forced working for long hours as a slave every day imposed on Jochebed the chief responsibility for the training of their precious son who would grow up to be the mighty leader of Israel. It is usual for the mother to be the principal person doing this work in the home.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 372:

Especially does responsibility rest upon the mother. She, by whose lifeblood the child is nourished and its physical frame built up, imparts to it also mental and spiritual influences that tend to the shaping of mind and character.

It was Jochebed, the Hebrew mother, who, strong in faith, was "not afraid of the king's commandment" (*Hebrews 11:23*), of whom was born Moses, the deliverer of Israel.

It was Hannah, the woman of prayer and self-sacrifice and heavenly inspiration, who gave birth to Samuel, the heaven-instructed child, the incorruptible judge, the founder of Israel's sacred schools.

It was Elizabeth the kinswoman and kindred spirit of Mary of Nazareth, who was the mother of the Saviour's herald.

The intensive training in love, faith, and humility, and other Christian graces which established the foundations of Moses character, were followed with about twelve more years of even greater educational effort on his behalf, of the same quality by the same teacher—his devoted mother.

Up until his adoption by the Egyptian princess, his education was conducted with serious difficulty due to the necessity of keeping him securely hidden, but once the Hebrew mother was given the role of nurse by the princess, and enjoyed the royal protection, she was free to concentrate her time and attention on the baby now safely in her loving care.

Spurred on by the knowledge that her child's life had been spared so that he might accomplish a special work for the Lord, and knowing she must soon surrender him to life in the sumptuous court where all was conducive to the development of pride and destructive to humility, she devoted her best efforts to the task. Moses under her educational work truly received the blessed quality of humility.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 243-244:

God had heard the mother's prayers; her faith had been rewarded. It was with deep gratitude that she entered upon her now safe and happy task. She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God. All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children.

She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence. She showed him the folly and sin of idolatry, and early taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency.

This most certainly was an education in humility.

She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God...

But how would she have proceeded with the accomplishment of this? No doubt she would have begun by making certain every day that she herself had a fresh view of her heavenly Father, and by making a practical working relationship with Him on a daily basis. She would have learned to look to God alone as her Plan-maker, Burden-bearer, and Problem-solver. What was true of John the Baptist's experience would have been true of hers, or at least in part. Of him it is written:

Conflict and Courage, p. 272:

John the Baptist in his desert life was taught of God. He studied the revelations of God in nature. Under the guiding of the divine Spirit, he studied the scrolls of the prophets. By day and by night, Christ was his study, his meditation, until mind and heart and soul were filled with the glorious vision. He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was lost sight of. He beheld the majesty of holiness, and knew himself to be inefficient and unworthy.

It was God's message that he was to declare. It was in God's power and His righteousness that he was to stand. He was ready to go forth as Heaven's messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine.

Thus the mind of John became thoroughly imbued with the fear of God, and by the same general principles of operation, so did Jochebed's. In turn, the deep and wonderful revelations of the Almighty which animated her, fired her son with holy inspiration.

The more Moses' mind and soul opened like a flower in spring to receive and grasp these glorious insights into the beautiful character of his loving heavenly Father; and the more he was able to gain some understanding of the measureless Omnipotence of God's creative power, the more readily and sincerely could he bow low before the Lord in true humility. And Jochebed was always there to skillfully guide him in the life-imparting, true science of prayer.

A Love of Truth and Justice

She also sought to imbue his mind with "the love of truth and justice." It is an undeniable fact of life that no one can love the truth of God, and, at the same time, be proud. This is because as the Lord dispenses the light, it is much more than information. Rather, it is the living power which penetrates beneath the surface of our lives and exposes the agencies of prejudice, darkness, and death still lurking within the soul.

The beautiful and powerful truth of this is well expressed in these words of mighty inspiration:

John 1

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

This life which is this light is the redeeming power of salvation. It is what the Saviour is when He declares himself to be the light and the life. Therefore, when we receive Him we receive the life and the light which He is, and that can only mean that we receive the humility which also is in Him.

To be taught to love justice is also a training in humility, for it loads one with the requirement to accept the verdict whether it be favorable or unfavorable. Even wicked men love the law when it protects them from other men, but not when it protects other men from them. But the true lover of justice will be strictly impartial at all times and under every circumstance.

The Folly of Idolatry

She also taught Moses the folly and sin of idolatry. The folly of idolatry is the utter foolishness of relying on this means of protection, blessing, and guidance. It is nonsensical because a superior being—man—is not able to endow inferior materials—metal and wood, with supernatural, Godlike qualities and powers simply by carving or casting them into the appropriate shape, or by any other means.

Moses, the child, came to understand this as he was taught to see that the smallest muscle in his body had more power in it than did the largest and most impressive idol in Egypt. Idol worship is the ultimate self-exaltation. How can it be anything less when it exalts man to the place above the gods to where he is his own god-maker?

Jochebed turned Moses' eyes away from the futility of trusting in these powerless idols, to concentrate his attention on the virtually infinite capacities of the eternal God whose living handiwork was on display all around him. When Moses caught sight of the love, humility, and power of God, as manifest in His created works, in comparison with his own finite limitations, a natural humility was generated within him. It was a simple matter then for his mother to teach him to bow in humility and...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p, 244:

...pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency.

Thus, by seeing to it first of all that Moses possessed the root of humility by being born again from his earliest moments, and secondly by adding to that a thorough training in the divine graces, Jochebed achieved in Moses a powerful establishment of humility. The work was so well done that no trial or temptation which beat upon him in later years was able to overthrow his spiritual fortifications. Instead, he grew in all the divine graces to become the meekest man who ever lived.

So many parents have spent years in faithfully training their children for the Lord only to find that when they come to the age where they can decide for themselves, it is found that their spirit is compatible with the world to which they turn in the face of broken-hearted parents. The reason is of course, that they failed to ensure that, first of all, the child was born again.

But it was not so with Moses. When he was about twelve years old he was plunged into the exciting life of the glittering Egyptian court where he could quite quickly and easily have forgotten all his mother's training, but he did not. That which had been established in him was there to remain. Neither time nor temptation could rob him of this wonderful treasure of humility and self-sacrificing love.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 244:

She kept the boy as long as she could, but was obliged to give him up when he was about twelve years old. From his humble cabin home he was taken to the royal palace, to the daughter of Pharaoh, "and he became her son." Yet even here he did not lose the impressions received in childhood. The lessons learned at his mother's side could not be forgotten. They were a shield from the pride, the infidelity, and the vice that flourished amid the splendor of the court.

Every mother today along with every other person can steadfastly pursue the noble work of developing the fine graces of love and humility within themselves and their children. If care is taken to make certain that the work is begun with the new birth and faithfully followed by thorough training, the results for good are guaranteed. None can assess the tremendous amount of good achieved by those who apply these principles. Some idea of it though can be seen in the after-effects of Jochebed's work on Moses, one of the mightiest men who ever lived.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 244:

How far-reaching in its results was the influence of that one Hebrew woman, and she an exile and a slave! The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of

Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother. There is no other work that can equal this.

To a very great extent the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children. She is dealing with developing minds and characters, working not alone for time, but for eternity. She is sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit, either for good or for evil. She has not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine.

Especially during their early years the responsibility rests upon her of forming the character of her children. The impressions now made upon their developing minds will remain with them all through life. Parents should direct the instruction and training of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. They are placed in our care to be trained, not as heirs to the throne of an earthly empire, but as kings unto God, to reign through unending ages.

Let every mother feel that her moments are priceless; her work will be tested in the solemn day of accounts. Then it will be found that many of the failures and crimes of men and women have resulted from the ignorance and neglect of those whose duty it was to guide their childish feet in the right way. Then it will be found that many who have blessed the world with the light of genius and truth and holiness, owe the principles that were the mainspring of their influence and success to a praying, Christian mother.

Thus Jochebed with the help and support of her husband, Amram, was the architect under God of the building into Moses of the lovely character of an ever-deepening love and humility.

Pressure from the Egyptian Priests

Satan, of course, exerted every pressure at his command to effect a compromise in Moses, especially when in Egypt he was isolated from the protection, guidance, and influence of his devoted parents. On the side of the enemy were the priests who were responsible for his high education needed to fit him for kingship. These in turn were fortified in their demands that Moses must submit to

them, by the powerful laws which inflexibly decreed that the heir apparent must become a member of the priestly class.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

By the laws of Egypt all who occupied the throne of the Pharaohs must become members of the priestly caste; and Moses, as the heir apparent, was to be initiated into the mysteries of the national religion. This duty was committed to the priests. But while he was an ardent and untiring student, he could not be induced to participate in the worship of the gods. He was threatened with the loss of the crown, and warned that he would be disowned by the princess should he persist in his adherence to the Hebrew faith.

But he was unshaken in his determination to render homage to none save the one God, the Maker of heaven and earth. He reasoned with priests and worshipers, showing the folly of their superstitious veneration of senseless objects. None could refute his arguments or change his purpose, yet for the time his firmness was tolerated on account of his high position and the favor with which he was regarded by both the king and the people.

Moses' steadfastness under the tremendous pressure of life at the royal court, is nothing short of absolutely marvelous. Those priests were not few in number, and were well versed both in the arguments to be used, and in the tactics to be employed in their determination to force Moses to conform to the Egyptian religion. As well, they enjoyed the considerable advantage of age, for, generally speaking, what match is a twelve-year old boy against highly educated mature men?

But Moses was no ordinary youth. He had received an education from his mother and father which had produced and established in him such humility as enabled him to maintain a constant sense of dependence on God. So long as he remained humble before God and dependent on Him, he could not and did not stumble.

What a foundation his parents gave him before he left to live in Pharaoh's palace!

12. Raised in Egypt

AS HAS already been noted in our study of the remarkable humility which graced Moses' wonderful life, the period which he spent in the Egyptian court between the ages of twelve and forty was much more conducive to the development of pride than of humility.

Class Structures

It had to be, for the way of life designed for those of the upper, ruling class was expressly and purposefully tailored to produce proud people, who classed themselves as being markedly superior to the common people. They projected themselves as being the privileged class whom the "common people" were duty bound to support in absolute comfort, luxury, and ease.

This structure in which distinctions are made and maintained between the various classes, is oppressive to those degraded to the lower levels, where, in consequence, incredible suffering is experienced. In Egypt during the time spent by Moses at its glittering court, the Hebrew slaves occupied the lowest level of the class structure, where they suffered terribly at the cruel hands of their taskmasters. It was from them that the bitter wail of protest arose over the hardness of their lot, and its long extended duration—the cry which came up before a pitying God, and was answered by Jehovah's delivering them from their terrible bondage.

Above them were the common Egyptian people who "looked down" on the poor slaves, but who had to look up to the small, but rich, proud, and powerful elite of the royalty.

This class distinction, this inequality of human rights, status, and share of the national wealth was never ordained of God, and, unjust and unrighteous in its very nature, it spawns ever increasing iniquity.

The history of every nation which has ever arisen so far, demonstrates the outworking of the evil in this class structuring

which is so loved by king and people alike. Men have varied the structure in order, as they hope, to improve it. Thus we have seen monarchies, despotisms, democracies, republics, and other attempts at rulership arise, but, in each one, there is always this class structure by which pride is fostered, and in which the rich, powerful, and proud oppress the poor, weak, and humble.

Yet it cannot be truly said that the “common people” are humble, for pride reigns in the heart of every unregenerate soul. This is proved by Israel’s longing for a king like the kings surrounding them. They desired, yea, longed for, the class structure which produces and strengthens pride.

God had designed the structure of Israel’s government after the order of heaven’s kingdom, which order produces beautiful humility, and in which there is no oppression of one class by another. But the proud-hearted Israelites were not content with a humble system of organization, so much so that when the extent to which they would suffer degradation and loss should they substitute a pride-fostering governmental system in the place of the one given them by God was revealed to them, they accepted this as not being a price too high to pay if only they could discard the divinely structured kingdom in favor of one fostering pride.

The System of Kings

God through Samuel faithfully warned the people of what the king would do to them, how he would demand their service be centered on him, how he would tax them, force them to shed their blood on the battlefield, oppress them, and so forth, all for him.

The people listened in silence to the recital of the solemn warning but they were unmoved by any of it, for, when the prophet had finished, they emphatically said:

1 Samuel 8

¹⁹ No, but we will have a king over us.

Ever since Adam and Eve replaced God as their sovereign with human rulers, men have either striven to fill that position themselves or they have labored to install another man there instead. There is a natural disposition in sinful man to adopt this procedure, and he feels driven to do it. It needs to be understood that it is quite impossible for any unregenerate person, be he either ruler or ruled, to escape being molded into a very proud person—one who, unless there was a reversal in direction, could never become the meekest man who ever lived.

Preserved by Regeneration

The unvarying effect on those who have been placed where Moses was installed, is the flowering of terrible pride, but it was not so with him. Nor do we find it producing the same effect in Daniel and his three companions.

But they were not exceptions to the rule that when unregenerate men are highly placed at the center of power, they become increasingly lifted up in their pride. Instead, their lives of maintained humility conform to the rule that a truly regenerate person can be placed in God's providence in the highest level of power even over the most godless of nations as both Egypt and Babylon were, and not be corrupted by the pride surrounding him.

It can be truly said then, that Moses' elevation to heirship of the Egyptian throne, was a testing and proving exercise which demonstrated the effectiveness of his preparation which was a combination of his being born again from conception or soon after, the prenatal educational influences, and the training received at his mother's hands, until he was twelve years of age.

It was a most remarkable outcome, and was in fact a miraculous achievement. It demonstrates the possibilities available to every parent who will lay hold of the provisions of divine power, rightly applied, in the formation of the characters of their children. There is no need for either parents or children to be proud or lost.

Identifying with the Hebrews

Moses demonstrated his amazing humility while living in the palace, by visiting among his brethren, the Hebrews, from time to time. Had Moses been a proud person, he would have been very much ashamed of his relationship to his people, would never have visited with them, and would have disowned them. But he never failed to identify with them, while he often thought about them.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

Moses remained at court until he was forty years of age. His thoughts often turned upon the abject condition of his people, and he visited his brethren in their servitude, and encouraged them with the assurance that God would work for their deliverance. Often, stung to resentment by the sight of injustice and oppression, he burned to avenge their wrongs.

In making these visitations, Moses continued to demonstrate that, like his parents, he did not fear the king who might easily have regarded these visits to the Hebrews with grave suspicion. He could very well have questioned what was the import of these singular activities, and kept a watchful eye on the budding prince.

The Spirit and the Flesh

Before Moses stretched the broad pathway wherein walk the proud on their way to destruction, and there was also the narrow way on which the humble walk unto eternal life. It was left to him to choose which it would be. He made the right choice, that is to walk in the pathway of humility, because, being humble in his very nature, he naturally chose the pathway of humility. He knew that that was where he belonged, that was where his spirit found rest, that was where he found himself at home. It was the application of the principle that it is by nature that the Christian lives righteously.

The Desire of Ages, p. 668:

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into con-

formity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

So it was that when Moses chose to identify himself, not with the proud Egyptians, but with the people of God, he was carrying out his own impulses. It was the natural course for him to follow.

This does not mean that the right decision was made for him by his own inner nature, and that he had but to follow his own impulses, and that the outcome was automatically decided for him. It was far from that. In addition to the divine spirit whose impulses matched his own, he was as cursed as we all are with fallen, sinful, mortal flesh and blood. That fallen, human nature responded to Egypt and its attractions rather than to the call from God. Constantly, Moses had to do battle with the flesh in order to maintain his purity.

It was no easy decision for the humble Moses to make, for it cost him a bitter struggle to decide for the right. But he made it on the right side thus providing us with the inspiring witness of the long-term power of true humility. To settle on that choice, it was necessary that he carefully weigh up the situation by evaluating what each side of the question required of him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245-246:

Hebrews 11

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch’s throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts.

He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch’s crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin.

Slaying the Egyptian

His depth of dedication to God’s cause is revealed in his slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster by which action he declared himself aligned with the lowly, despised people of God, and against the proud might of the kingdom to whose throne he was heir. It was his last act in the land of the Pharaohs’ until his return forty years later, for the exposure of what he had done forced his immediate flight to Midian.

That last act before his ignominious escape was an act of humility, even though it may appear to be one of pride especially when acts of violence are usually caused by pride. It must be remembered however that Moses’ use of force as a solution to the immediate problem facing his oppressed countryman, was based on a misconception of God’s character. He incorrectly thought that it

was God's way to compel men to obey or perish, and that His people would be delivered from slavery and arrive in Canaan through using a military solution. Moses fully expected that he would be the general who would lead the "invincible" armies of Israel from miserable bondage to glorious freedom. He would lead the humble against the proud and would utterly defeat them.

When Moses' performances during his life in Egypt are considered, it becomes evident that this was the proving, testing period revealing the extent to which the work done by his parents had established in him the actual spirit of humility and obedience. The witness from that period is of a work so effectively done that there was built into the young man such a solid foundation as was beyond the power of Egypt to erase. It was an achievement in child training which was both remarkable and wonderful.

More Training Required Yet

Yet it was not enough to adequately supply the qualifications necessary to fit Moses for his lifework of leading Israel from Egypt to the banks of the Jordan River. There was still much for him to learn, and much for him to unlearn, all of which would require another forty years of intensive training in faith, obedience, and humility.

For Moses then, no less than eighty years of dedicated preparation was invested in his education, before he was commissioned to do his lifework. It was the longest period appointed to the preparation of any of God's messengers.

Both Christ and John the Baptist were granted thirty years each. Isaiah was still a young man when called to the prophetic office.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 749:

It was under circumstances of difficulty and discouragement that Isaiah, while yet a young man, was called to the prophetic mission.¹⁰

¹⁰ See also *Prophets and Kings*, p. 305.

Jeremiah too was but a youth when he was appointed to be God's spokesman.

Prophets and Kings, p. 407-408:

In the youthful Jeremiah, God saw one who would be true to his trust and who would stand for the right against great opposition. In childhood he had proved faithful; and now he was to endure hardness, as a good soldier of the cross.

Jeremiah 1

⁷ Say not, I am a child, [the Lord bade His chosen messenger;] for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸ Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you.

¹⁷ Gird up your loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command you: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound you before them.

¹⁸ For, behold, I have made you this day a defensed city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

¹⁹ And they shall fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you; for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.

Others required varying lengths for preparation, but none so long as Moses' eighty years. This does not mean that he was a slow learner. On the contrary, he would have been an excellent learner, for a humble person is a teachable person—the more humble, the more teachable. Seeing then that he was the meekest man who ever lived, he must also have been the most teachable, as he surely was.

This means that the extended period of preparation beyond that given to other messengers of God, was not needed to cope with slowness on Moses' part. There was another, better reason. It is written that to Moses was given the greatest work ever committed to men:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 475:

After this experience, Moses heard the call from heaven to exchange his shepherd's crook for the rod of authority; to leave his

flock of sheep and take the leadership of Israel. The divine command found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouth-piece for God.

But he accepted the work, putting his whole trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. Of him it is written:

Deuteronomy 34 [ARV]

¹⁰ There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face.

The greater the work, the greater the preparation needed. To Moses was given “...greatest work ever given to mankind.” Therefore, he went through the longest preparation period.

But in what sense was his the greatest work ever given to mankind? It could not be greater than any one else in quality, for then the Saviour’s work would be superseded. It was greater in magnitude. He had to supply leadership for over two million souls.¹¹ This involved a tremendous amount of strength and wisdom in order to cope with the needs of that vast, restless, turbulent sea of people. Think of the love, skill, patience, faith, tact, energy, and so forth needed to lead the largest exodus in history. He had to be right in his judgments and counsels all the time. There was no room for mistakes. He just simply had to be the meekest man who has ever lived.

By the time he had left Egypt at the end of the first forty years of his life, his character foundations were powerfully and effectively laid, but the work was far from being completed. That fact is plainly stated in the following quotation:

¹¹ See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 333.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247-248:

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone.

Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught—not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises.

And there were other lessons that, amid the solitude of the mountains, Moses was to receive. In the school of self-denial and hardship he was to learn patience, to temper his passions. Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey. His own heart must be fully in harmony with God before he could teach the knowledge of His will to Israel. By his own experience he must be prepared to exercise a fatherly care over all who needed his help.

Man would have dispensed with that long period of toil and obscurity, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of care-taking, of self-forgetfulness and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, long-suffering shepherd of Israel. No advantage that human training or culture could bestow, could be a substitute for this experience.

The New School of Solitude

What a contrast was this new classroom from the one where he had spent the most of the previous forty years. It was the contrast between:

- affluence and austerity,
- luxury and crudeness,
- complexity and simplicity,
- many and few,

- pleasure-seeking and industry,
- pride and humility,
- riches and poverty, and
- being served and serving.

In Egypt, he was continually observing the architectural magnificence of the great buildings and monuments erected by a succession of mighty Pharaohs. These naturally tended to obscure his view of the majesty and power of God, and to stimulate pride in human skill and achievement.

But the Midianites dwelt in tents. After his arrival there, he could look out in whatever direction he might choose, and no beautiful buildings were to be seen by Moses anywhere. In their places stood forth the mountains as impressive witnesses to the Creator's power, all abasing pride and developing humility.

Into this stern, austere classroom Moses was now enrolled to continue the work of making him to be the meekest man who ever lived. With his background as with us, it was a case of much needing to be learned and much needing to be unlearned:

This Day With God, p. 321:

Many have, as had Moses, very much to unlearn in order to learn the very lessons that they need to learn. He had need to be self-trained by severest mental and moral discipline, and God wrought with him before he could be fitted to train others in mind and heart.

He had been instructed in the Egyptian courts. Nothing was left as unnecessary to train him to become a general of armies. The false theories of the idolatrous Egyptians had been instilled into his mind, and the influences surrounding him and things his eyes looked upon could not be easily shaken off or corrected.

Thus it is with many who have had a false training in any line. All the idolatrous rubbish of heathen lore must be removed, bit by bit, item by item, from Moses' mind. Jethro helped him in many things to a correct faith, as far as he himself understood. He was working upward toward the light, when he could see God in singleness of heart.

What was it that Moses had to unlearn in order for him to learn that which it was essential for him to learn? A very great deal which required the application of, not merely stern, but “the severest mental discipline.”

If Moses’ only reason for his embracing the truth of God was to ensure his own salvation, he would not have needed to have risen to such heights of spiritual excellence as required the application of the severest mental discipline, though certainly he would have been a better Christian for it. But Moses, like every other true Christian, was saved to serve, to pour out his life in dedicated love to God and man.

Much to Unlearn

But, also like so many of us, he had wrong concepts about God’s character and principles of operation. These desperately needed correction or his service to God and man would do more harm than good.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king’s grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.

Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

Without exception, every one of the factors listed in the paragraph just quoted, which made deep impressions on his developing mind, were influences designed to build up pride in the heart. Let us consider each one of them in brief.

1. FILIAL LOVE AND A HIGH POSITION

Firstly there was the love of his foster mother and his own high position in the court. There is of course, a close relationship between these two.

His foster mother loved Moses with the deepest affection and rightfully saw in him a person of extraordinary beauty, purity, and ability.

Education, p. 62:

From the humble home in Goshen the son of Jochebed passed to the palace of the Pharaohs, to the Egyptian princess, by her to be welcomed as a loved and cherished son. In the schools of Egypt, Moses received the highest civil and military training. Of great personal attractions, noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing, and renowned as a military leader, he became the nation's pride.

His foster mother, as is the way with doting mothers, would constantly have upheld him before himself, the royal family, the palace, the court, and the nation, as one worthy of their pride and adoration. To her nothing she could do for him was too good or too much. In her eyes he was the best and the brightest, and to him the whole of Egypt's glorious future belonged.

Her attitude toward him could only be an influence designed to rob him of his humility and fill him with pride. Satan, who was desperate in his determination to destroy Moses one way or another, knew how to turn Moses' God-endowed excellencies into a snare for his youthful feet. Had he not learned by his own experience in heaven as the covering cherub, the deadly power to destroy which attends those who become lifted up with pride? Had he not enjoyed satisfying success in overthrowing with their heaven-daring pride peoples such as those living before the flood, and the builders of the Tower of Babel?

But with Moses there was always within him the consciousness that his future did not lie with the kingdom straddling the Nile, but with the sovereignty of God, the capital city of which is the

New Jerusalem. As a faithful sentinel, this realization was always there every time he was tempted to turn aside from his high and holy calling.

2. DISSIPATION

Then there was the next factor which was also designed to lift up a man in pride, namely, “the dissipation on every hand.”

To dissipate is to squander, to scatter, to rob of vital force, and to make weak and ineffective. It is the result of the indulgence of the appetites and passions which destroy the moral, nervous, physical, and spiritual resources of the soul. While such indulgences initially promise the ultimate satisfaction in wanton, pleasurable sensations, they eventually leave a person a burned out shell, a blackened, sterile wilderness fit for neither time nor eternity.

These are temptations to which the rich and the powerful are more exposed than are the lower classes. The reason for this lies in the fact that the time devoted by the working class to useful, soul-saving, health-promoting labor, is expended in pleasure seeking by those who are so rich that they have no need to work for a living.

By these, work is regarded as being demeaning, degrading, and unbecoming. According to this attitude, useful labor is considered to be humiliating, so that those who do not have to perform it view their exemption from it with ever growing personal pride.

Moses was in the class which was made up of those who did not have to work in order to live. Therefore, the pressure was upon him to be lifted up, to feel that he was superior above those who worked for a living.

This is not to claim that his was a life devoid of any work responsibilities, for the greater part of each of his younger days was devoted to schooling, a discipline of great value. Later, when his education was completed, he would have worked hard assisting in the administration of government, when not on the battlefield

enlarging Pharaoh's dominions. This would have added up to a very busy life, yet, had he been inclined to amusements, time could have been found for that too.

3. INFLUENCES OF A FALSE RELIGION

Then there were "the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion." False religion is always self-centered, appealing mostly to the physical and emotional senses. By so doing, it leads away from the true God, and out into the dark wilderness of sinful pride. It can do no other, for it is specifically designed by the devil to achieve just such results.

Added to all this was "the splendor of idolatrous worship." Splendid indeed were the ceremonies and institutions surrounding the worship of idols. To it the most beautiful, costly, and impressive buildings in the land are dedicated and to its service devoted. This is true of all idol worshiping churches—as true of the Roman Catholic today as it was of ancient Egypt.

The Great Controversy, p. 566:

Many Protestants suppose that the Catholic religion is unattractive and that its worship is a dull, meaningless round of ceremony. Here they mistake. While Romanism is based upon deception, it is not a coarse and clumsy imposture. The religious service of the Roman Church is a most impressive ceremonial. Its gorgeous display and solemn rites fascinate the senses of the people and silence the voice of reason and of conscience.

The eye is charmed. Magnificent churches, imposing processions, golden altars, jeweled shrines, choice paintings, and exquisite sculpture appeal to the love of beauty. The ear also is captivated. The music is unsurpassed. The rich notes of the deep-toned organ, blending with the melody of many voices as it swells through the lofty domes and pillared aisles of her grand cathedrals, cannot fail to impress the mind with awe and reverence.

4. ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

All these together with “the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.”

No wonder that it required another forty years in which to purify his humility.



13. A Struggle As for Life

SO FAR in our study of the factors which made Moses to be the meekest of all men apart from Christ, we have considered what his parents did for him, and what were the influences and their effect upon him, of the forces in his environment.

In most of this he had no choice. He did not choose to be born, nor was it given to him to decide who his parents would be. He was unable to select what prenatal influences would mold him while he was as yet unborn, nor could he have been the author of the plan to float him on the Nile at the right time and place to catch the attention of the princess.

Again, it was not by his choice that he remained with his mother for the first twelve years of his life, after which, without reference to his wishes, he was obliged to take up residence in the palace. Thus he was domiciled in an environment completely out of his control. He could do very little to shape it, but it could do much to remodel him, which it did to a certain degree.

Drawing attention to this series of factors would tend to build the fatalistic concept that other people and varying circumstances are the arbiters of our destinies; that in these matters, it is not our choice but theirs which decides what we shall become. How often people find themselves hosting the thought that if only they had been born and raised in a better place, under more favorable circumstances, at a much more propitious time, things would have been so much better.

Individual Effort Required

But in order to establish a balanced picture, we need to realize that, apart from the areas where we are without the freedom and opportunity to decide, it is critical that we do make positive decisions about where we shall go in life. Our success or failure in life depends on this.

If we are inspired to be meek like Moses, we must make a definite decision to attain to that high level of righteousness, and then direct the exercise of all our powers toward the attainment of this holy ambition. God will do nothing for those who are content to remain where they are with no ambition to be elevated to a position where they can serve God and man more effectively. See how positively and strongly the responsibility for this is emphasized in the following paragraph:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

In all who have been chosen to accomplish a work for God the human element is seen. Yet they have not been men of stereotyped habits and character, who were satisfied to remain in that condition. They earnestly desired to obtain wisdom from God and to learn to work for Him. Says the apostle,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

But God will not impart to men divine light while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; He must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained.

Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

It is a sobering thought that:

“Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves.”

We seem to be afflicted with a natural perversity to follow the wrong procedure at the right time. When it is time to leave the work to God, we step in and try to do it ourselves as when Abraham and Sarah devised a way to, as they supposed, produce the child of promise, and as when Moses formulated a military solution for delivering Israel from Egyptian slavery.

Then when there is a vital, indispensable work for us to accomplish, we leave it all for God to do, forgetting, or more likely never having learned that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 535:

What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man's aid. He strengthens him, cooperating with him as he uses the powers and capabilities given him.

This observation was made on Christ's command to roll back the stone from across the entrance to the tomb of Lazarus. The entire paragraph reads as follows:

The Desire of Ages, p. 534:

John 11

³⁹ Take away the stone.

Christ could have commanded the stone to remove, and it would have obeyed His voice. He could have bidden the angels who were close by His side to do this. At His bidding, invisible hands would have removed the stone. But it was to be taken away by human hands. Thus Christ would show that humanity is to co-operate with divinity. What human power can do, divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man's aid. He strengthens him, cooperating with him as he uses the powers and capabilities given him.

The starting point then in every great success story is an uncluttered understanding of what we must leave God to do on the one hand, and what He will leave us to do on the other. It will take time spent in earnest, prayerful study to become established in the truth to the place where these two areas are sharply defined. The perceptions of the believer in Jesus must be developed

to the point where he is able to decide without hesitation what he must do for himself and what he must leave God to do. In this vital work, he is promised the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to fully clarify the matter, without which he is quite unable to understand any spiritual things anyway.

Realizing Weaknesses

Having decided the kind of person he aspires to become, he must look earnestly upon where he is, and, as far as possible, gain some estimate of the great gulf between what he is and what he has resolved he will become, for:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency.

Man's weakness in these matters is revealed in his lack of the power necessary to effect in himself the changes which are necessary for him to qualify as being a man of righteousness. He must be fully cognizant of his utter helplessness when it comes to man transforming himself from an individual steeped in transgression into one clothed in the spotless white robes of Christ's pure character. He must ever remember that only God's creative power can effect the needed changes in him.

Here is where, in order to escape being deceived, considerable care must be taken, for it is entirely possible for a person untouched by the power of the gospel, to produce an outward appearance of righteousness by the process of hard, stern, disciplinary procedures, by which the evil forces of hatred, pride, and such like are placed under strict control so that they are not permitted to manifest themselves in their true character.

This approach to the problem always fails sooner or later, for the forces controlling the evil dispositions can be and are caught off guard from time to time. Then comes the embarrassing manifestation of the person's real nature.

Understanding Deficiencies

Not only must he be aware of his weaknesses, but must also realize his own deficiencies and shortcomings. He must see that, far from being humble, he is proud, hateful, selfish, and such kindred characteristics. When he sees these things as being the picture of what he is, he will be acutely aware of his deficiencies, and will long for them to be fully made up. He will earnestly resolve to devote all the powers at his command toward the achievement of God's ideal for him, while trusting the Lord to fulfill His part of the covenant.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

He must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained.

Mental and Moral Discipline

The consistent application of himself to this mission must be maintained to a very high degree as the following statement will make plain:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

Please take notice that it does not merely prescribe "mental and moral discipline," nor even, "severe" mental and moral discipline, but the "severest" mental and moral discipline. There can be no regimen tougher than the one described as being the severest. It sets a standard of attainment which can be neither equaled nor surpassed.

It naturally raises the question as to who among us has sought fitness for usefulness by our being subjected to the severest mental and moral disciplines? Without judging others, I have but to look at myself to know that there is decided room for improve-

ment in this area. I am sure that there are others who would admit to a like deficiency. I doubt that this means that we are lost, but it does mean that our fitness for usefulness is severely impaired, that our humility will never match that manifest in Moses' life both on earth and in heaven.

Apparently Moses was trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, for otherwise how could he have developed into being the meekest man who ever lived? That would have been impossible.

For instance, if, while he lived in the Egyptian court, he had failed to exercise the high levels of mental and moral discipline which he was developing in his life, he would certainly have been overcome by temptation.

One manifestation of his possessing a high mental and moral discipline is shown by the relationship he maintained toward his foster-mother, and toward Pharaoh. They loved him and he held them in high esteem, so that it was difficult for him to do anything which would cause them distress. Only by the exercise of a powerful mental and moral discipline could he do the will of God before the demands and interests of the sovereign nation.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people.

He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God.

Again, he had to withstand the confederacy of Egyptian priests who were by far the most powerful body in the world at that time, in order to maintain his purity and his loyalty to God. They

were as determined as only a priestly order with the power of the state behind them can be, to compel Moses to yield to the superstitious beliefs and practices of their religion. But they utterly failed due among other things to the quality and power of the mental and moral discipline developed in Moses.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

By the laws of Egypt all who occupied the throne of the Pharaohs must become members of the priestly caste; and Moses, as the heir apparent, was to be initiated into the mysteries of the national religion. This duty was committed to the priests.

But while he was an ardent and untiring student, he could not be induced to participate in the worship of the gods. He was threatened with the loss of the crown, and warned that he would be disowned by the princess should he persist in his adherence to the Hebrew faith. But he was unshaken in his determination to render homage to none save the one God, the Maker of heaven and earth.

He reasoned with priests and worshipers, showing the folly of their superstitious veneration of senseless objects. None could refute his arguments or change his purpose, yet for the time his firmness was tolerated on account of his high position and the favor with which he was regarded by both the king and the people.

Moses, in order to qualify for the great lifework offered to him had to choose for himself whether he would accept the enormous wealth, mighty powers, the popularity of the people, great fame, and other incalculable treasures offered in this world, or whether he would reject all this in preference for the treasures of heaven throughout eternity.

When the comparison between these two options is laid out on paper, it is so obvious which is the right choice to make, yet the vast majority of mankind make the wrong choice. They select what the world has to offer and turn their backs on the incomparable riches which Jehovah promises to give them.

A New Spirit

The greatest reason for this is the fact that, to receive a place in that kingdom, one must have the true spirit of that kingdom in his heart. Those who are not born of God would never be happy in heaven and would plead to be banished from the place.

Steps to Christ, p. 17-18:

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” *Colossians* 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God.

Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God’s presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy.

It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.

Yet, one would think that once a person had read or in some other way become acquainted with what heaven will be like, he would become anxious to know how to fulfill the conditions required to gain admission there. If a new nature in harmony with the spirit of that kingdom were required as it certainly is, he would be glad to take the necessary steps to acquire one. That is what one would think, but it seldom happens that way.

What then is the problem?

A Living Faith

In the first instance, a person must believe that heaven is a very real place, that the righteous will be taken there, and that the descriptions of it recorded by the inspired writers are true. It is impossible for man to qualify for admission to heaven and find the place assigned to him there without faith in God and His wonderful promises.

Hebrews 11

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Moses possessed that faith, by the power of which he was enabled to truly discern the eternal treasures in contrast with the earthly.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he came of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch's throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch's crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin.

It was no easy choice for Moses to make, for the world offered him everything of itself, and offered it now. Heaven to the unbeliever, was distant, intangible, and unreal, but the earth and its glories were visible, tangible, and real to the mind of man.

The choice was one he had to make for himself as there were none who could make it for him. It was his battle, his struggle, his decision. How he must have agonized over that issue before the victory finally came.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

That certainly took great moral strength or decision-making power for him to make the choice which he did, a choice which ranks as one of the greatest ever made.

If anyone should ask him today whether the results of that momentous decision were worth it, we know what his answer would be. Just compare him as he is today as Gabriel, the mightiest of the Lord’s host, with the Pharaoh who took his place on the throne of Egypt. That once mighty ruler is nothing more than mouldering dust, wrapped in the abysmal darkness of inanimate death. That potentate has had his brief day of glory, having long since passed from the scene of action, whereas before Moses remains the unending days of eternity.

But permit me to stress again that it was an extremely difficult choice to make, one that...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

...would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his Helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

Moses knew what decisions he needed to make, and in the strength of the Lord he made them.

In every age God's people must learn just what they have to do, and what they must leave the Lord to do. Then they must work with the utmost diligence to fulfill their part of the covenant, while fully trusting the Lord to do His part. Never will this be more needful than as we approach the testing times of the final scenes. Then we shall have to understand by the severest mental and moral discipline what it will require to become truly fitted for service.

Intense Preparation

Here is a picture of that awful day of intense preparation:

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

Says the prophet:

Malachi 3

² Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

While the investigative judgment is going forward in Heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of *Revelation 14*.

The message of this paragraph is very clear.

Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

If ever there was a people who needed to know exactly what they must leave God to do on the one hand, and what they themselves must do on the other, and do it, it will be those who are alive on the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary in heaven.

Theirs is the most crucial ministry ever to be given to mortals still dwelling upon the earth—that of revealing the full glory of God’s character. These will know the power of making right decisions and standing by them even though they must exercise the severest mental and moral discipline to do so.

The Great Controversy, p.425:

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

Malachi 3

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to himself will be:

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Then she will...

Song of Solomon 6

¹⁰ ...look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

Thus we cannot isolate and ignore the vital factor or role of Moses’ making those choices which it was his responsibility to make. The choices others made on his behalf, which God overruled for good, the effects of the various environments on his developing humility, and the determinations from which he himself would not be moved, collectively added up by the grace of God and his own diligent effort to the developing of his character.

I am not saying that Moses made a personal resolution in these terms:

“I will become the meekest man who has ever lived!”

Rather, it was by a series of decisions some of which appeared to be small and inconsequential, while others loomed large, momentous, awesome, and frightening, that his humility grew in beauty and power day by day without his even being aware of it.

In the same way as that by which Moses achieved the glory of true meekness, we too are to attain to the heights of true excellence, assured that, at every step of the way, the Lord will lead us from humility to greater pure and holy humility, and will impart to us the strength needed to achieve the glorious goal set before us.

Education, p. 18-19:

Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth.

But let it never be forgotten that the utterly desirable prospects will be realized only by those who make a positive decision to become as meek as Jesus, and subject themselves to the severest mental and moral discipline in order to attain to it.

14. The Use of the Sword

IN THIS chapter we continue our consideration of those factors which contributed to the development in Moses of that humility which set him apart as the meekest man who ever lived. We begin with that point of time when, for him to have remained any longer in Egypt would have, over a period of time, undone the good work accomplished so far.

The Values of Egyptian Discipline

There had been much offered to him by Egypt which was of great value. We tend to think of those ancient kingdoms as corrupt sinks of moral dissipation, wherein, throughout their entire history, life was wholly devoted to wanton pursuit of sensual pleasure, and, such an evaluation of life at the court is quite realistic when applied to the appropriate stage in the development and decline of the kingdom.

But they were not always like that. The stage of moral decay arrived for each of them once they had finished conquering their foes and there were no more nations for them to enslave. Then, with the world at their feet, with no more wars to fight, and with the wealth of many lands flowing into their treasuries, the ruling classes had unlimited time to devote to whatever pleasurable pursuit they fancied. Activities they had dreamed of doing while at the battlefield, they now had all the time they needed to put into effect.

But prior to this stage, there was the period of kingdom-building when the pressing priority of conquest at any cost demanded the exercise of the sternest disciplines. The king required that his troops maintain the highest levels of physical fitness, and that they keep their fighting skills ever ready to meet any foe.

To maintain these levels of battle readiness required hour after hour of military drill practically every day. Then, at the end of the day, when this rigorous training was ended for that day, there was little time and energy remaining for the pleasures of the

flesh. But, when they marched against their foes, they were a force to be reckoned with.

In those days, the general had to be as fit for battle as were his troops, if not fitter, for he had to personally lead the soldiers into battle. Therefore, he had to have been a magnificent warrior himself.

Although the military procedures by which Egypt had come to be the leading world power by the time Moses was the general of her armies are not commendable, yet the disciplines needed to achieve Egypt's greatness, were a mighty factor in the development in Moses of true humility.

The same fixed determinations which enabled him to master inclination in order to give his best for Egypt, were the means under God, by which he refused the temptation to sin of which pride was the most likely problem. As the general of Egypt's armies, and the heir to her throne, Moses was in the best position in all the world of that time to receive the education in discipline so much needed for him to become the meekest man of all time.

As with all of us "...who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace," (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 76), each experience through which he passed was turned by God into a stepping stone to the highlands of humility, including his hasty flight from Egypt. One day his place in Egypt was secure, his fame untarnished, his heirship to the throne unchallenged, the love of Pharaoh and his foster mother as strong as ever; the next, it was all stripped from him, and he was in full flight across the frontier to the safety of Midian.

The Dangers of Egyptian Discipline

It is well worth our while to examine this disconnection of Moses from Egypt and his past life as a subject of its mighty power. We will endeavor to separate what Moses thought was humility, from that which in God's sight was in fact pride.

Moses knew both that it was God's plan to deliver Israel from the Egyptian tyranny, and that he, Moses, would be His chosen instrument in the accomplishment of this purpose.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people. He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God.

Moses' complete, unquestioning acceptance of the divine intention reveals the presence in him of a degree of true humility, but, unfortunately, there was mingled with his humility a degree of pride which, initially, he was not able to recognize as pride. The reason for his misinterpretation of Jehovah's announcement, lay in his long established habit of applying a military solution to a problem of this nature.

When confronted with an uprising anywhere under Egyptian sovereignty, he would call out the troops to quell the insurrection by force. And, by virtue of the overwhelming power at his command, and his highly skilled deployment of those forces, the system recommended itself by solving the problem every time, so that it was virtually automatic for him to conclude that the Sovereign of the universe would employ the same procedures in rescuing Israel.

Nor did he lack a precedent to seemingly justify this thinking, for, when faced with a similar problem, namely the enslavement of Lot's household by the coalition of mighty kings who overcame the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, and their allies, the revered Abraham resorted to the same solution which Moses was to use throughout his military career as the general of Pharaoh's armies.

Abraham's Use of Force

Furthermore, before applying the military solution to the problem of Lot's rescue, Abraham sought and obtained divine counsel as to what to do as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 135:

Seeking, first of all, divine counsel, Abraham prepared for war.

Thus the patriarch took his problem to the Lord asking Him for the solution to be applied, in response to which God counseled a military procedure. Abraham thus advised, made his preparations for the coming battle.

From his own encampment he summoned three hundred and eighteen trained servants, men trained in the fear of God, in the service of their master, and in the practice of arms. His confederates, Mamre, Eschol, and Aner, joined him with their bands, and together they started in pursuit of the invaders.

The Elamites and their allies had encamped at Dan, on the northern border of Canaan. Flushed with victory, and having no fear of an assault from their vanquished foes, they had given themselves up to reveling. The patriarch divided his force so as to approach from different directions, and came upon the encampment by night. His attack, so vigorous and unexpected, resulted in speedy victory. The king of Elam was slain and his panic-stricken forces were utterly routed. Lot and his family, with all the prisoners and their goods, were recovered, and a rich booty fell into the hands of the victors.

To Abraham, under God, the triumph was due. The worshiper of Jehovah had not only rendered a great service to the country, but had proved himself a man of valor. It was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that Abraham's religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed. His heroic act gave him a widespread influence among the surrounding tribes.

On his return, the king of Sodom came out with his retinue to honor the conqueror. He bade him take the goods, begging only that the prisoners should be restored. By the usage of war, the spoils belonged to the conquerors; but Abraham had undertaken

this expedition with no purpose of gain, and he refused to take advantage of the unfortunate, only stipulating that his confederates should receive the portion to which they were entitled.

For just such an emergency as this Abraham kept a small army in training. These troops were now mobilized, and Abraham with his confederates attacked the enemy's camp in the dead of the night. The victory gained was as swift as it was complete. Lot, his family, and all their goods were all recovered. What more could they have asked for?

It seemed that all the results of the application of the military option were very positive, there not being a single negative comment from God through any writer by inspiration in regard to the expedient employed. The list of those things which were gained as a result of this operation is quite impressive. They had recovered all of that which had been taken.

To Abraham under God, the triumph was due; he had rendered a great service to the country; he had proved himself a man of valor; it was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that his religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed; his heroic act gave him a widespread influence for good among surrounding tribes.

Added to all this was the blessing pronounced over Abraham, the warrior of Mamre, by a being of such mighty spiritual stature as Melchizedek, whom we have come to know as the immortalized, translated Enoch:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 136:

Another who came out to welcome the victorious patriarch was Melchizedek, king of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine for the refreshment of his army. As "priest of the most high God," he pronounced a blessing upon Abraham, and gave thanks to the Lord, who had wrought so great a deliverance by His servant. And Abraham "gave him tithes of all."

Such statements from so auspicious a representative of the most high God, would naturally tend to the conclusion that Abra-

ham had done all things exactly as God would have them to be done, that the military option was God's first and best choice of a course of action designed to solve the problem.

This is the light in which Moses, with his mind conditioned by decades of the most intensive military training, would have evaluated the triumph of Abraham over his foes. It was then logical for him to reason that the unchanging God would again select a military solution to rescue His people from Egyptian bondage.

There were two outstanding facts which guided his thinking. The first was that he had been chosen to lead Israel to Canaan, and the second was that his education and training fitted him to fulfill the commission as a man of war. He no doubt noted more than one parallel between Abraham's situation and his own. He, Moses, was highly skilled in the art of warfare. So likewise Abraham had been.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 134:

Abraham was also wise in diplomacy and brave and skillful in war.

When Abraham sallied forth against the marauders, his forces and those of his allies were small in number compared with his foes. Thus he appeared to be seriously disadvantaged. Likewise Moses in a military operation against Egypt would have had under his command an undisciplined army of soldiers who knew nothing of warfare or of faith in God. So implicit was Moses' faith in God however, that like his faithful predecessor, he was confident that the exodus would be an unqualified success if handled as a military undertaking.

All the insights into Abraham's one-night war as waged by obeying the Lord's counsel, would seem to support the belief held by the majority that God destroys, and that He rules by force. They would feel that the evidences provided by the account of God's dealing with Abraham, "the father of the faithful," are so compellingly in favor of the teaching that God does destroy, that no further proof is required.

Those who adopt this position miss the true message contained in God's dealings with Abraham. When that is rightly understood, it will be seen that it did not provide a precedent justifying Moses' planning to depart Egypt by the use of force. As this is an important point in regard to Moses being taught true humility, I will devote a number of paragraphs to demonstrate that God's relation to Abraham does not reveal that God is the destroyer.¹²

A Revelation of God's Character

Let us now consider the case of Abraham as a revelation of God's character.

The first principle to be noted is that God does not expect us to operate at the higher levels of righteousness before we have arrived there. A convincing example of this is provided in the question of Sabbath-keeping. When apostasy overtook the early Christian church, the time came when Sabbath-keeping was replaced by Sunday-keeping. While many were overcome by the prevailing darkness, there were always a few who were faithful to the true God, rather than to the prince of evil.

This was true even though they kept the first day of the week as the Sabbath. It was the best they knew, and the Lord never chided them for remaining in darkness from the dawning of the great Protestant Reformation in John Wycliffe's day in the fourteenth century until the Sabbath truth was at last revived in the nineteenth century, a time span of five centuries or five hundred years. It seems a very long time to wake up to a message as clear, as powerful, and as vital as the seventh-day Sabbath, but that is the time it took!

During all those years preceding the awakening to the Sabbath truth, God blessed them as if Sunday were the Sabbath. He gave them great protection from their enemies, victory over their persecutors, and inspiring revelations of truth from His Holy Word. Never once until 1844, was the Sabbath brought to them as a test.

¹² Those who desire a more comprehensive revelation of God's character should study the book, *Behold Your God* by F. T. Wright.

Early Writings, p. 42-43:

I saw that the present test on the Sabbath could not come until the mediation of Jesus in the holy place was finished and He had passed within the second veil; therefore Christians who fell asleep before the door was opened into the most holy, when the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844, and who had not kept the true Sabbath, now rest in hope; for they had not the light and the test on the Sabbath which we now have since that door was opened.

I saw that Satan was tempting some of God's people on this point. Because so many good Christians have fallen asleep in the triumphs of faith and have not kept the true Sabbath, they were doubting about its being a test for us now.

Note well that it is a misinterpretation of God's principles of operation to argue that because God manifestly blessed Sunday as the day of worship during those centuries of ignorance, then Sunday-keeping is the way of His appointment. No! We cannot claim that, because good and godly men like Martin Luther and John Wesley never kept the true seventh-day Sabbath, then we can regard Sunday with respect. We know better in this enlightened age.

Rather, we are to be profoundly grateful that our God is so patient, loving, and kind, that He does not run ahead, nor does He make demands upon us in areas where we as yet remain unenlightened, provided we have kept pace with the advancing light.

We are now to see that the same principles of operation were employed by God in respect to His dealings with Abraham. This wonderful man of God spent the first part of his life in Ur of the Chaldees, a center of idolatry wherein the ways of men replaced the ways of God. To be a worshiper of the true God, he came out of the great darkness in which Ur was submerged, but in doing so, he inevitably brought some of that darkness with him just as the Protestant Reformers were later to do when they escaped from the Papacy, and brought Sunday-keeping with them.

Patriarchs and Prophets, 125.

After the dispersion from Babel idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations. Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. Even his father's household, by whom the knowledge of God had been preserved, were yielding to the seductive influences surrounding them, and they "served other gods" than Jehovah. But the true faith was not to become extinct.

One erroneous procedure which Abraham brought with him from the Babylon which was Ur of the Chaldees, was trust in military solutions, as is evidenced by the fact that he himself was skillful in war and maintained a mini-army for the purpose of protecting himself, his loved ones, and all their possessions from the lawless, nomadic tribes inhabiting the land subsequent to the flood and the erection and destruction of the tower of Babel.

But neither the fact that he did this, nor the entirely satisfactory realization of the objectives achieved thereby, nor the rich blessings from God through Melchizedek which were pronounced upon him, are to be seen as a confirmation that this was or is God's way of solving problems. It was no more God's way than was Sunday-keeping during the Dark Ages. What we are to see is that this is a revelation of how a man who has but recently come out of Babylon and has not yet learned that God does not destroy, will approach the solving of his difficulties.

What we are also to understand is the way God is able to bless and work with those still advancing in spiritual attainment, without making the mistake of misreading what God is doing. There is nothing to be found in any of God's dealing with His creatures which, when rightly understood, presents God as one who at least on some occasions used force to achieve his desired ends.

We must not stop our study of Abraham's relationship to warfare at the point to which we have come thus far, for the patriarch did not stand still in the development of his knowledge and exper-

rience. Instead, he was moving from error to truth, and was doing it quite rapidly, for he was brought to realize from his own experience in warfare, that the military option is never the ultimate solution. This is because the use of force always generates the employment of counter-force.

So it was that Abraham discerned that, before too long, those whom he had defeated would come against him in the revengeful fury of their renewed strength. God and angels rejoiced to see this awareness on Abraham's part, effectually diluting his previous confidence in the use of force as a means of deliverance from the malice of other men.

The heavenly observers and helpers knew that as his faith in the ways of men was seriously eroded, he would be open to the alternatives which the Lord had to offer. Thus he would be educated to sever all connection with military solutions and to rest his faith in God alone. After the one-night war, it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 136:

Abraham gladly returned to his tents and his flocks, but his mind was disturbed by harassing thoughts. He had been a man of peace, so far as possible shunning enmity and strife; and with horror he recalled the scene of carnage he had witnessed.

But the nations whose forces he had defeated would doubtless renew the invasion of Canaan, and make him the special object of their vengeance. Becoming thus involved in national quarrels, the peaceful quiet of his life would be broken. Furthermore, he had not entered upon the possession of Canaan, nor could he now hope for an heir, to whom the promise might be fulfilled.

In response to this, the Almighty assured him that He would protect him, not by placing weapons in his hands, but by His own omnipotence. The Lord would place the fear of himself on all the nations so that none would dare attack him. So effective would this protection be, that he would never need to carry weapons of warfare, or be trained in their use anymore.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 136:

In a vision of the night the divine Voice was again heard. "Fear not, Abram," were the words of the Prince of princes; "I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward."

Although Abraham, troubled by serious forebodings, was unable at that time to enter fully into belief in God's commitment to him, yet this pronouncement marked that point of time after which no mention is made of his mini-army being maintained as a protective body, or of his ever again becoming engaged in a military solution for any problem which arose. Just as God has led His people away from the false Sunday-keeping into Sabbath-observance, so He led Abraham from depending on force to solve his problems, to utterly leaving matters in the hands of the Almighty.

This was a wonderful advancement in the right direction. It was a gaining of holy ground in the warfare between good and evil. We can praise the Lord that the patriarch never reverted to trusting in the power of an army again.

It may be argued that he never needed to fight again, for none of the nations ever adopted a threatening attitude against him after this point of time. That they did not is most remarkable, for the most natural thing for those heathen men to do was to wait till they had regained sufficient strength to regenerate the war, after which they would seize upon the first opportunity to exact a terrible revenge upon him who had been their conqueror.

That they did not is a thrilling testimony to the power of our friends, the holy angels. They, in response to Abraham's faith in God's personal commitment to protect him, and in joyful obedience to God, kept the winds of strife under perfect control even as they presently still do. Thereafter, Abraham could and did sleep the untroubled slumber of a man whose trust is in the Lord.

It becomes evident then that we do not get the true witness of Abraham's life by studying where he stood. Instead, we must be able to trace the direction in which he was moving, noting what

the Lord led him to leave behind such as military solutions, and what he was taught to take up in exchange.

Isaac and Jacob

This movement continued in the same direction during the lifetime of Isaac, Abraham's son. There is absolutely no reference to his maintaining a strike-force of well trained soldiers, because there were none. He was a man of peace, for God was his protection. Obviously, Abraham had diligently taught the child of promise what he himself had learned about abandoning all faith in military solutions.

So, we pass on to the story of Jacob, the twin brother of Esau. Esau was disinterested in spiritual values and used force and cunning in order to solve his problems. In other words, his movement was a reverting toward the position which his grandfather had renounced as we would expect.

But, on the other hand, Jacob displayed in one crisis after another, his tenacious adherence to the position to which Abraham had been converted subsequent to the one-night war. Prior to his gaining the birthright by deception, the only weapons in his possession were garden tools which were all but useless for defense or attack.

Though his flight before his enraged brother lay through dangerous territory, he carried no weapons with which to defend himself. Twenty years later in obedience to God's command, he slipped away from Padan-aram knowing quite well that an armed, angry, and very dangerous Laban would overtake him, but he led a totally unarmed band into the face of that threat.

As we know, God honored his faith by inducing a dream into Laban's mind by which the desert chieftain was instructed by an angel of God not to hinder Jacob's flight. God accomplished a bloodless deliverance whereas, if Jacob had relied on a military solution, blood would have freely flowed on Laban's side at least.

The encounter with Laban behind him, Jacob was faced with the much more terrible threat of Esau's determination to slaughter him and his entire entourage. If ever there was a justification for meeting force with force, it was on this occasion, but Jacob apparently did not even consider resorting to such an expediency. There would be no killing by him or his, but only a complete surrender of the entire problem to God.

Once again, God used a dream with which to communicate His will to Esau, and, once again, the threat was removed forever.

There was one other incident in the life of Jacob which really tested the wisdom of discarding military solutions. It came about through the treacherous procedures by which Simeon and Levi avenged their sister Dinah.¹³ The wanton slaughter of all the males of the families of Hamor the Hivite, was so unprincipled, so unchristian, so dishonorable, that it was a military solution in its ugliest form. It provided the surrounding nations with unconditional justification for wiping the children of Israel from the face of the earth.

And Jacob feared they would do just that though he himself was innocent of the crime. The man of God could then have argued that, having forfeited the divine protection, as he could have been convinced they must have done, the time had come when he was left with no other choice than to arm himself and his followers. One would suppose that it must have been a very powerful temptation to revert to military solutions, but there was no going back with Jacob. Nor was there any need to retreat, for even though his sons had disgraced the family in the eyes of all, God did not forsake him, but maintained the shield of protection over him.

Genesis 35

⁵ And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

¹³ See *Genesis* 34:1-31.

Moses Misinterprets History

When formulating his strategy for the execution of his mission for the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian servitude, Moses would certainly have studied how God worked through Abraham. It is equally certain that he never saw beyond the one-night war of Abraham's. That singular victory was Moses' model, but in making it such, he failed to move with God, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob along the pathway which led away from military solutions.

Moses was retreating in the opposite direction taken by God, and therefore, even though unwittingly, was looking upon his judgment as being superior to God's. That can never be humility. It can only be pride even though Moses never saw it as such at the time.

Education, p. 65:

In the military schools of Egypt, Moses was taught the law of force, and so strong a hold did this teaching have upon his character that it required forty years of quiet and communion with God and nature to fit him for the leadership of Israel by the law of love.

God understood his need, and, severing him from all connections with Egypt, sent him far away for forty years' schooling, wherein his education would be designed to confirm in him the rejection of military solutions forever.



15. Fleeing from Egypt

Lessons in Non-Violence

WE WHO have seen and accepted the beautiful and altogether true light describing our heavenly Father's wonderful character of love, have no difficulty in understanding the direction in which Jehovah was leading Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We see quite distinctly that He led them to move away from military solutions, for there is no place in the heart of the infinite One for a forced obedience.

These great Christians obviously recognized and accepted the messages from on high, for they did in fact repudiate the ways of Babylon from whom they had been separated, and, in exchange, embraced the new light.

So well did the instruction become embedded in Jacob's mind that even though on several occasions designed by the devil to provoke him to resort to a military solution, he steadfastly refused to compromise, and thus became the example for Christians for all coming generations, including Moses.

But centuries separated Abraham's day from Moses' time, a great deal of which the Israelites spent in slavery. Inevitably they lost their grip on many spiritual principles including God's abhorrence of military solutions. They had fallen away from the high spiritual level of Abraham's day and needed a message to bring them back from darkness to light.

Moses was well versed in his knowledge of the history of his spiritual forebears. His godly parents had most diligently seen to that although we cannot go so far as to say that they rightly interpreted those historical events. Therefore, he knew of the one-night war and saw that in the immediate outworking of the employment of the weapons of force, a very acceptable result had been achieved. This led him no doubt to interpret the blessing upon Abraham by which he gained the victory in that short-lived war, as the divine endorsement of the military procedures em-

ployed. What he needed to have also seen and rightly interpret, was the depression which seized upon Abraham as he viewed with foreboding the prospect of his enemies' returning against him as soon as they had regained strength through increased numbers.

Moses needed to see the divine assurances that God, and not an army of soldiers, was to be the impenetrable shield surrounding Abraham so long as the patriarch obeyed God and put his trust in Him. He needed to study God's fulfillment of that promise in His dealing with Abraham to see that the "father of the faithful" never needed his private army anymore, for the wicked, violent, warrior-kings of that time never dared go out to war against the man of God. They left him completely alone. Though it would not have been difficult for Moses to verify these facts, even the simplest spiritual things cannot be seen until the time comes for the Spirit to reveal them to the receiver of these truths.

But Moses' mind was clouded with the commonly held misconceptions resident in both the Jews and the Egyptians after centuries of reliance upon military solutions. If, while in Egypt, the time had come for the Spirit to open this area of truth to him, he, the future messenger of God, would have observed the ongoing effect of these revelations upon the minds and lifestyle of Isaac, Abraham's son, and Jacob, his grandson.

Moses would then have observed that even in the face of severe provocation as when Jacob stole his brother's birthright, and when Dinah's brothers basely tricked and murdered Hamor's family, God's role as Protector of His people was far more effective than a standing army could have ever been, no matter how large or small it might have been.

Although Moses appears to have never fully come to the place where he discerned God's non-violent way of kingdom-building, God never ceased His vital work of trying to re-educate Moses toward eventual understanding of the direction in which He was seeking to lead His people, which direction was entirely away

from the use of force. God wanted Moses to understand that there were to be no gray areas in between full acceptance and full rejection of the use of force to achieve the will of the Almighty. The Lord of Hosts was seeking and working toward absolute divorce between His principles of operation, and those involving military solutions.

The Way of Pride

Moses understood none of this while in Egypt, where, as a practicing soldier, the general of Egypt's mighty armies, he more than once led her troops on successful expeditions designed to solve such problems as uprisings against the kingdom. Each operation was always executed with excellent results from his point of view and that of the royal family.

Looking now on the developments back then, it is not difficult to see that Moses, while in Egypt, was fighting against the stream of truth which God was developing in His Church on earth by moving in the opposite direction from it. This was the way of pride in which a mere human thinks that he is wiser than the Lord, even though he is not aware of the true nature of his thinking, but rather imagines himself to be in harmony with God, and zealous for His cause. By what procedures he serves His Master is much less important to him than the assurance that he is serving the true God. He is not troubled as he should be by the law which requires that we not only do God's work, but that we do it God's way.

A New Environment Needed

But, despite the fact that Moses was moving unwittingly in the opposite direction from God, which was a serious problem in view of his having been appointed to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt according to God's way of undertaking such a mission, Jehovah was committed to effecting the work through His delegated servant according to His righteous principles, which meant that Moses had to be turned completely around from fighting against the current, to moving with it. It would require the

second forty years of his life to effect, maintain, establish, and develop this conversion to the place where it had become his unshakable way of solving problems to which military solutions are usually applied.

This could never be accomplished for him while ever he remained in Egypt. He had to be totally delivered from that environment where the person who had the greatest power at his command and knew how to preserve and use it to the best advantage, was the decider of the fates of other men. Everyone in that powerful kingdom, from the lowliest slave to Pharaoh on his throne, saw only light in this philosophy. It was the settled conviction of every mind that this was the only way to maintain a stable lifestyle.

A Master in the Egyptian Way

Moses was no different from the rest, having never perceived the great truth on this theme which had been revealed through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was evident from the fact that he pursued a military career as long as he was able to remain in Egypt.

Education, p. 62:

From the humble home in Goshen the son of Jochebed passed to the palace of the Pharaohs, to the Egyptian princess, by her to be welcomed as a loved and cherished son. In the schools of Egypt, Moses received the highest civil and military training. Of great personal attractions, noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing, and renowned as a military leader, he became the nation's pride.

There can be no doubt about the fact that Moses put his whole heart and soul into the nation's military solutions program, for, otherwise he would never have achieved the high level of proficiency which he did.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

His ability as a military leader made him a favorite with the armies of Egypt, and he was generally regarded as a remarkable character.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 246:

As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer.

To stand without a peer is to occupy a position unequaled and unsurpassed by any other. The world has produced its great military men such as Joshua, Caleb, David, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon Bonaparte, Lord Nelson, and so forth, but there was not one of them who equaled or surpassed Moses.

This might be difficult to realize, for, while we have detailed records of the military campaigns of these famous generals, of Moses' exploits on the battlefield no records remain. Yet we know that he was the greatest, because unbiased, infallible Inspiration has declared that he was.

No man can rise to such heights if he is not in tune with the philosophy which animates the principles involved. Therefore, Israel's future leader was so committed by lifelong habit and practice to solving problems by the application of military might, that he never challenged the philosophy by the arguing of which, decided efforts were made to justify the use of force to achieve one's objectives.

Deliverance by Warfare Fails

Obviously then, so long as he remained in Egypt, God would not be able to reach and change him as He had reached and converted Abraham. Therefore, the longer Moses remained in the kingdom on the Nile, the more firmly were these wrong concepts being embedded in his thinking. For this reason, he naturally concluded that the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt would be a military solution as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. It was not God's will to

deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone.

So it was that Moses thought that it was God's will and plan "to deliver His people by warfare," for that was the only direction in which Moses' thoughts ran. He could see no other way of achieving this wonderful objective, nor did it even occur to him that there could be an alternative procedure.

Just so long as Moses was locked into thinking only in terms of realizing Israel's freedom through fighting and winning a great battle, then he was quite unprepared for his special mission. All of his "precious," cherished concepts had to be dislodged, eradicated, and replaced with those truths which have their source in the mind of God where no home is to be found for military solutions. When that transformation was achieved, Moses was then ready for his special work.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught—not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises.

And there were other lessons that, amid the solitude of the mountains, Moses was to receive. In the school of self-denial and hardship he was to learn patience, to temper his passions. Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey. His own heart must be fully in harmony with God before he could teach the knowledge of His will to Israel. By his own experience he must be prepared to exercise a fatherly care over all who needed his help.

The Lord's Remedy

It was quite impossible for Moses, under the circumstances, to have his thinking realigned while he remained in Egypt as the illustrious general of her ever-victorious armies. Therefore, he had to be relocated in a different school as far removed as possible from the one in which he was the pride of the Valley of the Nile.

This the Lord kindly arranged for him by taking advantage of Moses' rash murder of the Egyptian slave-driver. Nothing could be better calculated to separate him from being the pride of Egypt than this treasonous action. Suddenly, almost overnight in fact, Moses found himself in a situation as different from his former glory as was possible. He had plunged from the highest to the lowliest, it all happening so swiftly that it must have been difficult for him to take it all in.

Now he had an immense, life-threatening problem on his hands, for the then most powerful nation on earth was determined to capture and execute him. The very army which had provided him with ample protection in his past, had suddenly become the greatest threat to his existence, and there was no other to take its place. Thousands of powerful, fully armed men were dispatched in every direction to search out the traitor and bring him back to the capital in abject humiliation to die under the remorseless hand of retributive justice.

He looked for some solution which would effectively have saved him. His first need would have been to escape from the capital city where he was best known. Then there would have been the flight from there to the border in the direction of Arabia, for...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

...he made his escape and fled toward Arabia.

No doubt the border was heavily guarded and continuously patrolled so that it required skill to negotiate this obstacle, but once across and out of sight he would have been reasonably safe from the Egyptian army.

Two Systems of Conquest Meet

The first thing to be discerned is that in this situation, both Egypt and Moses were each faced with a great problem. The Egyptians realized that they had a person in their midst with the capacity to overthrow the government and introduce a new dynasty. It had

been done before by men less capable than the outstanding Moses, and the rulers had no illusions about the danger and possibility of its happening again. “Uneasy lies the head which wears a crown,” is a saying as old as it is true. As do all absolute rulers, the Egyptian potentates saw that nothing short of the elimination of Moses would remove the danger to the existing, established crown.

To solve their problem, the Egyptians resorted to the usual military solution, and called in the largest and best trained army in the world of that day to utterly defeat one lone unarmed man. It seemed like a contest of such unequal forces that it could only have resulted in total victory for those resorting to a military solution. And such it would have been if indeed it had been only the one man against an army. But Moses was not a lone man because all the awesome might of the invisible God was with him.

Let each one of us see that two systems of conquest were in operation that day. One was the proud military solution, and the other the way of humbly trusting in God alone for protection and deliverance. Moses up to that point of time, had been accustomed to operating by the former, but now he had to learn the way of the latter. In this he had no choice, for he had been robbed of his army without which he could not save himself by using physical force. He had no choice but to rest his fate entirely in the hands of God. He was beginning to learn the lesson of faith and humility which God had successfully taught to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and which He would even more successfully teach him, for he was to become the meekest of all men.

God's Faithfulness

This trust enabled God to give him the necessary guidance he needed and:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with Jethro, the priest and prince of Midian, who was also a worshiper of God.

Being suddenly thrust into a life-threatening situation such as faced Moses after and in consequence of his killing the persecutor of one of his people, is a marvelous education in the school of humility. Those who know God have become aware of His way of making wonderful promises of protection, healing, guidance, and so forth, and then seeming at times to be utterly indifferent and uncaring in the desperate hour when we need Him the most.

There are many examples of this in the history of God's dealings with His people, and when such experiences befall us, the pressure on us to do something to save ourselves can be very heavy especially when we have been accustomed to being in command as Moses was.

We need to understand ourselves far better than we do so that we will know just why we are so afraid to totally submit ourselves unto God. Then, when we come to the place where we can identify the forces working on us and recognize the effects they have upon our attitudes, our thinking, and our actions, we will be better able to keep our souls at peace with God.

The Sin of Unbelief

The roots of our problems are to be found in our earliest moments and by the time we reach early childhood are so well defined that they can be accurately and readily discerned, if one has been trained to know what to look for. The problem can be summed up in one word: "unbelief." There is no greater sin than this, for,

The Signs of the Times, October 4, 1899:

The greatest sin we can cherish is the sin of unbelief.

If asked to name the greatest sin, many might choose murder, or adultery, or idol worship, or Sabbath-breaking, or the taking of God's name in vain, but none of these qualify as being the greatest of all sins no matter how iniquitous, costly, hateful, or defiant of God and man they might be.

The real fact is that unbelief is the greatest because it is the first of all sins ever committed and, as such, is the progenitor of all

other transgressions. It is the living truth of God that wherever unbelief establishes itself, every other sin is certain to follow and manifest itself. This is a connection or relationship of which we must be aware—unbelief the parent; all other sins the offspring.

It is when we have become intelligently informed in regard to this, that we shall be alerted to the certainty that sin is about to appear in every single instance where unbelief intrudes. It is therefore our duty to positively and swiftly cut off the evil unbelief before it has the opportunity to secure a foothold. Therefore the greatest righteousness we can cherish throughout all eternity is faith.

There are those who would respond to this statement by challenging the thought that faith will have to be maintained and cherished throughout all eternity. Those who argue this way will freely admit the need to exercise living faith in our everlasting Father during our sojourn in this environment which is so heavily impregnated with unbelief. They understand that there is no other way to serve a God whom we cannot see, but, it must be pointed out that, no matter how much that which is invisible becomes visible once we have arrived in heaven, there will always be a limitless amount of knowledge about God into which to look and learn.

So vast is this store of knowledge, that the most intense study on the part of all created intelligences though applied with the utmost diligence throughout all eternity will not exhaust the light shining forth from the eternal One. The area of the unknown, where to live at all must be to live by faith alone, will seem to be barely diminished.

Yet, there are those who will argue that once we are able to see God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, all the Holy Angels, and the sinless inhabitants of other worlds, we shall not need faith to believe in their existence.

This argument is quite sound up to a certain point, for it is the truth that we shall see more than enough of the person of God

than is necessary to know that He exists, but no matter how much we, as the redeemed ones, enter into the loving fellowship of His actual presence, and thus see Him face to face, will we never know all that there is to know about God. Always, there will be an infinity of light, truth, and character about Him beyond that which will be known to us.

In that profoundly mysterious area, God works at levels of operation beyond even the capacity of the redeemed to comprehend. It will be in those areas of the unknown that we will have to trust Him because we have found Him to be utterly trustworthy in His dealings with us in the areas where we have known and understood Him. We know that He has supplied us with much more than enough evidence upon which to build our faith. There is no excuse for unbelief. Therefore, there is no excuse for sin.

This pattern of known and unknown truths about God is not new, for it existed from the creation of the first created being, is continued throughout the sin intrusion period, and will be there throughout the coming future eternity. This vast unknown varies in area from person to person, from Gabriel, the mightiest of the Lord's host, down to the most illiterate of God's children. There are those who know considerably less about God than do others.

The Rebellion in Heaven

In the opening of the great rebellion when Lucifer rose against his Sovereign Lord, He of all created beings who knew by far the most about our loving heavenly Father, found himself at his border between the known and the unknown beyond which he became aware of questions for which he found no answers. Despite the very long period before sin was found in him, during which he could find not the slightest trace of unfaithfulness with God, he was not prepared to believe in Him in the area of the newly discovered unknown. Keeping in mind the truth that unbelief is the first and greatest sin, and from it flows all other sin, it is not difficult to discern this progression in Lucifer's downfall.

The commencement of his losing faith in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, is marked by the point of time when he began to form his own estimation of himself contrary to God's evaluation of him. This meant that he considered himself wiser than God which was to disbelieve God. This unbelief of God's judgment of him centered around the issue of who was the greater, Christ or himself.

Having satisfied himself that God esteemed him much less than He regarded Christ, the next step following on after that, had to be his uncompromising, submissive faith in the divine assessment, or his utter rejection of God's word. Tragically, it was the latter course which he elected to follow. Then, the next development was his commitment of himself to dethrone his rival, Jesus Christ, for the bitterest enmity and the darkest hatred now possessed him.

Let us keep very clearly in mind that the presence of these evils in him was the direct outgrowth of unbelief. It must be clear to all that if he had retained unshakable faith in God's word, none of these evils which now abounded in him would have appeared at all.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God.

But He who would have the will of all His creatures free left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy.

In His unlimited love, kindness, and mercy, God convened a great meeting of the heavenly beings and presented to them more than sufficient light to meet the awful crisis which faced them, enabling those who implicitly believed in what the Lord said, to

retain their righteousness, and thus be saved from the darkness enshrouding the devil.

Again let me emphasize the point that only those angels who, at the time when Satan was rising in his rebellion, possessed and cherished faith in God in the unknown because of what they knew of Him in the known, survived the crisis, and did not fall with Satan. It was those who lost faith who fell even as it continues to be on earth since the fall in heaven.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.

About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (*Revelation 5:11*), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity.

Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due.

Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.

Two thirds of the angels accepted the words of the Supreme Being by faith, for even though they were beings possessing giant intellects and wonderful spiritual perceptions, they were not able to comprehend the heights and depths of the truths involved. More than four thousand years were required before they were able to discern the real nature of Satan's claims against the char-

acter of God. During those trying millennia, those who were loyal to God both in heaven and on earth were so because in the areas of the unknown of which they were aware, they lived by faith and faith alone.

And so it will continue to be in the coming eternity of perfect peace, harmony, and never-ending life. While many questions will have been answered, there will still be vast areas of the unlearned and unknown in which we will have to live by faith alone.

Total Submission to God

This faith was that which equipped Moses to win the battle against the Egyptian solution when he fled from Pharaoh and his mighty army. It would not have been easy for Moses to have truly worked in living faith because truly living faith requires total submission to God's being absolutely in command. There is probably nothing more trying to one's faith than to be in a life-threatening situation while, despite the powerful array of heaven's appropriate promises, God seemingly has no interest in keeping them, but appears to have abandoned you to your fate.

As time passes and no change is to be seen in the supposed divine attitude, the pressure to do something by taking God's work into our own hands, becomes all but overpowering. But one has to learn to rest his helpless soul in the charge of his Saviour. He who does this successfully is gaining a priceless lesson in humility which will make him to be more and more humble in himself. He will actually be changed from humility to greater humility.

In his flight from Egypt toward Arabia, Moses must have encountered a number of situations from which it required more than his wisdom and skill to escape. He had to look to a power outside of himself to furnish him with deliverance from each of these crises in turn. That was humbling, for there was no glory in it for him.

Think of the way then of that spirit of pride which rises in the man who is able to save himself. Again we will think of a man fleeing for his life. The first problem to be faced and solved is in what direction shall he direct his flight. Firstly he lists his options carefully assessing the merits and demerits of each one, until he makes a definite choice. He then heads off in that direction and after facing and overcoming a number of perilous situations through his own cunning, speed, disguise, or strength, he arrives at last at a place of safe refuge. When this great escape has all been achieved by and of himself, what feelings will naturally be generated in him? They certainly will not be those of humility but will be of great pride only.

Of course, if he is outwitted by his pursuers and dragged back to waste his days in a loathsome prison, he certainly will be humbled though not into the same sweet humility of the man who has made God his trust as in the case of Moses.



16. Apparently Abandoned

IN THIS chapter we will continue our study of those factors which were the instruments in God's hands to bring forth Moses as a meek and lowly one. The ministry of God for that great leader was so successful that he became fashioned into the meekest man who ever lived.

Meekness is a quality of peerless value. Those who truly possess it shall inherit the earth made new by the creative act of the Omnipotent One; that wonderful Paradise from which all pain, sorrow, and death shall be eternally excluded. Therefore, we have the highest incentives for searching out the procedures whereby this vital quality in its purest form can be acquired.

It is now time to consider the education in humility which Moses received during the second forty years of his life, during which session, much was done and much undone in shaping him for a career in the leadership of a nation to be freshly delivered from slavery.

It was during this time that Moses learned the tough lesson of patience, which is to submissively wait for the Lord to fulfill His glowing promises, when it appears that God has no intention of keeping His word. Let me stress that this is in appearance only, for God is a faithful keeper of His sacred word. One reason for the seeming delay is that our faith may be purified and strengthened.

The Early Life of Christ

There are numerous examples of this way of God's dealing with His people. We will study some of them in order to understand why God deals with us as He does. Let us begin with God's treatment of His Beloved Son, being careful to distinguish between what God appeared to be, and to be doing, and what He truly was, and was doing.

I would emphasize here that God dealt with Christ exactly as He does with every one of us, for our Saviour came to this earth as one of us, to be tempted exactly as we are tempted, and to overcome even as we have to overcome. He shows us the way to go and leads us in that way.

The Review and Herald, September 3, 1903:

Our Saviour passed over the same ground on which Adam fell. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He never yielded to temptation; and yet, in withstanding the assaults of the enemy, He exercised no power that is not granted us. He might have come to this earth accompanied by a vast retinue of angels; but He came unattended, to dwell with the poor and the lowly.

Throughout His life He was sorely tried. On every hand He was beset with temptation. He endured every affliction that we are called to endure.

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ For in that He himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

As a human being with all the limitations of humanity, Christ did not come into the world knowing from where He came, why He was here, or what his future held. He depended on the sure word of prophecy to reveal these things to Him. Thus He discovered much about himself when He attended His first visit to a Passover. While the crowds around Him were merely observing a lifeless ritual, He was awakening to insights into mighty spiritual truths of which He was the central figure.

The Desire of Ages, p. 78:

For the first time the child Jesus looked upon the temple. He saw the white-robed priests performing their solemn ministry. He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With the worshipers He bowed in prayer, while the cloud of incense

ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.

No doubt His whole being must have responded to this awakening realization with urgent desires to step out there and then to save the world from its fearful fate, but with that calm abiding patience which is characteristic of true humility, He submissively returned to His father's carpentry business in Nazareth to await His appointed time. It was a wait of eighteen years.

Time which is passed is over and gone, while we set our faces toward the future and its glowing promises. But, generally speaking we are an impatient people, who do not readily submit to long periods of waiting for the promises to be fulfilled. It is so difficult for us to accept the fact that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 32:

Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. Through the symbols of the great darkness and the smoking furnace, God had revealed to Abraham the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and had declared that the time of their sojourning should be four hundred years.

Genesis 15

¹⁴ Afterward, [He said,] shall they come out with great substance.

Against that word, all the power of Pharaoh's proud empire battled in vain. On "the selfsame day" appointed in the divine promise,

Exodus 12

⁴¹ ...it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Not only was the time and place of Christ's first advent predetermined, but every other event in His life was appointed its moment and location. After His first visit to a Passover, the next great event for which He looked was His baptism and His consecration into the ministry.

We who quickly read through the few pages devoted to recording the events of His life during those twelve years, do not think of how long they would have seemed to Him, as His great heart of compassion was being drawn out in yearning to save sick and dying mankind. All around Him, every day, souls were going down into their graves lost forever, and there were so few if any with the answer to the problem. And to make matters more desperate, God seemed to have withdrawn into himself having, apparently, abandoned the world to its fate.

As the mission of the Redeemer unfolded before Him, and He saw that He was to be the Saviour of mankind, what a temptation He must have faced to lose patience and "do something." This is a temptation which arises out of righteousness, for, the more we are charged with the love of God, and the more our souls are drawn out in compassion for others, the greater the pressure to take matters into one's own hands.

The Baptism

Eventually for Christ, the eighteen years ended, and, responding to the directions given to Him by the Holy Spirit, He departed from His home in Nazareth and headed for John the Baptist's place of ministry in the wilderness.

The Desire of Ages, p. 109:

Tidings of the wilderness prophet and his wonderful announcement spread throughout Galilee. The message reached the peasants in the remotest hill towns, and the fisher folk by the sea, and in these simple, earnest hearts found its truest response. In Nazareth it was told in the carpenter shop that had been Joseph's, and One recognized the call. His time had come. Turning from His daily toil, He bade farewell to His mother, and

followed in the steps of His countrymen who were flocking to the Jordan.

Under the ministry of John, Jesus requested baptism, upon the satisfying of which request Jesus stepped out of the water, on to the river bank and bowed in prayer. It is of considerable significance that at this moment of time, in that place, by this action:

The Desire of Ages, p. 111:

A new and important era was opening before Him.

Firstly, the magnitude of the coming conflict, and the nature of that struggle were now seen by Him with a clarity and force exceeding even His comprehensive previous understanding of these vital matters. So vivid, compelling, and urgent were the responsibilities confronting Him, that He was constrained to respond, as it is written in these next paragraphs:

Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus bowed in prayer on the river bank. A new and important era was opening before Him. He was now, upon a wider stage, entering on the conflict of His life. Though He was the Prince of Peace, His coming must be as the unsheathing of a sword.

The kingdom He had come to establish was the opposite of that which the Jews desired. He who was the foundation of the ritual and economy of Israel, would be looked upon as its enemy and destroyer. He who had proclaimed the law upon Sinai would be condemned as a transgressor. He who had come to break the power of Satan would be denounced as Beelzebub. No one upon earth had understood Him, and during His ministry He must still walk alone. Throughout His life His mother and His brothers did not comprehend His mission. Even His disciples did not understand Him. He had dwelt in eternal light, as one with God, but His life on earth must be spent in solitude.

As one with us, He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin. The peace lover must dwell with strife, the truth must abide with falsehood, purity with vileness. Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit.

Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory, and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest. He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent Love.

This was an intensely critical moment. The very atmosphere was charged with purest love, living faith, divine power, and solemn dedication. The onlooking angels were deeply moved and inspired.

The Desire of Ages, p. 112:

Never before have the angels listened to such a prayer. They are eager to bear to their loved Commander a message of assurance and comfort. But no; the Father himself will answer the petition of His Son. Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory. The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour's head descends a dove-like form of purest light—fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One.

This was far too important a moment to be recognized by anyone less than the Father himself, much as the beautiful angels were eager to bring to Christ a message of assurance and comfort. Instead, the voice of God was heard from the heavens above saying:

Matthew 3

¹⁷ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Let us now carefully consider what this solemn declaration would have meant to Christ, and what it would have led Him to expect in His immediate future, bearing in mind that, as the following statement declares, He made no plans for himself but daily accepted the plans which His Father made for Him.

The Desire of Ages, p. 208:

But the Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for himself. He accepted God's plans for

Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will.

So, subsequent to His dedicatory prayer on the bank of the Jordan River, Jesus made no plans for himself but looked to His Father to supply the plans for that day and the next. And that is what the Father did. He supplied His Beloved Son with His plan for the immediate future—a journey into a desolate wilderness area utterly devoid of any kind of food, shelter, and human companionship, and inhabited by wild animals.

Sent Into the Wilderness

The inspired record emphasizes the truth that the plan for Jesus to spend forty days of meditation and prayer while He fasted to death, did not originate with Him, but that these movements were administered by God, the Holy Spirit.

The Desire of Ages, p. 114:

Luke 4

¹ And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

The words of Mark are still more significant. He says,

Mark 1

¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts.

Luke 4

² And in those days He did eat nothing.

As our knowledge of the ways of men versus the ways of God will have taught us, for Christ to be sent off alone to spend almost six weeks in a desert wasteland was not what humans would have planned for Him or anyone else. A human plan-maker would have seen this as a pointless waste of time especially in view of the urgent need for Christ's work to begin as soon as possible.

He had waited in true humility with divine patience and dedication for many years for this very moment when He could bring life to the spiritually and physically needy. The needs were desperately urgent. There was no time to lose. The plaintive pleas of millions were begging for relief. He had accepted His commission; His Father had signified His total approval. It was time to sound the cry:

Matthew 22

⁴ All things are ready; come to the marriage.

With all that accomplished, surely it was time for the work to be undertaken without any delay.

Christ the man could have remonstrated with His Father, protesting that there was no time to spare for this period in the desert. He could have thereupon rejected His Father's program, and then formulated His own devisings to take its place.

But for our utterly humble, submissive Saviour to adopt such a course is unthinkable. He was utterly emptied of self. Therefore He was utterly filled with humility, which is to be filled with living faith, and perfect righteousness, which is perfect obedience to all the commandments of God, and the unreserved acceptance of Him as our Plan-maker in everything.

Had Christ appealed against God's plans for Him, He would have been declaring that, as a human being, He was wiser than God, the Infinite One. That is the ultimate manifestation of pride—the classification of one's self as being superior in wisdom to the Sovereign of the universe. This was the sin in Lucifer, the attempted exaltation of himself above our God who is infinite in knowledge and wisdom.

Our Danger

Terrible as this insulting sin against the Most High is, we are all in serious danger of committing it. There are several reasons for this:

1. We are not prepared to accept as best for us the painful, self-sacrificing decisions which God would have us make. We think we know a better, smoother way than the one He has chosen for us, and are tempted to excuse ourselves from walking the pathway He has mapped out.

This is unbelief, the progenitor of all other sins, and it is pride, the attempted exaltation of the insignificant creature above the almighty Creator.

2. In view of God's infinite power and enduring love, we expect Him to give us just what we think we should have and, when He does not do so, we tend to petulantly complain that He does not really love us.

The greatest temptation to entertain these unjust, untrue, ungrateful, and unloving thoughts is when we, for one reason or another, are called upon to experience delays in deliverance from life-threatening situations.

A Season of High Faith

An excellent example of this is provided in Christ's battle with temptation in the desert shortly after His baptism. Lovingly led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, Christ was directed to fast and pray as a needful preparation for the fulfillment of His great mission. At first, the experience was a glorious one.

The Desire of Ages, p. 118:

When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness.

Anyone blessed with such a lovely relationship with God, will have no difficulty in believing that God is a covenant-keeping God who loves us with an infinite love, is faithfully guarding us from the cruel power of the enemy, and is supplying all our needs. His presence can be felt, His voice heard, His blessings realized, and His truth verified.

During such seasons of refreshing and glad assurance, the tempter, recognizing that conditions are not favorable for an attack, stands off and bides his time. He knows that a negative reaction frequently follows high faith, as happened to Elijah when Jezebel threatened his life.¹⁴ The more glorious and wonderful the walk with God, the more devastating the fall which may follow.

The Glory Departs

So it was with Jesus who found himself suddenly alone, for the glory which had enveloped Him vanished as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, 118.

But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony,

Isaiah 52

¹⁴ His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.

Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ.

For how long did the glory remain with Christ so that its presence rendered Him insensible to desperate hunger, and nourished Him with life from above? The answer is that the glory remained with Him until the forty days were ended as is revealed in the following statement:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1080:

While in the wilderness, Christ fasted, but He was insensible to hunger. Engaged in constant prayer to His Father for a preparation to resist the adversary, Christ did not feel the pangs of hunger. He spent the time in earnest prayer, shut in with God. It was as if He were in the presence of His Father. He sought for strength to meet the foe, for the assurance that He would receive grace to carry out all that He had undertaken in behalf of humanity.

¹⁴ See *Prophets and Kings*, p. 161.

The thought of the warfare before Him made Him oblivious to all else, and His soul was fed with the bread of life, just as today those tempted souls will be fed who go to God for aid. He ate of the truth which He was to give to the people as having power to deliver them from Satan's temptations.

He saw the breaking of Satan's power over fallen and tempted ones. He saw himself healing the sick, comforting the hopeless, cheering the desponding, and preaching the gospel to the poor—doing the work that God had outlined for Him; and He did not realize any sense of hunger until the forty days of His fast were ended.

The vision passed away, and then, with strong craving Christ's human nature called for food. Now was Satan's opportunity to make his assault. He resolved to appear as one of the angels of light that had appeared to Christ in His vision.

This agrees with the Scriptures where it is written:

Matthew 4

² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry.

Luke 4

² And in those days He ate nothing, and afterwards, when they had ended, He was hungry.

During the forty days of fasting when "He was lifted above human weakness," He was insensible to hunger or weakness, because He was fed from above but this did not prevent Him from wasting away until He was emaciated. The effect on his body was as if, while fasting, His soul had not been nourished with the bread of life.

A Difference Between Christ and Moses

In this there is a difference between Christ's fast in the wilderness, and Moses' forty days and nights of fasting on Mt. Sinai. As the following statement shows, Moses abstinence from food was just as total as was Christ's, but the effects differed from one to the other:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 313:

Upon the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, Moses was called up into the cloud. The thick cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the glory of the Lord broke forth like devouring fire.

Exodus 24

¹⁸ And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

The forty days' tarry in the mount did not include the six days of preparation. During the six days Joshua was with Moses, and together they ate of the manna and drank of "the brook that descended out of the mount." But Joshua did not enter with Moses into the cloud. He remained without, and continued to eat and drink daily while awaiting the return of Moses, but Moses fasted during the entire forty days.

Moses however, did not emerge from his fasting tortured by the desperate need for immediate nourishment, nor was he emaciated, and his visage marred as was Christ's. What then made the difference?

The Review and Herald, July 28, 1874:

In the wilderness of temptation Christ was without food forty days. Moses had, on especial occasions, been thus long without food. But he felt not the pangs of hunger. He was not tempted and harassed by a vile and powerful foe, as was the Son of God. He was elevated above the human. He was especially sustained by the glory of God which enshrouded him.

It must have been in the different purposes for which Christ on the one hand, and Moses on the other, were called upon to fast over so long a period.

Our Saviour was there in face to face confrontation with the devil, to gain the victory over appetite for all mankind, so that anyone who will can receive the victory thus gained for him. Let us all understand with increasing clarity that this victory was not easily won, for, by the time Satan was forced into ignominious retreat, the Son of God lay dying on the battlefield.

Moses was called apart for different purposes:

- to receive instruction for the erection of the sanctuary,
- to be tutored in the training of the priesthood, and
- to be entrusted with the laws, and the principles of their administration.

He was not called in to win any battles, or to prove any points of truth. There was no evil foe present with whom he had to struggle. He was shut in with the Almighty, where Satan could not have any access to him. Therefore, he did not emerge from the experience worn, marred, and emaciated, but instead, came forth, refreshed, reinvigorated, and strengthened to resume his staggering responsibilities.

A Time of Desperate Need

Once the glory departed from Him, Jesus became acutely aware of His desperate need. He found himself faced with the life-threatening problem of physical starvation, for which He needed a legitimate Problem-solver who, mindful of His need for immediate relief, would supply that need according as He had faithfully promised He would. There was only one Person who could satisfactorily fill that role, and that was His Heavenly Father to whom He directed His faith-filled petitions for deliverance.

No doubt, confident of immediate relief, He directed His prayers heavenward, but no answer came.

- He listened, but heard nothing! There was no reply!
- He looked upward, but saw nothing! There was no revelation of light and truth!
- He longed for the assurance that He was not forsaken, but was answered by silence!

Wild beasts surrounded Him anticipating a carrion feast. Soon, if no help was forthcoming, He must sink unconscious to the ground with no defense against those ravenous carnivores. That

was a most alarming prospect even in the face of the natural human instinct to survive at any cost.

But, in His case, the necessity for survival was infinitely more critical than the mere human instinct of self-preservation. He was the Saviour of the world and He knew it. He also quite correctly understood that in the time table of that work, there had to be three and one half years of ministry at the end of which His sacrificial death awaited Him.

That program could not be changed, so that Christ could not die then and there alone among the wild beasts. He had to live until the time prophesied. There could be no other way, nor could there be any other person through whom it could be done. There was no reserve Saviour to do the work should Jesus fail. Therefore, should Christ die at this point of time, the plan of salvation would be destroyed, there would be no sacrificial death on Calvary, Satan would triumph, and all would be lost.

The world's Redeemer, fully understanding the issues at stake, was possessed with a total concern for God's cause, but found what seemed to be an absolute preoccupation of God with other matters elsewhere. God had declared at the Jordan that Christ was His Son, but He appeared unconcerned with His desperate plight, and worse still, He looked as if He cared nothing about whether the plan of salvation foundered or floated.

The Temptation

And Satan was there to insinuate that God did not love Him, was certainly not a Father to Him, and could not be trusted to plan successfully for Him. Therefore, the evil one contended, if Christ's mission was to be successful, He had better commence making His own plans for the successful execution of His commission beginning by turning stones to bread in order to save the life about which God seemingly cared nothing.

The Desire of Ages, p. 118-119:

Matthew 4

³ If You be the Son of God.

The words rankle with bitterness in his mind. In the tones of his voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus? Would He leave Him in the desert with wild beasts, without food, without companions, without comfort? He insinuates that God never meant His Son to be in such a state as this. "If You be the Son of God," show your power by relieving Yourself of this pressing hunger. Command that this stone be made bread.

Satan's determined strategy was to implant in Christ, the spirit of unbelief, and, certainly the witness of sight and circumstances provided him with powerful support. He did not for one moment appear to be a much loved and well cared for son, and much less the Son of the living God. At least, such a faithful Son would be heard and answered.

The Desire of Ages, p. 119:

Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch-deceiver.

Therefore it was a struggle for the Son of God not to feel and believe that God cared not for Him or for His work of saving the lost. It was a life-threatening struggle to go on believing in the love and wisdom of the Almighty. But humility triumphed and a shining faith kept Him absolutely true.

The Same Battle

The same battles must be fought and won by every believer in Jesus. There will be seasons when in our desperate need, we pray without ceasing for the solution to problems of a quite serious nature, but no answer comes. Days, weeks, months, and even years may be involved during which time no answers seem to come through. For instance, Jacob did not gain full relief for his sin against his family for twenty years.

When passing over this ground, there is the most terrible temptation in our deep distress to doubt God's love, to feel that He is unconcerned about our troubles, and that we can hardly view Him as a loving, compassionate Parent. If we succumb to this temptation and as often as do, we are yielding to unbelief, the first and greatest of all sins, from which all other sins spring. This is the pathway of pride, and never the way of humility.

But living faith continues to believe no matter what the witness of sight and circumstances might claim. All that we can see and feel may proclaim that God does not care about us, but faith knows it is not so.

Be encouraged with the truth that Jesus has passed over this ground, and, on our behalf has won the total victory over unbelief and pride, by replacing them with faith and humility as every one of us can likewise do through the saving grace of Christ.



17. Perplexity and Trial

WHILE the fearful ordeal through which Christ passed on the mountain of temptation is immeasurably greater than any such trial that we shall be called upon to bear, yet the same test in principle must be successfully met and overcome by everyone of us if we are to become qualified to enter heaven.

Christ Gives Us the Victory

At the same time, we can be very grateful that we do not each have to go on a forty-day fast in order to gain the victory over the flesh and the devil. Of this we are assured in the following statement:

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 189:

All the fasting in the world will not take the place of simple trust in the word of God. "Ask," He says, "and you shall receive"...You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. There would be no virtue in such a fast; but there is virtue in the blood of Christ.

It is a very comforting truth that Jesus has gained the victory for us, and that He longs for us to accept this victory as our own, for thereby is to be found the absolute certainty of deliverance from every temptation however great or small it might be. Jesus, seeing this glorious result of His faithful ministry, was inspired to press His way through every barrier, override all obstacles, and plant His banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.¹⁵

The Desire of Ages, p. 490-493:

Beyond the cross of Calvary, with its agony and shame, Jesus looked forward to the great final day, when the prince of the power of the air will meet his destruction in the earth so long marred by his rebellion. Jesus beheld the work of evil forever ended, and the peace of God filling heaven and earth.

¹⁵ See *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 995; *The Signs of the Times*, April 14, 1881.

Henceforward Christ's followers were to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own.

Luke 10

¹⁹ Behold, [He said,] I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper.

He who fights the good fight of faith, never moves out to get the victory over Satan every day. That is a very wrong procedure and, as such, is certain to meet with defeat. No! Firstly, the true Christian receives the victory from Christ as a gift and then sallies forth to be confronted by an enemy who has been permanently conquered. This understanding will produce an attitude which will strengthen faith and will cause you to triumph gloriously.

But this does not mean that we can always expect to understand what the Lord is doing, especially when His behavior is seemingly so contrary to His character, so much out of tune with His glorious promises, and what our knowledge of those assurances has led us to expect of Him. An example of this is provided in God's seemingly unfatherly conduct toward His Son at the very time when He needed Him most, that is, when, almost dead from His forty day fast, Satan came to terribly tempt Him as studied in the chapter previous to this one. Two levels of faith are involved here.

Faith in His Power

Firstly there is a level of faith based on the knowledge that the gospel is the creative, redemptive power of God, which enables us to believe that God assuredly can and will do all that He has promised. This is the faith which was possessed by the multitude after Christ fed them with a few loaves and fishes and when with great enthusiasm they prepared to crown Him king of the world.

The Desire of Ages, p. 377:

Seated upon the grassy plain, in the twilight of the spring evening, the people ate of the food that Christ had provided. The words they had heard that day had come to them as the voice of God. The works of healing they had witnessed, were such as only divine power could perform. But the miracle of the loaves appealed to every one in that vast multitude. All were sharers in its benefit. In the days of Moses, God had fed Israel with manna in the desert; and who was this that had fed them that day, but He whom Moses had foretold? No human power could create from five barley loaves and two small fishes, food sufficient to feed thousands of hungry people. And they said one to another,

John 6

¹⁴ This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

All day the conviction has strengthened. That crowning act is assurance that the long-looked-for Deliverer is among them. The hopes of the people rise higher and higher. This is He who will make Judea an earthly paradise, a land flowing with milk and honey. He can satisfy every desire. He can break the power of the hated Romans. He can deliver Judah and Jerusalem. He can heal the soldiers who are wounded in battle. He can supply whole armies with food. He can conquer the nations, and give to Israel the long-sought dominion.

Their faith in Christ's wonderful power was very real and very active, so much so that they were prepared to immediately initiate what they deemed to be the obvious course of action, which was to take Him by force and make Him king. They were fully confident that their Messiah would cooperate with them in their planned procedures even though somewhat reluctantly at first.

They were convinced that when He saw how successful their plans were, He would become an enthusiastic leader in their schemes.

But Christ was not in the least prepared to work in accordance with their ideas, for they found no place in His mission to save from sin. The people had to learn:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 174-175:

Before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within.

Faith in His Way

This being so, what the multitude proposed was quite the opposite from what Christ came to do. What they needed, was not only faith in what He had the power to do, but faith also in the way He went about carrying out the will of His Father, or faith in the way He was relating to them personally.

At times, this can be most difficult to exercise, for God does not operate according to human procedures or principles of operation. To us His is the strange act. He is the One who says that His ways are not our ways nor are His thoughts our thoughts. Therefore, we can be positively sure that God will perform His work in ways which will be contrary to any human planning. When this happens, we must rest by faith in what He is doing even though it does not make sense to us, and may even be out of character with us.

There are many examples of this problem in the recorded history of God's dealings with His children. Let us turn briefly to look over the seemingly strange behavior of God through Christ in the death of Lazarus, the friend and believer in Jesus. Here, on the Master's part, as seen through human eyes, was strange behavior indeed.

The three members of the family at Bethany were very precious to Jesus, for, in a land where almost everyone had turned against the Messiah, here were three priceless souls whose proven love

and loyalty were an oasis in a vast windblown desert of unbelief. Lazarus is described as being...

The Desire of Ages, p. 524:

...among the most steadfast of Christ's disciples...From their first meeting his faith in Christ had been strong; his love for Him was deep, and he was greatly beloved by the Saviour. It was for Lazarus that the greatest of Christ's miracles was performed. The Saviour blessed all who sought His help; He loves all the human family; but to some He is bound by peculiarly tender associations. His heart was knit by a strong bond of affection to the family at Bethany, and for one of them His most wonderful work was wrought.

Though He was the great Fountain of life, and operated at a level high above that understood at times by even the best informed of His followers, He personally needed the refreshing to be obtained through fellowship with those of kindred spirit, who shared with Him an all prevailing interest in God's great work in the building of God's kingdom in God's way. He found His needs supplied in this home. Therefore, what a wonderful privilege it was to entertain Him and thus supply that need. They were rendering a service to the cause of God the value of which they were unaware.

At the home of Lazarus, Jesus had often found rest. The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples; and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here He found a sincere welcome, and pure, holy friendship. Here He could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that His words would be understood and treasured.

Christ needed them, and they needed Him, and never was their need greater than when Lazarus fell so sick that his sisters perceived He was close to death and sinking rapidly. This situation

naturally dictated a certain predictable course of action from the sisters, Mary and Martha.

They apparently and rightfully had no faith in the medical profession of that time, but they certainly had unquestioning faith in Christ as their mighty Healer as is evidenced by their calling for Him to come to their rescue. They were aware of His success in healing all manner of diseases including the dreaded leprosy. They had heard that even the dead had been called to life. Exercising creative power and procedures, He had but spoken the word of life, and instant healing had been the result.

And, no doubt, from their hearts He had banished the ruling presence of the sin-master so that they understood within themselves the restoring power of His spoken word. Thus, by personal experience they knew that the gospel is the living, creative power of God to deliver from sin and sickness. Thus they all three knew that, what He had done in all of them spiritually, He could quite readily accomplish in Lazarus physically. They fully believed that, once Christ entered the sickroom, the malady afflicting Lazarus would vanish, and he would stand up in perfect health.

Thus it is clear that their faith in what He could do for them was strong and true, but then this was not so much a test of faith in what Christ had the power to do for them, as it was a test of faith to see if they could still believe in Him when they could not understand the procedures by which He would handle the situation. So they sent for Him as soon as...

The Desire of Ages, p. 525-526:

Sorrow entered the peaceful home where Jesus had rested. Lazarus was stricken with sudden illness, and his sisters sent to the Saviour, saying,

John 11

³ Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.

They saw the violence of the disease that had seized their brother, but they knew that Christ had shown himself able to heal all manner of diseases. They believed that He would sympathize with them in their distress; therefore they made no urgent

demand for His immediate presence, but sent only the confiding message, “He whom You love is sick.” They thought that He would immediately respond to their message, and be with them as soon as He could reach Bethany.

Let us look carefully at their responses to their situation in the light of what they knew of Christ and His power and their consequent expectations of what Christ would do for them.

Faith That Works by Love

The two outstanding qualities which manifested themselves once this crisis developed, were faith and love. Their faith is revealed in the words:

The Desire of Ages, p. 526:

...they knew that Christ had shown himself able to heal all manner of diseases.

That He could do the same for them, they fully believed, for no shadow of unbelief blemished their faith. Their love for Jesus was matched by their knowledge of His love for them as is revealed in these words:

They believed that He would sympathize with them in their distress;

–and,

John 11

³ ...he whom You love is sick.

Let us in imagination put ourselves into the place where Mary and Martha stood and see what we would expect the Saviour to do. You believe that He has the omnipotence to speak the word of power in order that healing will come, and that He loves you with undying love, so that He will intensely desire to deliver you.

Add to that the fact that you have been experiencing sweet fellowship with your Maker, your Doctor. Known sin has been eliminated from your life, and there has been nothing of late to mar your relationship with Jesus who remains a welcome guest in

your heart and home. Daily you have been dedicating yourself to the Master's service, and, as far as you know, there is nothing in you to prevent His working for you.

Under these conditions what would you expect in response to your importunate prayer? You would definitely expect immediate attention to your petition, just as these two sisters did:

The Desire of Ages, p. 526:

They thought that He would immediately respond to their message, and be with them as soon as He could reach Bethany.

That is what you too would expect, and, if you think back over your past religious experience, it is what we all have expected under similar circumstances. Sometimes that is just what happens, for the healing does come quite quickly at times. But it is not always so. Sometimes there is to us an inexplicable delay, or we are given something else altogether, or in our judgment, nothing at all is provided.

So it was that Jesus, in seeming contradiction to the operations of love, made no attempt to reach Bethany, but remained where He was. His only response was to send a brief message to the sisters:

John 11

⁴ This sickness is not unto death.

No doubt, the family read these words to mean that Lazarus would not die,

The Desire of Ages, p. 526:

...and they clung to the hope that Lazarus would live.

But He died. Into what a turmoil that development must have thrown them. Their faith in what Christ was doing was certainly being very closely tested, yet they were prevented from casting any blame on Jesus by the grace of Christ which was in them, and through the loving ministry of their friends, the heavenly angels. To them the following promise was certainly fulfilled:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 341:

We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand.

When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.

The Desire of Ages, p. 526:

When Lazarus died, they were bitterly disappointed but they felt the sustaining grace of Christ, and this kept them from reflecting any blame on the Saviour.

Christ's disciples, the ones who were closest to Him and were best informed in regard to His procedures, were unable in this instance as at other times, to reconcile Christ's behavior with His character. They actually thought His reaction to the news about Lazarus' illness lacked any manifestation of love.

When Christ heard the message, the disciples thought He received it coldly. He did not manifest the sorrow they expected Him to show. Looking up to them, He said,

John 11

⁴ This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

For two days He remained in the place where He was. This delay was a mystery to the disciples. What a comfort His presence would be to the afflicted household, they thought. His strong affection for the family at Bethany was well known to the disciples, and they were surprised that He did not respond to the sad message,

³ ...he whom You love is sick.

It was a sad and difficult time for those men who loved and believed in their Redeemer, and wished above all else that His mis-

sion would prosper. Jesus' behavior pattern reminded them of similar problems they had previously encountered in understanding and believing in Christ's procedures and His way of dealing with them and others as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 526:

During the two days Christ seemed to have dismissed the message from His mind; for He did not speak of Lazarus. The disciples thought of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. They had wondered why Jesus, with the power to perform wonderful miracles, had permitted John to languish in prison, and to die a violent death. Possessing such power, why did not Christ save John's life?

This question had often been asked by the Pharisees, who presented it as an unanswerable argument against Christ's claim to be the Son of God. The Saviour had warned His disciples of trials, losses, and persecution. Would He forsake them in trial? Some questioned if they had mistaken His mission. All were deeply troubled.

Those of us who have been through great periods of test and trial, when we have been faced with what was to us, inexplicable behavior on God's part, will have no difficulty in understanding just how those men felt under these trying circumstances. They were tempted to feel that Jesus did not really love the family in Bethany upon whom He appeared to have turned His back just when they needed Him the most.

To make matters more alarming, it looked as if this was not an isolated case, for, to all appearances, John the Baptist, once his usefulness to the cause was over, had been left to die a violent death just when he needed to be delivered the most.

If this was the law of the kingdom, the pattern of behavior of the Master toward His most important followers, what dismal future awaited them? From that they wondered:

Would He forsake them in trial?...All were deeply troubled.

To compound the problem, after two days, Jesus announced that they would return to Judea. Now those faithful followers were more bewildered than ever because of the perils awaiting them there through the hatred of the Jewish leaders.

The Desire of Ages, p. 526-527:

After waiting for two days, Jesus said to the disciples,

John 11

⁷ Let us go into Judea again.

The disciples questioned why, if Jesus were going to Judea, He had waited two days. But anxiety for Christ and for themselves was now uppermost in their minds. They could see nothing but danger in the course He was about to pursue.

⁸ Master, [they said,] the Jews of late sought to stone You; and do You go there again?

⁹ Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?

I am under the guidance of my Father; as long as I do His will, my life is safe. My twelve hours of day are not yet ended. I have entered upon the last remnant of my day; but while any of this remains, I am safe.

From our vantage point of distant time, and in the light of the inspired writings which we now possess, it is not so difficult to understand and believe that God knew what He was doing, and that that was the very best and most loving course which could be followed. But to have lived through the drama with all its perplexing moves was quite another matter. The best way to appreciate their temptation to judge God as being uncaring and unloving, is to recall when we have seemingly been abandoned by God, and have been tempted to believe that God neither loves us nor cares about us.

Reacting to Pressure

When subjected to this pressure to doubt God, there are several courses open to us. Firstly, we can permit unbelief to flood our souls, which will result in our entertaining the idea that God is uncaring and unloving, and cannot be trusted to do that which is best for us.

To respond after this manner is certainly to walk the dark and evil pathway of pride. It is misjudgment of God, and the exaltation of the human above the divine, which leads inevitably to rebellion, the taking of our salvation into our own hands.

The second possibility, like the first, includes great perplexity over what God is doing for us, but, because we have cultivated the conviction that God does love and care for us, we unhappily resign ourselves to our sad situation. Earnestly we plead with the importunity of Jacob for relief from the pressure to be unbelieving, and when it is not immediately forthcoming, we cling to our faith until relief comes. During this period, we are prepared to die with Him and for Him though we cannot understand why. This was the position in which those perplexed disciples found themselves once Lazarus had died.

The Desire of Ages, p. 527-528:

John 11

¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Thomas could see nothing but death in store for his Master if he went to Judea; but he girded up his spirit, and said to the other disciples,

¹⁶ Let us also go, that we may die with Him.

He knew the hatred of the Jews toward Christ. It was their purpose to compass His death, but this purpose had not succeeded, because some of His allotted time still remained. During this time Jesus had the guardianship of heavenly angels; and even in the regions of Judea, where the rabbis were plotting how they might take Him and put Him to death, no harm could come to Him.

While the disciples were perplexed and disappointed in Christ's response to the needs of the family in Bethany, they did not seem to exhibit a spirit of rebellion and unbelief, but rather demonstrated a humble willingness to die with Christ. I really appreciate

the way in which Thomas girded up his spirit and rallied the rest with his stirring call:

John 11

¹⁶ Let us also go, that we may die with Him.

We remember Thomas as being the doubter after Christ's resurrection, but his positive move just before the resurrection of Lazarus is generally overlooked.

But the truly faith-filled and humble response is to be so in tune with God that we will be unconcerned with the witness of sight and circumstances, no matter how dark and convincing it might be. Turning our backs on this witness, we will always not only believe in God's incredible love for us all, but will be literally filled with that love. It will be the all-pervading force in our lives, the presence of which will not permit even the slightest suggestion that our heavenly Father does not love to abide in our hearts and minds, even for so long as the slightest instant.

There is nothing Satan is more determined to do than to destroy our faith in our loving heavenly Father. He works to persuade us that God neither loves nor cares for us. Therefore we are to expect as a matter of course that we will pass through periods of walking through the barren wilderness where God cannot be seen for what He is, but Jesus has been there before us and is ready to guide us through the darkest as well as the best lit portions of the way home. It will help you without end if you never forget that there is nothing abnormal about these seasons of distress. Every one who is finally victorious must survive them.

Messages to Young People, p. 63:

Those who are finally victorious will have seasons of terrible perplexity and trial in their religious life; but they must not cast away their confidence, for this is a part of their discipline in the school of Christ, and it is essential in order that all dross may be purged away. The servant of God must endure with fortitude the attacks of the enemy, his grievous taunts, and must overcome the obstacles which Satan will place in his way.

18. A Training for Heaven

WE CONTINUE our study of the making of Moses into the meekest man who ever lived on this earth apart from Christ, the Son of God and man. Therefore, we are studying the education and consequent development of him who emerged from that schooling as the most powerful and best qualified on the earth.

When that work had been completed, God was able to find in him the qualified instrument He needed to carry forward the great enterprise conceived in God's mind by which the enduring principles of everlasting righteousness were to be established on earth as they are in heaven.

The importance of our understanding how this very great and potentially proud man could emerge from this educational process so utterly changed from what we would truly expect him to have become, to what he did become, cannot be overstressed. The better we are able to understand the effectiveness of the factors involved in that training, the better we shall appreciate the power of true Christian education which is designed, not merely to fill the mind with information, but to actually reshape the character, correct the sense of values, give a new direction to the thoughts, and remodel the entire personality.

God's Education Plan

It is God's intention that every person on the earth shall be educated through the same unconquerable processes by which enduring change for the better was effected in Moses and must be achieved in us.

Moses was called to fulfill a work of the greatest magnitude and of the most far-reaching importance. It was a work which was not to be limited in time or space to this earth, nor was it simply aimed at relocating an entire nation in their traditional homeland, Canaan. That was included as a step along the way but did not satisfy the purpose of the Almighty to reinstate spotless right-

eousness as the perfect formula by which every child of God could enter into the ultimate perfection of the kingdom and into the full and perfect fulfillment, joy, and happiness which it offered.

Despite the incredible leadership which Moses possessed in righteousness as particularly manifested in the humility which enabled him to talk with God face to face, Moses failed to lead the people of God across the Jordan into possession of the earthly Canaan.

The people themselves even though under the leadership of Moses, Joshua, and other messengers of the Most High who surely understood what the divine objectives really were, failed to understand that the occupation of the earthly land of promise was but an early phase in the overall intentions of God, and not the end in itself.

Therefore, the work has remained unfinished until the present day, and we, the people of the Lord who have survived the terrible determinations of our wily foe to destroy us, are now the inheritors of the same awesome responsibility which was faced by Moses and the Israelites. We are they who now must lift the eyes of God's people still in Babylon far above the low levels of preoccupation with the acquirement of mere earthly and material securities, which are only temporary securities anyway, for the day is soon coming when all that men consider to be secure, shall with them be utterly swept away forever.

Well would it be if the people of God today were to have a very clear realization of why we are on this earth as God's true children. Oh! That we could be brought to the place where we could see that those who today are the counterpart of the mighty Moses, must equal him in all the righteous character excellencies. Then the quest for the possession of these qualifications would truly command our entire attention, interest, and effort. We would, with the greatest possible dedication, aspire to be, with

Moses, the meekest, and therefore the most powerful people on the face of the earth.

It will not be sufficient then for one person to be outstanding in the possession of these beautiful qualities. Every believer, who will then be numbered with the Church that is the one hundred and forty-four thousand, will all have to be at the same level of perfection.

The Time Factor

For Moses personally, eighty years were allotted to the work of intense preparation which was enough to make him the meekest man who ever lived on this earth, and therefore the most powerful man, and the only one to spend eighty days in God's actual presence.

But in our case, it is with dismay that we view the shortness of time available to us in which we are to attain to the same levels of humility and power as those achieved by God in Moses, without our realizing that there is another angle from which to consider this important point.

The point is that whereas God had eighty years in which to prepare Moses, He has had considerably more time to prepare the final people for their work. And whereas he had one generation from which to take one man and build his character back then, the character of the last people will be the product of the efforts of many generations.

When that truth is recognized, we have a much more encouraging and inspiring picture. We will see that God has been able to allot a considerably longer period of time to the work of preparation than He did for Moses in whose case the period of time stood at eighty years.

The Reformation Was the Beginning

In our case the work began with the opening of the Protestant Reformation in the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe being its morning star. Prior to his courageous stand against the man of

sin, the world was sinking from one depth of apostasy to an ever-deeper one, until it seemed that the ultimate depths of all the worst kinds of iniquity had been plumbed. Rightly, it has been classed as the "Dark Ages."

The Great Controversy, p. 60:

But "the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, b. 1, ch. 4. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God's law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position.

The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.

Despite the abhorrence with which the secular rulers viewed the abominations which were practiced in the name of religion, and their consequent determination to cleanse their nations from these abuses, none of these kings and princes were able to begin the reformation they so much desired to see.

There was a reason for this and it was that it is impossible to establish righteousness by force. It took the preaching of the gospel to achieve the beginning of the Reformation, and it was in Wycliffe's day that such a factor was introduced into the situation. In this connection A. T. Jones asks and answers this question:

How came the Reformation?

The Reformation did not and does not consist in exposure and denunciation of the iniquities of the Roman church.

That is included in the Reformation, as an incident; because it is of the essence of Christianity to hate iniquity, as it is to love righteousness.

It was the iniquities, enormities, and desolations, wrought by the Roman church, that caused the universal desire and the pressing demand that there should be a reformation. Yet the Reformation was not wrought by magnifying or dwelling upon these things.

The Reformation springs from another principle, lives in another atmosphere, and works in another field, than that.

If exposure and denunciation of the iniquities of that church could have wrought reformation, then the Reformation would have been in the world more than five hundred years before it was.¹⁶

How then came the Reformation? It came by the preaching of the life-saving, life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ, the inimitable power of God to save from sin. Whenever that gospel is injected into a world crying out for reformation, the kingdom of darkness will be shaken to its very foundations. So it was in the ministry of Wycliffe through which...

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, p. 89:

The appeal to men's reason aroused them from their passive submission to papal dogmas. The Scriptures were received with favor by the higher classes, who alone in that age possessed a knowledge of letters. Wycliffe now taught the distinctive doctrines of Protestantism, salvation through faith in Christ, and the sole infallibility of the Scriptures. Many priests joined him in circulating the Bible and in preaching the gospel; and so great was the effect of these labors and of Wycliffe's writings, that the new faith was accepted by nearly one-half of the people of England. The kingdom of darkness trembled.

There is only one power by which results such as these can be effected, and that is not by a mere theory of the truth, but only by the actual presence of God's personal power producing trans-

¹⁶ A. T. Jones, *The Reformation: 14th to 16th Century*, p. 73.

formed lives on the one hand, and the bitterest persecution on the other.

Thus in the mighty ministry of John Wycliffe, there came the beginning of the deep, searching, constructive work of preparing a people who shall eventually be, with Moses, the meekest, purest, and yet most powerful people ever to have lived excepting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These will be that people through whom the Almighty one shall manifest the full perfection of His character, and through whom He will utterly destroy the wicked, and as totally establish righteousness throughout His eternally enduring dominions.

The Stages of Education

The preparation of Moses advanced from one stage to the next, and it would be a serious mistake on our part to view each part as being disconnected from the remainder. If, on the other hand, we find ourselves able to plainly see a distinct line of progression in God's preparation of him for the extremely important work which lay ahead, then we will have a most important awareness of the divine purpose in permitting the great controversy to take place.

There was, first of all, the powerful, molding influence of his prenatal development, which was followed by three months in hiding. After this came the twelve years under state protection, during which his mother was his dedicated educator, before his being inducted into his place as a member of the royal family.

This was followed by the years spent in the royal court up until the age of forty, during which time he was historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator. This was the period during which he learned so much that he had to unlearn later. It was terminated by his slaying of the Egyptian, and his unpremeditated flight across the Egyptian border into Arabia, and on to Midian.

The next forty years spent in Midian and terminated by the call to service from the burning bush, were the final years which God had allocated to the preparation of His messenger. In those trying but, in the end, satisfying years which followed the ending of his preparation, we see the effectiveness of that training, and how everything was accomplished according to a preplotted schedule.

We must also recognize of course that when Moses accepted the commission to lead Israel to Canaan, the work of physical, mental, and spiritual education and development which had marked his education and preparation, simply continued as the means of keeping his execution of his work fresh, pure, powerful, and entirely effective.

For the child of God, whether he be on earth or when he comes to heaven above, there can and will be no stopping place, but, instead, a continual development, and growth of all his powers.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 340:

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained.

Just as Moses preparation progressed from one stage to the next even though God had not at the outset handed him a time table of all the events in that program, so it is that we, as a people, are being moved along from one stage to the next towards a completed work of preparation for the final admission of God's people into their true home. While we too are not provided with a time table spelling out just when each new development will take place, we can look back into the past and recognize both the steps taken and something of their significance.

A Continuing Reformation

Our survey should begin at least with the peerless witness of John Wycliffe, for that was the turning point in history when men began to turn to God. But the death of Wycliffe did not terminate God's work of preparation of the people who would fulfill His purposes to the highest degree at the end of time.

God called the next generation, not merely to repeat that which had been taught by Wycliffe, but to build on the foundations so solidly laid. Of necessity, the messengers who followed Wycliffe, namely the Bohemians, Hus and Jerome, had to know more than did their predecessors, live a higher level of obedience, and thus demonstrate that they were taking steps which effectually distanced themselves from the papacy, while drawing nearer to God on a constant basis.

Another century passed and God called Martin Luther to follow Him still higher in the schooling which was advancing the work of preparing the final people to fight the last great battle of all time, the struggle called Armageddon. While there has always been that group of people who do not advance with the Lord as He reveals new truths, there has also always been that group of true-hearted souls in each generation who do not rest satisfied with a mere repeating of what has gone before.

Instead of looking back with complacency on the achievements of the past, they have looked forward to catch the bright beams of light shining from His glorious throne. As new duties were laid open before them, they planted their feet firmly in the pathway of truth and advanced as far and as fast as they could. Ever looking forward and upward, they progressed on to greater levels of preparedness.

After Martin Luther came the remarkable ministry of John and Charles Wesley. While repudiating none of the light unfolded in the past, these men assuredly advanced the revelation of the gospel to new heights of simplicity and power, and laid the foundations for the unfolding of the third angel's message.

The Advent Movement

There was a vast amount of light poised to irradiate God's people on earth when Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary from where He continued His ministry as "the Refiner and Purifier of silver." Those who had received the light concentrated on them from the Holy Place, and who did not fail the test imposed upon them through the great disappointment, found a great work of preparation going forward in them at the very time when they thought the work was complete.

The Great Controversy, p. 424-425:

Christ had come, not to the earth, as they expected, but, as foreshadowed in the type, to the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming at this time to the Ancient of Days:

Daniel 7

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came [—not to the earth, but—] to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi:

Malachi 3

¹ The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, says the Lord of hosts.

The coming of the Lord to His temple was sudden, unexpected, to His people. They were not looking for Him there. They expected Him to come to earth,

2 Thessalonians 1

⁸ ...in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministrations there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church. Says the prophet:

Malachi 3

² Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appears? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.

While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of *Revelation 14*.

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.

Malachi 3

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to himself will be...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Then she will...

Song of Solomon 6

¹⁰ ...look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

The generation to whom Christ first ministered from the Most Holy Place, have all long since died, but this has not stopped the steady advancement of the work of final preparation of the people who shall be the counterpart of Moses who, this time, will lead spiritual Israel, not into a materialistic paradise, but into heaven itself.

In 1844, there were tremendous advancements made in the unfolding of the light by which the final generation is to become fitted for its work. It was so much so that God's people thought that they had received all the light necessary for them to be rendered fit to be given their eternal home.

Yet so bright, broad, high, powerful, and advanced was the additional light which came forty-four years later through Elders Waggoner and Jones, that those who had failed to keep pace with the advancing light questioned whether there was any connection between these new revelations and the original truths taught in the beginning of the movement. Among those of this class there were some who wrote to Sister White asking if it was in fact the third angel's message:

The Review and Herald, April 1, 1890:

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity."

But the full glory of the light of the third angel in verity was not given back in 1888 by the Holy Spirit through Elders Waggoner and Jones, nor has it yet been fully given even to this day through the present channels of God's selection, nor will it be until the very closing moments of human history.

The Review and Herald, June 3, 1890:

The question has been asked me, "Do you think that the Lord has any more light for us as a people?" I answer that he has light that is new to us, and yet it is precious old light that is to shine forth from the word of truth. We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us. We are not making the most of the light which the Lord has already given us, and thus we fail to receive the increased light; we do not walk in light already shed upon us.

While this was true of the people of her day, our generation, up to the present moment, is blessed with the clearest, most powerful, most effective, most comprehensive, and most beautiful light

ever revealed to God's people thus far. It is light shining upon us in order to remake us into His own divine image so that we shall acquire the power and the efficiency by which we will be God's instruments to bring to its final fruition the task for which God is preparing us.

Understanding the Objectives

The prospect of our being remade by the educational forces at God's disposal is greatly enhanced by our being aware of the objectives to be achieved by that transforming grace. Regretfully, all the Israelites could see awaiting them was a land flowing with milk and honey. Theirs was a materialistic ambition which could not bring them true and lasting enrichment.

God wished to establish them as a happy and holy people in the land of Canaan as His messengers of righteousness, but they wanted to be there as traders of the material blessings of the world. Consequently, they cherished no desire to be processed through a schooling by which, as a people, they might fully enter into the divine purposes, and, by the beautiful grace and power of total humility, become fitted to do naught else than the will of our Father in heaven.

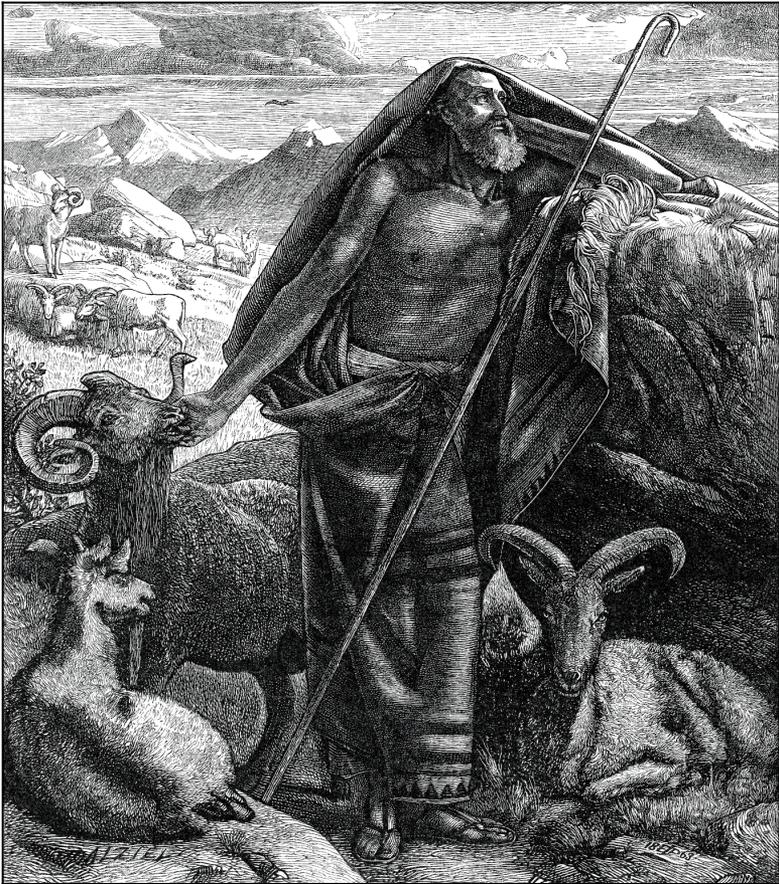
As certainly as Moses, in order to fulfill his life work, had to undergo a long work of education to prepare him for that work, so we too must be likewise remade in order to obtain the fitness required to fill the position needed to finish the work.

Let us fear the danger of regarding our heavenly home as the Jews regarded the blessings of Canaan. They saw only the material and thought they would have been completely satisfied with that kind of wealth. Do you find that you long only for the pearly gates and golden streets; for a world where there is no more death or sickness, nor pain of partings? Is this all that you wish to have waiting for you on the other side?

If this is the limit of our understanding, then we shall have but little interest in a protracted work of preparation effected by intense education.

Let us keep ever before us the need to understand the true nature of the work awaiting us in heaven, and in the meantime, let us become thoroughly versed in all the light which has been revealed.

Pray most earnestly that the light will effect in us such changes as will make us to be the meekest, and therefore the most powerful people in existence.



19. Schooling the Inner Man

THE classroom into which Moses was graduated subsequent to his hasty flight from Egypt was very close to being in as marked contrast with the one abandoned as it was possible for it to be.

The Removal of Earthly Support

- He left behind the position of heir to the throne of the most powerful nation of the world of that time, to take up the work of sheep herding.
- Behind him was the command of the all-conquering Egyptian armies; but in Midian not a single soldier stood by awaiting his orders.
- In Egypt he wore the finest of clothes, lived in the most luxurious palace, and ate the tastiest of foods, but in the land of Midian, all that was left behind forever.

His flight had been so hasty that there had been no time to gather up any possessions, and he must have been quick to discard any clothing normally worn in the palatial environment of the royal residence lest it identify him as the fleeing fugitive.

It reminds me of Christ's instruction to the Christians who were to flee from Jerusalem when the momentary lifting of the siege by the Romans would give them the briefest of opportunities to escape with their lives. They were not to waste a moment of time, were not to come down from their housetops to grab even essential clothing. Instead, they were to pray that their flight be not in the winter, so that they could do without the additional clothing even though their escape route would carry them into the mountains where it can be decidedly colder than in the lowlands.

We as followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, have been instructed that we shall suffer the loss of everything, in many cases in virtually a moment of time. But have we ever realized for our-

selves, personally, what a devastating effect this can have on one's life when it means that all that upon which we have depended for our life-support has been totally swept away in a moment of time. We know not who might be our enemies, nor who we can trust as our friends. Everything is insecure, there is nowhere to go, no one to turn to and no visible further source of income.

Just imagine yourself in the position of one of the early Christians working in the field as the moment of flight approaches. Across from him stands his home in which are the clothes worn by himself and his family; his furniture, kitchen utensils, food supplies carefully stored from the annual harvest, and some personal treasures. It all spells security, and the supply of their personal needs.

As he works on, the moment of flight arrives. The abomination of desolation stands in the holy place. The farmer and his family take flight without casting a single, anxious look behind them. It has been more than difficult enough to establish a home, support a family, and provide security for the future. Now, in a moment, the work of years is swept away, and replaced with destitution. There is nothing to take the place of the almost total loss now sustained in their service to Christ.

It is one thing to read about such experiences happening to others, but it is certainly something else to experience this kind of trauma for one's self. Only those who have gone through this shock for themselves can know how crushing and devastating it can be. None other can know how it feels to see that which has required a lifetime to accumulate, and which is regarded as being essential to one's immediate survival, being wrenched from one's possession, forever.

Whenever this happens to a true child of God, as in the case of Moses, he is to know and understand that he is passing through another lesson in the school of life. It is a lesson in which he is to learn what are the true values of life and bear witness that He has

learned them. In the case of Moses, it was a matter of deciding whether he valued the visible throne of the world, or the invisible treasures of truth as being of real and enduring value. He demonstrated by fleeing into perpetual divorce from Egypt, that he chose to be numbered among God's children, and to learn whatever lessons were to be gained from this experience.

The School of Adversity and Humility

For Moses, the experience of totally, suddenly, and dramatically losing all he had built up during the first forty years of his life, was his initiation into the next school. This was geographically located in the land of Midian, in which he spent the next forty years in further preparation for his lifework.

When we remember that Moses was a mighty man possessing the great physical strength necessary to fill the position of the general-in-chief of Pharaoh's military might; that he was a man of such a powerful intellect; of strict moral rectitude; and of rare gifts with which to serve the Lord, one marvels that God could not place him in command of the exodus at the time when the first forty years of preparation were completed. We tend to think that God would accept the best that Moses could do, would bridge the deficiency with His own divine merit, and thus achieve the desired result.

But, in God's infallible assessment of the situation, Moses was not ready to receive his commission to initiate and follow through to its successful conclusion, the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. This fact is established in the following statement:

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 168:

God overruled the act of Moses in slaying the Egyptian to bring about his purpose. He had in his providence brought Moses into the royal family of Egypt, where he had received a thorough education; and yet he was not prepared for God to entrust to him the great work he had raised him up to accomplish. Moses could not immediately leave the king's court, and the in-

dulgences granted him as the king's grandson, to perform the special work of God. He must have time to obtain an experience, and be educated in the school of adversity and poverty. His father-in-law feared God, and was especially honored of all the people around him for his far-seeing judgment. His influence with Moses was great.

So it was that Jethro became the next instrument through whom the work of preparing Moses was advanced still further. When Moses abandoned Egypt as his kingdom forever, he was led by God through Arabia to the household of Jethro, a man with a close relationship with God, and a very powerful religious experience. He was just the man needed at this time to point Moses in the right direction, and lived so far from the Egyptians that, under God's hiding hand, there was no possibility of Moses hide-away becoming known to his deadly enemies.

This is not to state that Moses had to be at least a certain minimum distance from the nation straddling the Nile before God could have successfully concealed him. This is proved by his being in Pharaoh's territory close to the royal palace, when as a baby sentenced to death with all the other male infants born to Jewish parents, the Lord concealed his presence for three months.

In God's selection of Jethro's home, the distance from Egypt was but one of the factors involved in the making of that choice. Once these are enumerated, it becomes clear as to why the Lord led Moses through Arabia to the household of Jethro, the Midianite.

Let us firstly consider how God guided him unerringly to Midian as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

The whole matter [of Moses' killing of the Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite] was quickly made known to the Egyptians, and, greatly exaggerated, soon reached the ears of Pharaoh. It was represented to the king that this act meant much; that Moses designed to lead his people against the Egyptians, to over-

throw the government, and to seat himself upon the throne; and that there could be no security for the kingdom while he lived. It was at once determined by the monarch that he should die; but, becoming aware of his danger, he made his escape and fled toward Arabia.

The Lord directed his course, and he found a home with Jethro, the priest and prince of Midian, who was also a worshiper of God.

This does not mean that, on this occasion, God sent His angel to visibly appear to Moses with specific instructions for immediate flight as when, for instance, the angel appeared to Joseph the husband of Mary and directed him to return to Nazareth:

The Story of Jesus, p. 27:

Joseph and Mary remained in Egypt till after the death of Herod. Then the angel appeared to Joseph, and said,

Matthew 2

²⁰ Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

This is the kind of leadership which we would all like to enjoy, for we imagine that it would make obedience to the Most High, in matters of procedure, a simple question of knowing the will of God and obeying it. I make a distinction here between obedience to moral standards such as keeping all the ten commandments on the one hand, and following the will of God in choosing a job, place to live, etc. on the other.

When the issue is the keeping of the Ten Commandments, no other alternatives are offered. For instance, when it says not to steal, it plainly states that you shall not seize another person's possessions no matter what the circumstances might be, and that is the end of the matter. The only question is:

“Shall I do right or wrong?”

“Shall I break the Sabbath, or shall I carefully keep it?”

“Shall I bear false witness against my neighbor, or shall I speak only the truth?” and so forth.

But this was not the kind of decision Moses had to make when the information reached him that the king was exceedingly angry, and had condemned him to immediate death. The question he then had to ask was:

“In which direction shall I take my flight? Shall I head south up the Valley of the Nile and disappear into the jungles of Africa, or shall I go east into Ethiopia, or north into Canaan, or west along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea?”

Just how the Lord guided him to follow the route which led eventually to Midian we are not specifically told, but I would expect that, under the particular circumstances, he would have prayed much, intelligently applying the Sabbath Rest principles to whatever degree he understood them.

In response, I would expect the Lord would have adopted a role which would have left Moses to be largely insensible of His presence, yet able to gently direct him in the way he was to go. Looking back later when he could see at least some of the perils from which he had been delivered, he would have solemnly praised the Lord for His great salvation.

Such a relationship introduced by God at the outset of the second forty years, set the tone of the classroom proceedings during the following span, the direct objective of which was to remake Moses from being a proud man into the meekest man ever to live on earth.

The most effective measure God could employ in achieving this objective was to present himself before His messenger as the meek and lowly One. God does not have to adopt this character, for He is in himself infinitely humble. That is His actual character. He acts humbly because He is humility. Likewise He loves because He is love.

To the human mind, the presence of great power is associated with great pride, and in human relationships this is true. Great generals of armies are proud and even arrogant people. So are successful business people, politicians, law enforcers, criminals, and such like. Quite correctly, we understand that God is the most powerful Being in existence, but incorrectly, without even thinking about the matter, we assign to Him the position of being the proudest of all beings.

But whereas among men power spells pride, with God, power and humility are inseparable companions, while power and pride are two incompatibles. Consider that truth as it is revealed in the following statement:

The Desire of Ages, p. 20:

Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeks not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto.

The declaration that it was the meek and lowly one who manifested the character of God, can only mean that God is meek and lowly. A powerful, proud person cannot manifest the character of the humble One. It could have been said that “In the high and mighty one was manifested the character of God,” and this would likewise have been true, for God is high and He is mighty, though not haughty.

But it was predominantly as the ultimate, infinite perfection of meekness that Christ, as Moses’ Teacher, should present the Almighty God to him. This teaching technique is based on the principle that by beholding we become changed into the same image from glory to greater glory, if we fix our gaze on heavenly things. On the other hand if we choose to behold the satanic, we

can utterly rely on being changed from shame and degradation, to greater shame and degradation.

It is left with us to make the right choice, the one which will adequately prepare us for our final work, the displaying from within ourselves of the full and final revelation of God's infinite love. The powerful effectiveness of this educational procedure by which a person is changed into the image of God by beholding His lovely character, needs to be much better appreciated than it has been. When we have learned to recognize how effective it is as a teaching tool, we will diligently strive to take the fullest advantage of this procedure. Consider well the following paragraph:

The Sabbath School Worker, July 1, 1894:

The glory of God is His character, and it is manifested to us in Christ. Therefore it is by beholding Christ, by contemplating His character, by learning His lessons, by obeying His words, that we become changed into His likeness. As we are enlightened by His Spirit, we see no virtue or merit in ourselves. We realize there is naught in us but deformity.

But the glory of the Redeemer, manifested in His atoning sacrifice, in His justifying righteousness, in His fullness of grace, whereby we not only obtain pardon but receive sanctification, fills the whole soul with love and adoration, and in contemplating the goodness, mercy, and love of God, we become transformed in character. Jesus said,

John 17

²² The glory which You gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

On him who receives Christ, the glory of the Lord has risen, the Sun of Righteousness has shined, and, rising from his low and worldly state, the believer reflects the light of Christ's glory. As he continually looks to Jesus and contemplates His beauty, he is more and more transformed into the child of light.

Especially while Moses was back in Egypt was he surrounded with displays of human greatness and, day by day, these were exerting powerful influences on his developing mind. That which made things much more difficult for him was his obligatory in-

volvement in the Egyptian world. His work day by day brought him continually into close contact with the boastful expressions of the nation's pride, the magnificence of its architecture, its glorious victories in battle, and its supposed advancement in the sciences. All this amounted to a considerable shaping of his personality in the wrong direction, requiring an even greater influence to reshape it in the opposite direction.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.

Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

It was not enough to delete all the negative influences from his life. The vacuum had to be filled with educational factors which would serve to reshape his character and personality. So it was that the relocating of Moses in a rugged, austere environment, served to flow influences into his being which began the noble work of reshaping his thinking and his life.

Human Effort Required

It is most important that those of us who are determined to achieve the meekness which God established in Moses, understand that we ourselves firstly have to be aware of our great personal need to be transformed in heart and life as he was. Then we must take the work in hand ourselves. We have to accept the fact that while changing our environment and circumstances will help, it alone will not accomplish our sanctification. It will accom-

plish some of the desired effect, but it must be accompanied by total commitment.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

In all who have been chosen to accomplish a work for God the human element is seen. Yet they have not been men of stereotyped habits and character, who were satisfied to remain in that condition. They earnestly desired to obtain wisdom from God and to learn to work for Him. Says the apostle,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

But God will not impart to men divine light while they are content to remain in darkness. In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained.

Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 331:

But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.

Relating Correctly to Experiences

In this connection, it is vital that we relate to life's experiences as valuable revelators of weaknesses and impurities in us which need correction, rather than windows into the hearts of those who offend us. This is achieved by following certain simple procedures which I will now outline.

It is inevitable that we will experience disagreeable encounters with other human beings from time to time, when even the best of friends have trouble maintaining a harmonious relationship. When an incident of this character threatens to divide us from a brother, relative, friend, or even a stranger, we all tend to experience the same reaction which is to blame the other person for the reaction produced in ourselves. We feel that if only the other person had not spoken the hurtful words, or taken the evil action against us, we would never have responded in the way in which we did. Thus, in our hearts we tend to justify our anger and resentment, while condemning the other person as if all the fault rested with him.

In following through such a course, we have overlooked some very important principles. We have failed to remember that in the judgment where God has the last, irrevocable word, we will never be required to answer for the action taken against us by any other person. That for which we will be called upon to answer will be our reactions to his actions.

Imagine the following judgment scene. There you are standing before the great Judge of the universe who is examining your response to an incident in your life in which you exhibited impatience, anger, resentment, and a spirit of retaliation in response to your character having been maligned. As the Lord looks with disfavor upon your behavior, you are quick to argue that if your enemy had not injured you, you would never have reacted as you did. "Therefore," you contend, "it is all his fault."

In reply to this hopeful defense, the Lord would point you to the fact that, at this moment of time, it is your name which has

come up for investigation, not his. His name will come up in its appointed lot, and when it does, he will be judged by the same standard. The question in your case will not be as to what his actions against you were, but what were your reactions to his actions. Never let this truth be forgotten that it is not his actions against you, but your reactions to those actions for which you will have to answer in the judgment.

Being able and willing to clearly identify reactions coming from within ourselves which if not deleted from the life, will cost us eternity, is critical to our salvation. Success in detecting the evil presence requires that we keep a constant watch on ourselves so that in that moment when we find ourselves involved in such an incident of short or long duration, we will focus on our reactions and not the other's actions. Let him say what he likes, and do what he wishes, while we rest in the assurance that none of it will hurt us.

Forgetting all about the other person and his determination to hurt us as much as possible, we look upon ourselves in order to identify what is emerging. As surely as we honestly evaluate what has surfaced from within us as we depend on the Holy Spirit to bring sincere repentance, we will see ourselves as we really are.

Now, what a perfectly wonderful opportunity has come our way to be cleansed from self-justification, pride, retaliation, and any other evil thing which has been hidden within us. Realizing that what comes out of us is the fruit of what is in us, we come before Christ today, while there is probationary time remaining, confessing both what we are, and what we have done.¹⁷

When this approach to God is made in true faith and according to correct procedures, we can rely on the evil traits of character being rooted out, and their places filled with the lovely graces of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ The principles and procedures are presented in the book, *Acceptable Confession* by F. T. Wright.

At the same time, we will manifest an entirely different attitude toward the one who was attacking us, for we will speedily come to see that, even though his intentions were to put us down, the actual result was to clear the way for a more extensive soul cleansing than we have previously experienced. This was possible because cleansing from sin is always preceded by our becoming aware of its presence, and that requires some means of our eyes being opened to see the hidden plague spot.

Therefore, he was not your enemy; he was your friend; and we should thank the Lord for his ministry to us. If the opportunity is afforded us, tell him too with thanks, but do this only when clearly directed of the Lord. Evil workers do not usually appreciate that kind of testimony.

This is not the only means whereby such conviction can be gained. The study of the Scriptures when blessed by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, is a powerful agency in producing deep conviction in one's soul. With this principle we are so well versed that there is no need to elaborate on it here.

It should be that, when our enemy attacks us, there is no stirring from within which in any shape or form is a sinful reaction to the temptation from without. This is cause for guarded rejoicing, for it is powerful evidence that we do have the living victory over the sin problem. The rejoicing must be guarded, for Satan can wrest from us that which we have gained by replacing living faith with the darkness of unbelief.

Enticement and Provocation

The temptations from without come to the soul in at least two forms, enticement and provocation.

Enticement is when the devil holds out before you how pleasurable it would be to commit a certain sin, in response to which, if he succeeds, feelings of intense desire are aroused. Powerful stirrings are generated within, which draw the soul in the direction

of committing serious sin. Temptations from without find an answering chord from within as it is written:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 451:

Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet slide imperceptibly into sin.

Sins of provocation are those in which the devil takes an aggressive and attacking approach in order to bring out all the evil over which we have not gained the victory.

As we work on the elimination from our lives of this answering chord from within, we must learn to determine what constitutes true victory in the battle against sin. Otherwise we may be calling something victory which is not victory at all.

Let me refer you back to the situation described above in which the attacks leveled at us produce a retaliatory reaction. When this kind of response is aroused, anger meets anger, hatred meets hatred, force meets force, and so forth. There should be no one who would class this as victory.

But let us look at another outcome than the one described above. Instead of displaying the evil responses listed, they are brought under strict control, to the point where outwardly there is little, if any evidence of their existence. While inwardly burning with anger and resentment, the one being hurt appears calm, silent under suffering, and seemingly in perfect control of the situation. What has happened is that, as his evil temper boiled up, he did not permit it to boil over, but kept it under strict control, at least for the moment.

There can be powerful incentives not to permit a display of an uncontrolled temper such as when delicate business negotiations are going forward, or it is very important that a good impression be left on other people. These forces have sufficient power to suppress evils in the life up to a certain point, after which, once the limit of control has been reached, the explosion will take place.

But, when men are faced with hatred and pride boiling up in them from below, and successfully keep these forces under strict control, they will claim that they have the victory over sin. They will also claim that the experience described in *Romans 7* is a description of the life of victory.

But, while it is a great victory to keep your evil temper under perfect control, this achievement falls far short of being the life of victory as Jesus lived it. With Him, the evidence that victory was present was shown when there was no answering chord within, no evil temper to keep under strict control. The following words testify to the truth of this:

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1129:

The first Adam fell; the second Adam held fast to God and His Word under the most trying circumstances, and His faith in His Father's goodness, mercy, and love did not waver for one moment. "It is written" was His weapon of resistance, and it is the sword of the Spirit which every human being is to use.

John 14

³⁰ Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me,

—nothing to respond to temptation. On not one occasion was there a response to his manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground, to give him any advantage. Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances.

That is the victory and nothing short of that will be classed as the victory in the great day of final reckoning. Christ, as our complete and perfect example, came to earth to live a life of victory at a level of which He could truthfully say that the prince of this world could find nothing in Him to respond to his temptations—no anger, no hatred, no pride, no covetousness, nothing!

This does not mean that, once this condition is reached, there will be no further temptation of any kind to sin; that we will have become immune to sin. This cannot be true, for Jesus was terribly

tempted even though Satan could find nothing in Him to respond to his temptations to sin.¹⁸

But, it must be self-evident that if hatred and other evils in this category do not exist within the individual, then there will be nothing which will stir them up in his life because they are not there! There can be no angry lion where there is no lion to begin with, and where the lamb rules in its place. Therefore the life of victory is achieved by the expulsion of the evil and the installation of its holy counterpart.

But, how will you know that you have this victory? When persecuted and provoked to say and do evil, you realize in that testing situation that there is no disposition in you to respond in the same manner; no desire stirring in you to partake of the pleasure of that sin; in short, when you show as much interest as the dead do in sinning, you may know that your religion is of the right order.

More than that, all those who have determined to have true victory over sin must be brought to the place where Christ was. They must be able to truthfully testify that Satan can find nothing in them. In this connection, ponder very thoughtfully the instruction contained in the following paragraph:

The Great Controversy, p. 623:

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of himself:

John 14

³⁰ The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me.

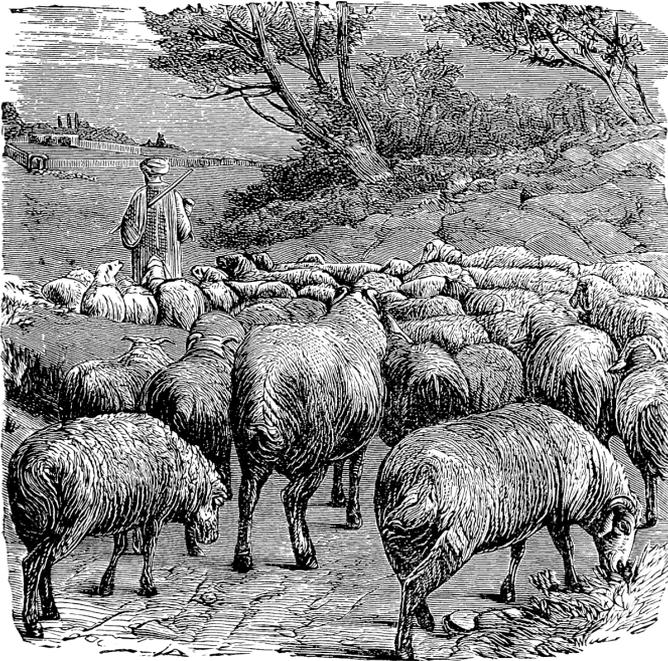
¹⁸ For a more detailed explanation of how Satan can bring pressure to bear on even the best of Christians, see the book, *Revival and Reformation* by F. T. Wright.

Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

As early as possible in our Christian walk with God, we need to see very clearly that we are here to be prepared to fulfill our destiny which is as much higher than merely becoming fitted for a dwelling in Paradise, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

God plans that we shall be His instruments for giving the final revelations of His awesome character to the dwellers both on earth and throughout the universe. To do so will require that as with Moses, so with us, we must endure a long period of preparation under God's special training.

That phase is almost over and, when it is, the entry into spiritual Canaan will soon thereafter be effected.



20. In the Household of Jethro

WE WILL now move on in our study of the vital factors which, in preparing Moses for his lifework, were essential in remaking him until he had become the meekest man in all the world. By the time this work was finished he had also become the most powerful, and was considered by Jehovah to be ready at last to lead His people into the promised land.

Not by the Will of Man

Moses most likely had thought that he could accomplish this mighty work from within the confines of the kingdom containing millions of people including both the Egyptians and the Israelites. We do not know how detailed his expectations and intentions were, but we can be sure they did not include his complete separation from Egypt for forty years. He never dreamed that he would be suddenly torn from his kingdom, forced into exile, and later brought back to accomplish his work by coming to it from without. Oh! what a humbling experience that was!

How typical this is on the part of those upon whom the Holy Spirit has laid the burden of a reformatory movement, large or small as the case might be. These men or women who deeply loved the church or the kingdom of which they were members or subjects, thought in terms of effecting their divinely appointed work from within the organization. They often had to learn that the church or the nation could not be reformed from within so that separation from it became an essential element in the successful outcome of the divine commission.

As a general who had received the highest education and training that Egypt could offer in the deadly art of warfare, he would have planned the strategy of the campaign with meticulous care and with abounding confidence in his personal qualifications. He decided that the first step in his plan to overthrow the Egyptians was to enlist the confidence and support of his own people, the Israelites. The failure of this objective threw him into a sad state

of lost confidence in God, and the assumption that God could not now use him as He had planned to.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 342-343:

Moses supposed that his education in the wisdom of Egypt had fully qualified him to lead Israel from bondage. Was he not learned in all the things necessary for a general of armies? Had he not had the greatest advantages of the best schools in the land? Yes; he felt that he was able to deliver them.

He first set about his work by trying to gain the favor of his own people by redressing their wrongs. He killed an Egyptian who was imposing upon one of his brethren. In this he manifested the spirit of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and proved himself unfit to represent the God of mercy, love, and tenderness. He made a miserable failure of his first attempt.

Like many another, he then immediately lost his confidence in God, and turned his back upon his appointed work; he fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. He concluded that because of his mistake, his great sin in taking the life of the cruel Egyptian, God would not permit him to have any part in the work of delivering His people from their cruel bondage. But the Lord permitted these things that He might be able to teach him the gentleness, goodness, longsuffering, which it is necessary for every laborer for the Master to possess; for it is these characteristics that constitute the successful workman in the Lord's cause.

So, before the failure of his first attempt, he considered himself ready to fulfill his mission without spending forty years in a very low density population area called Midian.

Training Under God

The Almighty however had a very different evaluation of Moses' preparedness or fitness in all respects for this work. Humans usually grossly underrate the amount of preparation needed before they have obtained the fitness to proceed with the Lord's work.

Patriarchs and Prophets, 247-248:

Man would have dispensed with that long period of toil and obscurity, deeming it a great loss of time. But Infinite Wisdom

called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of care-taking, of self-forgetfulness and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, longsuffering shepherd of Israel. No advantage that human training or culture could bestow, could be a substitute for this experience.

We think of Moses living a simple life during this period in Midian, and in comparison with mystical Egypt, with its ritualistic religious ceremonies, it most certainly was an uncomplicated schooling through which he passed for the second forty years of his preparation for his life's work. Yet, it was powerful and deep. It involved fearful struggles with wrong concepts which had been embedded deep in his conscious and subconscious mind while in Egypt, and which struggled for the mastery.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.

Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

God foresaw all the problems facing Moses and supplied in Midian just what was needed for his deliverance from those powerful influences. We will study these provisions one by one with special consideration being given to those which are apt to feature in the work of finishing in us the preparation to meet and conquer the beast and his image.

The Influence of Jethro

The first of these to which attention will be given was the influence and role of Jethro, the Priest and prince of Midian, to whom God guided Moses in his flight from Egypt.

It is very important that we become better acquainted with this fine Christian, for, like him, we, in these last days, will almost certainly be responsible for strengthening the experience of others in readiness for the last great struggle of the ages. When the time comes, the work we shall be called upon to do will range from person to person from seemingly insignificant to far reaching in its significance. When such opportunities come to us, the position and work of Jethro will be an enormous inspiration and encouragement to us.

Jethro was not an Israelite nor a relative of them until Moses married his daughter, but nonetheless he was a man of strong religious convictions and deep and powerful spiritual experience. Of this godly man in connection with Moses' search for a refuge when he fled from Egypt we read:

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 168:

God overruled the act of Moses in slaying the Egyptian to bring about his purpose. He had in his providence brought Moses into the royal family of Egypt, where he had received a thorough education; and yet he was not prepared for God to entrust to him the great work he had raised him up to accomplish. Moses could not immediately leave the king's court, and the indulgences granted him as the king's grandson, to perform the special work of God. He must have time to obtain an experience, and be educated in the school of adversity and poverty. His father-in-law feared God, and was especially honored of all the people around him for his far-seeing judgment. His influence with Moses was great.

The fact that God chose Jethro and his family to provide a house of refuge for the fugitive Moses, constitutes a divine endorsement of Jethro as a man whom God could entrust with sacred responsibilities. He was approved of God for the purpose.

Here was a man of great integrity whom God knew would not reveal Moses' hiding place to the Egyptians as it was in his power to do. It would have been a simple matter for Jethro to have sent a secret message to Pharaoh advising him that, for a handsome sum of money, he would disclose Moses' whereabouts. In response to this the monarch would have eagerly dispatched a band of kidnappers to capture the runaway and drag him back to the kingdom on the Nile for speedy execution.

It is claimed by some among men that every man has his price. In other words, if you offer a man enough money, or gold, or a high position, or liberation from bondage, or whatever is greatly to his advantage, he will commit any crime you might wish him to. Many a man has lost his life at the hands of paid assassins, and Moses knew that there were any number of unscrupulous men who would gladly have betrayed him to the king, even for much less than the king was prepared to offer.

But it is not true that every man has his price, for there are, as there have ever been, men of integrity who would not betray sacred trusts at any price, even to the forfeiture of liberty and life itself. Jethro was such a man, for which reason the Lord guided Moses' footsteps to his shepherd's tents, where he was safe from disclosure.

Jethro feared God, for which reason he uncompromisingly regarded Egypt as being God's enemies, and, for which reason he kept himself completely separated from them. This meant that he chose a life of poverty in preference to the wealth with which trade and social intercourse with the Egyptians would have enriched him.

During his childhood, Moses' parents had taught him to resolutely make decisions favoring God's righteousness, and to as positively reject those urged upon him by the great enemy of God and man, whether the pressure to do so came from the priests, his foster mother, the king, the army, or from any other source. But there came the time at last when Moses was compelled to make

the irrevocable commitment either to become a permanent part of God's kingdom, or to turn his back on Jehovah forever.

The Review and Herald, December 14, 1897:

Moses was called upon to choose between the world and God. Two conflicting objects were placed before him. The treasures of Egypt, the honor of a temporal crown, and all the worldly benefits involved in this choice, were presented by the prince of this world. The opposite side was presented by the Prince of Light, the world's Redeemer. He held out the recompense of reward, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and showed also the path of affliction, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, that must be traveled by all who gain this reward.

The decision was left with Moses. As a free moral agent he was at liberty to choose. All heaven was interested in the matter. What would be his choice?—obedience to God, with the eternal recompense of reward, or obedience to that most agreeable to his own will?

Hebrews 11

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

This is a lesson for all who would render true service to God. We must not venture to remain where our associations will tend to draw us away from God, and to obscure our view of the reward of obedience.

These two men, Jethro and Moses, had both made the same momentous decision. Therefore, there was between them from their very first meeting that close and wonderful bond known only to Christians who have made the decision to turn their backs on great worldly honor and riches, in favor of the heavenly treasures. These men were two of a kind with a deep understanding

of each other, that served to strengthen them both in the faith of Jesus. It is not surprising then that Jethro...

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 168:

...was especially honored of all the people around him for his far-seeing judgment.

A man with moral courage and divine enlightenment certainly would be a man of far-seeing judgment which would be demonstrated by the decisions he made. Moses had many opportunities to witness Jethro's incredibly wise decisions and he soon learned that these were the result of Jethro's God-given courage and wisdom. Moses knew that Jethro would choose the pathway of truth and righteousness no matter what the cost might be to himself, simply because that was the correct course to take, as it would unerringly lead him and them into the kingdom of light. Like Abraham, he looked for a city which has eternally enduring foundations, and forsook those which pass away.

Here then was just the man of God who had the spiritual strength, wisdom, and knowledge to guide Moses at this critical time in his life, out of and away from the soul-destroying influences of Egypt. That Jethro became involved in such a responsibility is revealed in such a reference as this:

The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 168:

His influence with Moses was great.

Once Moses arrived in Midian, it would not have taken long for mutual confidence to have become established between himself and Jethro, the priest and prince of Midian. Moses would have been filled with questions about the greatly changed circumstances of his life, for which he would have sought reassuring answers. Consider the bewilderment, confusion, uncertainty, and self-condemnation which would have harassed him as he tried to relate all this to his divinely appointed commission to lead Israel from the land of bondage to the promised land. He remembered how previously:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245:

The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people. He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God.

Based on the revelation of God's will, Moses had formed his expectations of just how the operation would be conducted. He no doubt had everything planned. Naturally, he thought in terms of a military solution, and looked upon his training as a mighty general of armies as an essential factor in fighting the war of liberation.

Then, suddenly everything was changed, all his expectations were swept away in the general confusion, and any hope of being the man to lead Israel to freedom seemed to have been destroyed. It must have been a very depressed, troubled, and confused Moses who arrived among the tents of Jethro. His carefully thought out strategy by which he had planned the overthrow of the Egyptians now lay before him in shattered, unworkable fragments. Never before nor afterwards had or would Moses' fortunes sink to so low a level.

A Man of Living Faith

At just such a time, Moses needed a strong man filled with living faith who could supply the answers. He would need to be a man who was emotionally uninvolved, who could view the entire situation objectively, and thus arrive at rational conclusions. That man at the right time and place, was Jethro.

This does not mean that Jethro understood every aspect of the situation enveloping Moses. To him things would have appeared as confusing and inexplicable as they did to Moses, but he would

have rested in faith knowing that God had everything under perfect control. He would have taught Moses to rest peacefully in the knowledge that God had not been caught by surprise, for He had complete foreknowledge of what had happened and of what would yet eventuate, and had made full provision to meet the emergency. There was absolutely nothing which could possibly go wrong so long as they refused to take matters into their own hands, and so long as they leaned their entire burden on the Lord.

It was an approach which David was to employ with great effectiveness many years later when he returned to find Ziklag destroyed by the Amalekites and his and his men's wives and children all taken captive. As Moses in his flight from Egypt felt that every earthly support was cut off, so David felt the same way before the smoldering ruins of Ziklag.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 692-693:

David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death.

In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, looked earnestly to God for help.

1 Samuel 30

⁶ [He] encouraged himself in the Lord.

He reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him? His soul was refreshed in recalling the many evidences of God's favor.

The followers of David, by their discontent and impatience, made their affliction doubly grievous; but the man of God, having even greater cause for grief, bore himself with fortitude.

Psalm 56

³ What time I am afraid, I will trust in You,

–was the language of his heart. Though he himself could not discern a way out of the difficulty, God could see it, and would teach him what to do.

The outcome of David’s casting the entire responsibility for his problem into the care of his loving heavenly Father was peace of mind for him, followed by the actual solution to the entire potential disaster. So under the tutelage of the calm, far-seeing, faith-filled Jethro, whose “influence with Moses was great,” Moses entered upon the second forty-year-long training period of his life. Jethro was the teacher, though not the only one, and Moses was the student.

Not a Violation of Gospel Order

It might appear that in this arrangement or relationship, gospel order was violated, in that someone other than God taught the messenger, whereas the messenger should receive his message directly from the Lord. Let us consider this seeming problem.

Firstly, Moses was not as yet God’s messenger, but was a student of his spiritual father, Jethro. The father to son relationship was extended by Moses’ marriage to Zipporah, one of the daughters of Jethro. In gospel order, it is proper that the parents be the first teachers of the children. Their task is to receive the light sent through the messenger, and after simplifying it to meet their children’s levels of understanding, to teach it to their precious offspring. In doing so, the parents have the opportunity to participate in preparing a future messenger as in the case of Moses’ mother and father, and later, Jethro.

Their preparation of a future messenger did not include the impartation to him of the actual message he was to bear. Their task was to cooperate with our friends, the angels, in developing in the future messenger the capacities which would enable him to encompass his divinely appointed work.

The Training of Egypt

Nor are we to overlook the training the Egyptian tutors drilled into Moses' mind as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. While there were considerable areas of wrong concepts which needed to be cleared away later, there was much useful information and training which were imparted to him by his Egyptian tutors. Heathen though they were, they still contributed to the preparation of the future messenger of the Lord, for not all the learning which the world has accumulated is valueless. It is a fact that some of the mightiest men in Bible history have received during their period of preparation, the highest worldly education available during their lifetimes. Examples of these are Moses, Daniel and his three companions, and Paul.

Under no circumstances however, are we to use these facts to justify our attendance at the great universities of today, unless, as in the cases of these men, special conditions apply, for, in these great halls of learning, that which is good is so mingled with error that only God can decide what can be received and what rejected. Therefore, no one by his own choice should elect to attend these schools.

If however, having faithfully committed our lives to the living out of the Sabbath rest principles, we find ourselves inducted into a learning situation such as those men faced, we can trust the Lord to keep us, just as He did those men.

Even so, Moses did not escape from the Egyptian education unaffected. There was so much for him to unlearn that it required forty years of oftentimes agonizing effort to expel the evil concepts and to establish the correct principles into their places in his mind.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. The influences that had surrounded him in Egypt—the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the

mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture—all had left deep impressions upon his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character.

Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions. It would require on the part of Moses himself a struggle as for life to renounce error and accept truth, but God would be his helper when the conflict should be too severe for human strength.

Under these circumstances, it is evident that the foundations laid down by his godly parents, and his later studies under Jethro's teaching, were more effective in preparing him for his lifework than all the learning acquired in Egypt. Whereas there was a great deal of that which he had absorbed in Egypt which had to be cast aside as worthless, very little if any of that imparted to him by his parents or by Jethro had to be cleansed away and replaced. These were eternal principles capable of withstanding any testing they might be called upon to bear.

A Series of Educators

It is evident that a series of educators in their turn contributed to the fitting out of Moses for his mission. None of these were capable of doing all the work, but each had to faithfully perform his part as if it were the only work involved. Yet none of these knew how extremely important their portion of the work was.

This was certainly true of his Egyptian tutors who had no idea of the future which awaited God's messenger to be. Could they have foreseen that the education they were giving Moses would play its part in enabling him to destroy the kingdom, they would have been very quick to terminate his tuition and his life.

Amram and Jochebed, Moses parents, were not aware when their child was born, of the mighty man he was to become. But they would have deduced from the special protection God had given him during the first three months of his life, that God had special plans for their son.

No doubt it was with great relief that Jochebed entered into the relationship with Moses' foster mother, which would give him lifelong physical protection. There was no murderous Egyptian soldier who would dare to kill him now, but his parents realized that a greater peril than death awaited their son in the courts of Egypt. To safeguard him against these corrupting influences, she injected much more diligence into his training than she gave to her other children.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 243:

She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God. All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children.

She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence.

She showed him the folly and sin of idolatry, and early taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency.

There are highly significant lessons to be learned by us from the roles of the different parties involved in the preparation of Moses for his lifework, especially since we are in training to finish the same work.

Long ago, the earthly land of promise should have been secured by Israel, and faithfully developed as the base for missionary operations around the entire world. Instead:

- The goodly land was looked upon as Israel's special endowment of benefit, blessing, and delightful home.
- The people mistakenly saw that objective as being the end in itself.
- They were covetous for worldly security which they expected to find in the adding of house to house and land to land.

Instead, they reaped unbelief in the only security which would have saved them from deadly apostasy—the faith of Jesus. We must succeed where they so tragically failed!

Very few believers down through Church history have been called of God to bear such a heavy burden of responsibility as was Moses. More likely than not, you are not one of them. Neither were the parents of Moses, Amram and Jochebed, in that they never occupied high positions of power and influence. Their lives were taken up working as slaves in Egypt and in bringing up their three children, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. But for the fact that they were the parents of the illustrious Moses, we would not even know their names.

Jethro likewise laid no claim to fame. He was an obscure shepherd in the sparsely settled land of Midian which lies on the eastern shore of the Sinai peninsula. Again, but for his contact with Moses, we would never have heard of him.

Yet, how critical to the success of the Lord's work was their faithful improvement of every opportunity to serve God's cause with the utmost diligence. But for their dedicated ministries, Moses would never have been shaped into the meekest of men, nor would he have become the greatest leader, apart from Christ, which Israel ever had. It would be impossible to calculate the incredible loss to God's cause if these people had felt their work too insignificant to receive their undivided attention and whole-hearted support.

Thus, while you may not have been chosen of God to be one of His messengers, there are marvelous opportunities for you to serve God in capacities which, though they may seem inconsequential, are in fact of the most critical importance.

The Role of Godly Parents

This is especially true of the role of parents with whom the new life begins. The start in life which they give their offspring determines the direction the child will take for the remainder of its life.

There is no area of human endeavor in the work of salvation that can match in importance the salvation of children even from their earliest moments.

As the last great storm is about to burst upon us, God must have a complete army of messengers standing by in full readiness to meet and conquer the beast and his image. To qualify, such an army of Christian soldiers must have been born again from conception or soon after, so as to ensure that there has been no impairment of their physical, mental, and spiritual powers. In addition, of the period of their prenatal influences, the utmost advantage must be taken by the parents on behalf of their children so as to make certain that the interests of the little ones remain forever interlocked with God's great enduring purposes of saving love.

We have but a scant understanding of the heights to which we must ascend in order to qualify to lead those still in Babylon into the promised land. It will call for the application of the most highly developed powers of body, mind, and spirit dedicated to the one great cause of establishing everlasting righteousness. It will require the loving, dedicated ministry of those who like Jethro, Amram, and Jochebed, could never be messengers themselves, but were placed in the position of opportunity where they could be and actually were powerful elements in the successful preparation of Moses, for his future work as messenger.

That same position of wonderful opportunity is open to every believer in Jesus, but, first and foremost every one of us must catch a vision of what the Lord has in mind for us to achieve, and to become fully aware of the fact that only one complete procedure carried through from beginning to end will produce the incredible people through whom God will finish the work at last.

The specifications for that procedure begin with born again parents, followed by their offspring becoming newly born at or soon after their conception. Thirdly, during the prenatal period, the life within the mother must be surrounded by the best possi-

ble influences. Finally, the individual must receive the most diligent training for:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

It is with confidence that I believe that only those who are the end product of this procedure will be qualified to be messengers in the near future. The life and ministry of Jesus proves this. Christ achieved the highest levels of spiritual, mental, and physical attainment possible to anyone clad in sinful, mortal flesh and blood, and He achieved it through the procedure listed above. Being divinity clothed with sinful, mortal flesh, He was on the same footing when conceived, as is any child born again at or soon after its conception. During His prenatal period, His mother maintained a close spiritual connection with heaven, and He was trained by the severest mental and moral discipline.

This would indicate that only those few in the present movement who were born again at conception have any hope of mounting to the highest levels of excellence, physically, mentally, and spiritually. But there is a promise which greatly extends the prospects so that more of us can be raised to the highest levels of excellence. It is to be found in:

Joel 2

²⁵ So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be put to shame.

I understand this to mean that, when the latter rain falls in flood-tide torrents, those who, through no fault of their own, have not been born again from conception, but who, before the falling of the latter rain have made the best of their opportunities,

will then be endowed with physical, mental, and spiritual power equal to what they would have had if their parents had known the way to bring the new birth to them at conception.

It is impossible at the present time to possess any real understanding of the glory which will be experienced by God's people when the Amrams, Jochebeds, and Jethros have all done their noble work, and the modern counterparts of Moses have taken their places as leaders under Christ. Let us therefore prayerfully consider the awesome effect of the following series of events:

1. Every believer in our ranks makes certain that he is actually and truly born again, all known sin has been put out of the life, and his experience is fresh and living.
2. Make equally certain that every child conceived be truly born again. Agonize in prayer until you know for certain that this is true;
3. Be an Amram, a Jochebed, or a Jethro to your children and to educate them for service.
4. Once your children are established in the faith of Jesus, together with them, reach out to souls in your immediate neighborhood, to Jerusalem, then wider still to encompass the more distant neighbors, Samaria, and then on to the entire world.

The solemn truth upon which we must take hold, is that this is God's only way of finishing the work. The responsibility for the success of the work and its final, speedy conclusion, rests then with the parents. If we faithfully relate to our children as Amram, Jochebed, and Jethro did to Moses, we shall see the salvation of God and the work will soon be finished.

21. Building an Army

Two Classes

THE last chapter closed with the declaration that there will be two classes making up the army of Christian soldiers of great power and skill through whom God will vanquish the beast and his image.

One class will be made up of those who will have been born again from conception. Their age at the time of the falling of the latter rain will vary depending on how long before the advent of this glorious event they will have been conceived. These, properly trained, will be a powerful division of the Lord's invincible forces. They will be Christian soldiers of a caliber which will not in any sense fall below that which will be required to utterly rout and destroy the beast and his image.

The other class will be made up of those who, though born again, did not obtain this blessing till some time after conception. Nevertheless, from the falling of the latter rain onward they will be blessed with the same levels of power as those who have been born again from conception, despite the serious impairment of their physical, mental, and spiritual faculties incurred while sinfulness reigned within them.

Always remember that sin is the great destroyer so that whatever it touches, it progressively destroys. Therefore, the older you are before being born again, at which point the power of the sin-presence is eliminated, the longer the indwelling presence of sin has had to destroy you, and the greater the damage sustained.

But all that will be changed when the latter rain falls as promised by the Lord of infinite power and glory in *Joel 2:25-26*. Therefore, when the latter rain falls, neither of these two groups will be advantaged above the other.

Parental Responsibility

The preparation of the members of both of these groups is the responsibility of the parents. This responsibility is divided into two phases. Firstly, they must approach the throne of grace to petition the Saviour for the effecting of their own new birth, for parents cannot bring forth born again children if they themselves are not re-born.

Obviously, in order to obtain the best results, this work of eradicating the old nature and of replacing it with the new must be completed in the parents well before they contemplate any conceptions. They are the ones who alone can approach the throne of saving grace to gain their own deliverance from the indwelling power of sin. No one else can do this work on their behalf. However, once this transformation has been achieved, they will possess the most important element in their preparation to fight the Lord's last great battle.

Secondly, the parents, acting in true unity of mind and spirit, are the only ones who can approach the throne of infinite grace on behalf of their precious little charges, and by living faith claim their deliverance from the domination of the sin-master, which is also the disease-master. In fact, there is no other way in which it can be done. Only they are in the position where they can request the eradication of the sin-master, the spirit of rebellion, both from within themselves and the newly conceived child, and have it instantly replaced by the divine nature.

God has assigned this privilege and responsibility to the parents who cannot hand it to another person or persons, except possibly under very special circumstances. Even so, at the present moment, I cannot think of any examples of such a delegation of responsibility which was approved of by God. I am referring here only to those whose responsibility it is to establish the presence of the divine nature within the human nature of their little ones, for others can and do participate in the subsequent training of the children.

The Importance of the New Birth

But, let it never be forgotten that every training program which has not been preceded by a genuine new birth experience, is as certain to fail as any attempt to train a thorn bush to bear a crop of good fruit.

A farmer who grows figs for instance, will not even consider planting, cultivating, and irrigating a seedling until he is absolutely sure that it has sprung from the seed of a fig tree. Just as certainly, he will expend neither time nor effort on the training of a wretched thorn bush. His only way of relating to the thorn bush is to regard it as a cumberer of the ground fit only for uprooting and subsequent incineration.

This truth is so self-evident in the natural world, that no one questions it. Every worker of the land understands and accepts it, and all live in harmony with it. It is rightly seen as an unchangeable law of God that good seed produces good fruit, and evil seed produces evil fruit.

This is as equally true in the spiritual as in the natural world. Therefore as surely as the farmer or gardener will not waste time and money on an evil tree, neither are Christian parents to bypass the all important establishment of the divine life in the souls of their children. Without this, all that may be applied in the education of the child's spiritual nature will only make him into a more decided rebel than before, just as the cultivation of a thorn bush only makes it to be bigger and thornier than ever.

Simple and obvious as this principle is, its point is constantly being missed by people in every walk of life, including, most tragically of all, the parents who need more than anyone else to know it. Any study on the work of bringing up children which omits this stage, is imbalanced. But, if applied in connection with proper training thereafter, success is guaranteed in preparing for the great, final battle of the ages.

One Great Purpose

Parents need to recognize that they are in the world for one great purpose, namely to train their children to be God's final representatives, recruited to serve God and man in this sin-torn earth. Think of the potential which resides in the children who have been born again from conception, and rightly trained thereafter!

This revelation of what might be, can be gained by beholding what was achieved by the one or the other of the few whom we know were born again from conception and were rightly trained thereafter. Let us consider some of the exploits of one of those whose life demonstrates the truth of the following words:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 159-160:

Heavenly intelligences are waiting to co-operate with human instrumentalities, that they may reveal to the world what human beings may become, and what, through union with the Divine, may be accomplished for the saving of souls that are ready to perish.

There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life.

The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible.

Education, p. 271:

With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and

sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where...

Psalm 37

²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;

Isaiah 33

²⁴ [where] the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,

Isaiah 65

¹⁹ ...and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard.

The Example of Daniel

If ever there was a youth in whose life these words were fulfilled, it was Daniel, who...

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 570:

...was but eighteen years old when brought into a heathen court in service to the king of Babylon.

Youth still in their teens have been regarded as passing through the most troublesome, unstable years of their lives, leaving their parents with the dreadful uncertainty of not knowing which side they will choose. Here however was a young man together with his three friends who did marvelous things in righteousness.

1. THE TEMPERANCE TEST

Firstly, they stood firmly for the right under tremendous pressure to sacrifice principle over the temperance issue. They did this with such charming courtesy, and demonstrated the truth of their position so convincingly, that they won their freedom to live healthfully in a court not given to granting concessions to champions of God's living truth.

2. INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL FITNESS

When their university course was over, Daniel and his three companions outclassed their heathen fellow-students at the rate of ten to one. Furthermore, they demonstrated that their walk with God was so close that the prophetic gift was upon them. They could receive, reveal, and interpret prophetic revelations directly from heaven.

3. THE CONVERSION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Next, I will mention the incredible conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar, for he was thoroughly converted as the following statement declares:

The Review and Herald, January 11, 1906:

King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to “praise and extol and honor the King of heaven.”

When God was ready to awaken King Nebuchadnezzar to an unfolding of the future through the symbolism of the multi-metalled image, He needed a man to whom He could transmit the king’s dream and its interpretation. Such a man had to be so pure and holy and therefore in such close connection with the Almighty, that he could fill the role of receiving detailed messages from heaven. Daniel qualified, and how unlimited was his usefulness as he put self aside and made room for the working of the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit in his life.



So great and powerful in the infinite might of the Holy Spirit were Daniel and his companions, that the Babylonian sovereign listened spellbound to Daniel's revelation of the truth sent by God from heaven to the monarch. Never before had he who had conquered the world been witness to such a performance. Unable to stop himself, he fell at Daniel's feet. Since the latter rain had not yet fallen at this time, we cannot otherwise account for such a mighty manifestation of God's power than to say that these men had been born again from conception and received correct training thereafter.

Had that been but an isolated experience, Daniel and his friends would still have made an outstanding contribution to the forward progress of the work, but Daniel's was an unlimited life made so through the faithful training he had received from his truly faithful parents.

The successful conversion of the king of Babylon himself was an achievement so rare in the history of the great controversy, that it must rate as one of the mightiest feats of the gospel. To match it today would require the placement in the Vatican of at least one of God's true children, whose walk with God would be so close and powerful that through him God could communicate such mighty revelations of truth to the head of that organization as would effect his conversion to the truth as we know it. What an event that would be! Such a victory for the gospel would rejoice the hearts of God's people and dismay our enemies.

Nebuchadnezzar's final commitment to surrender himself to the appeals of the Holy Spirit came when he returned from the seven years spent in insanity. On being reinstated to the seat of power, he bore public testimony before the entire world to his faith in God and his pledge of allegiance to Him.

That was wonderful enough, but it was not the limit of the usefulness of Daniel, this mighty man of God. In his remarkable life, each incredible victory was but the launching pad for the next

wonderful achievement in the building of God's kingdom, according to God's ways of kingdom-building.

4. THE TESTIMONY OF DARIUS

God, working through faithful Daniel, virtually duplicated the triumph of King Nebuchadnezzar's conversion when, under deep conviction, King Darius testified to the superiority of God's power and character. The king's witness was declared after Daniel had safely passed the night in a den of ravenous lions:

Daniel 6

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one that shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues, in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

The mighty king who was ruler of the then-known world is here described as decreeing that every person in his vast dominion reverence the God whom Daniel had introduced to them, and faithfully obey Him. Evidence that Daniel had imparted to the powerful monarch a knowledge of God's character is found in the absence of any penalties threatening non-compliance with the king's orders such as accompanied King Nebuchadnezzar's decree passed as a result of his failed attempt to enforce the universal worship of the golden image.¹⁹

Whether King Darius' decree is to be taken to be the testimony of true conversion or a confession springing from the lips of one standing awed by the manifestation of the divine power and character, I know not, nor have I found any texts or statements which would clarify the question. What we do know is that King Darius held Daniel in such incredibly high regard that he appointed him the highest position in the entire realm, next to himself.

¹⁹ See *Daniel* 3:26-29.

This action on the king's part was nothing short of extraordinary, for the king of a freshly established empire was expected to appoint to the highest positions those who had fought the hardest to make him king. These generals, councilors, and various other leaders expected to be given high positions in the new regime. In their wanton pride, each saw himself as being worthy of much higher positions than those assigned him. The king being aware of these feelings among his lofty, ambitious ones, had to assign positions with great care so as to minimize, as far as possible, the dangerous effects of the fierce ambition which drove these unscrupulous men to seek the highest place in the realm.

The most destabilizing appointment the king could make would be to take a statesman from the empire which he had just conquered, and give him the very highest position available. Such a move would most certainly excite the fiercest jealousy. Yet that was just what Darius did when he appointed Daniel to the very highest position in the newly organized Medo-Persian government. The resulting envy was all that could be expected from those unsanctified, heathen men.

Prophets and Kings, p. 539:

The honors bestowed upon Daniel excited the jealousy of the leading men of the kingdom, and they sought for occasion of complaint against him.

Their jealousy gave place to the formation of a terrible conspiracy designed not only to remove Daniel from office, but to do away with him altogether. Step by step the conspirators successfully advanced their plans until Daniel's fate appeared sealed. The king saw how helpless he was to save his friend, and was obliged to put his entire trust in God to solve the problem, as is evident from his parting words to the prophet:

Daniel 6

¹⁶ Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.

From whence came such confidence in God on the part of the king? It came from God, through Christ, through Daniel! Surely

here is a life which in fulfilling the truth of the promises quoted above, gives us the assurance that if we will train our children as Daniel, Moses, and others were trained after they had been born again, we shall see more of the same exploits. It would mean that the Lord would at last have the army through which He could destroy the beast and his image and that is a goal worth striving for.

King Darius, who is not to be confused with the King Darius of later times when the Jews were restored to their homeland, only reigned for two years after the fall of Babylon. This however did not terminate, lessen, or limit the ministry of Daniel who continued to become more useful until death finally brought his extraordinary life to its end.

5. INFLUENCE ON CYRUS

King Darius was succeeded by his general of armies, Cyrus the Great, who led the Medo-Persian forces to the permanent fall of Babylon. This mighty potentate, upon whom God depended to effect the termination of the exile, needed to be powerfully influenced to undertake this responsibility. His not being a converted Christian meant that God needed a man whose usefulness was unlimited so that he could effectively win King Cyrus to His plan to have the captives set free. Daniel was just the man needed.

When Cyrus witnessed Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den, he was profoundly impressed, to say the least. This in turn gave him confidence to believe in the prophecies of Isaiah, wherein over one hundred years before he was born, Cyrus was named as the one through whom God would secure the release of His people.

Prophets and Kings, p. 557:

The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment.

And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.

Despite the powerful presence of God in Daniel, the devil did not admit defeat but contested each advancing step that God took. When the time came for King Cyrus to formulate and sign the decree into law by which the Jews could return to their promised land, Satan brought all the powers at his command to resist the divine influences working on the monarch's heart.

Again, God needed a man mighty in faith and prayer, who would carry the burden of God's work on his heart. Again Daniel was the man of the hour, a man accustomed to petitioning the throne of grace three times a day, and one who was a most diligent student of the sacred writings. Of particular interest at this time were the prophecies revealed by God to Jeremiah foretelling how long it would be before Babylon would fall and her captives be released.

Prophets and Kings, p. 553:

Often had Daniel and his companions gone over these and similar prophecies outlining God's purpose for His people. And now, as the rapid course of events betokened the mighty hand of God at work among the nations, Daniel gave special thought to the promises made to Israel. His faith in the prophetic word led him to enter into experiences foretold by the sacred writers.

Jeremiah 29

¹⁰ After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, [the Lord had declared,] I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return...

¹¹ I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

¹² Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

¹³ And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart.

The careful, prayerful study performed by Daniel convinced him that Babylon had fallen never to rise again as predicted, and that the time had come for the Hebrews to be granted their freedom. But, he sensed that all was not well, that there was an impediment in the way designed to frustrate the divine plan.

This drove him to his knees and, while Gabriel was joined by Michael to battle against Satan to win the confidence and support of King Cyrus, Daniel spent three weeks in the most earnest supplication of the throne of grace. In some wonderful way, the uniting of the earnest prayers of God's people on earth with the work of God in heaven, has the capacity to make the human and the divine contributions more effective. This needs to be remembered when a burden of prayer for a needy soul is laid upon us.

The result of Daniel's spending three weeks in fasting and prayer at this critical point of time in history, was the defeat of the devil's plan to thwart the restoration of God's people to their promised land. Cyrus became a dedicated supporter of the scheme. He cleared the way by issuing all the necessary authorities, and by passing a decree which gave the people full liberty to return to Judea and to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem.

The decree is so remarkable as a revelation of what God can and will do through a life born again and properly trained, that I will quote most of it here. Be sure to read it carefully so that something of the tremendous achievement may dawn on your mind.

Prophets and Kings, p. 558:

In a written proclamation published "throughout all his kingdom," Cyrus made known his desire to provide for the return of the Hebrews and for the rebuilding of their temple.

Ezra 1

² The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, [the king gratefully acknowledged in this public proclamation;] and He has charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

³ Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem...and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

⁴ And whosoever remains in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering...

Ezra 6

⁴ ...and let the expenses be given out of the king's house.

There was no need for any law court to compel the king to come to the aid of God's people, for he was himself wholeheartedly in favor of the project. This is evidenced by his enthusiastic issuance of instructions for the execution of the project. He would even meet all the expenses from his own treasury. All that surely bespeaks total interest in, and dedication to God's work.

None of this would have been possible without a man on the spot who had received a thorough Christian training by an Amram, a Jochebed, or a Jethro, as was Moses. That man was Daniel. Moses was as powerful a man as was Daniel, both of whom redirected the course of history.

The Application to Us

Think about it! If there had been no Moses, rightly trained, then Israel would have remained as bond-slaves in Egypt. The Egyptian kingdom would have eventually been replaced by another rising power, and, in it all, God's cause would have been lost.

And even though Moses' faithfulness made subsequent history to be what it was until King Cyrus ascended the throne, if there had been no rightly-trained and powerful Daniel to inspire Cyrus to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem, how different history would have been thereafter! How disastrous it would have been for the cause of God! Never again would the temple and the city have been rebuilt, nor would the Jews have reoccupied Palestine, nor could the prophecies concerning the death of Christ have been fulfilled.

God depended on those men being what their training had made them to be. He also needed them, with that training, to be where they were, at the critical point of time required by the sure word of prophecy. Only by the combined factors of time, place, and proper training could the will of God be done and the plan of salvation itself be saved.

How truly those men personally demonstrated the absolute truth of these promises. They show to parents everywhere that if they will but ensure that their children are born again from their earliest moments, and skillfully and properly trained thereafter, that there is no limit to their usefulness. They can be a Moses or a Daniel occupying the right place at the right time, ever demonstrating the truth of these words:

The Ministry of Healing, p. 159:

There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.

Education, p. 271:

With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!

Behind us in history lie a number of critical moments, when the future of God's work hung in the balance. Fortunately, on each occasion, God had a born again man or woman who was properly trained for the work of the hour of destiny, and the Lord's cause was both saved and prospered. Behind each was the ministry of an Amram, a Jochebed, or a Jethro.

We too have an appointment with our destiny. Soon we shall see the beast and his image rise to fullness of power. When that time comes, the Lord must have a mighty army of born again, thoroughly trained, front-line troops filled with the awesome

power of the latter rain, through whom the beast and his image will be utterly defeated.

This means that today, parents must be faithfully meeting their responsibilities of making sure their little ones are born again and properly trained. Terrible are the consequences for failing to successfully fulfill the roles of Amram, Jochebed, and Jethro.

Child Guidance, p. 13:

It is the privilege of parents to take their children with them to the gates of the city of God, saying, "I have tried to instruct my children to love the Lord, to do His will, and to glorify Him." To such the gate will be thrown open, and parents and children will enter in.

But all cannot enter. Some are left outside with their children, whose characters have not been transformed by submission to the will of God. A hand is raised, and the words are spoken, "You have neglected home duties. You have failed to do the work that would have fitted the soul for a home in heaven. You cannot enter." The gates are closed to the children because they have not learned to do the will of God, and to parents because they have neglected the responsibilities resting upon them.

Light has been shining from the Word of God and the testimonies of His Spirit so that none need err in regard to their duty. God requires parents to bring up their children to know Him and to respect His claims; they are to train their little ones, as the younger members of the Lord's family, to have beautiful characters and lovely tempers, that they may be fitted to shine in the heavenly courts.

By neglecting their duty and indulging their children in wrong, parents close to them the gates of the city of God. These facts must be pressed home upon parents; they must arouse and take up their long-neglected work.

22. The Influence of Environment

THE next factor which now needs to be considered in the preparation of Moses for his date with destiny is the influence of his environment. This needed considerable change from what it had been during his stay in Egypt where practically every influence had tended to steer him away from the light into darkness.

Architecture

In Egypt, Moses was continually surrounded with magnificent structures, the beams and columns of which required great skill to fashion and then erect. In fact, in view of the relative crudeness of their lifting equipment, we marvel that they could and actually did successfully transport those massive columns and ponderous beams from their quarries to the place of erection.

Moving about among those beautiful architectural masterpieces, he had been subconsciously impressed every day with the seemingly all-encompassing capacity of man to fashion his own destiny, to be the master of his fate. Living within such buildings constantly impressed the mind with the incredible skill of the architects who designed them, and of the workmen who fashioned and positioned the elements used in their construction.

Everything surrounding the dwellers in the great cities of ancient Egypt was successfully designed to proclaim the power, permanence, glory, and skill of man on the one hand, and to degrade and eclipse the might and majesty of the Omnipotent One on the other. A sense of dependence on God was effectively replaced with reliance on human abilities and powers.

It is worth noting that though the individual dwellers in zones of negative influence are largely unaware of what is happening to them, the effect is there just the same. For instance, had anyone asked Moses if his environment was shaping an unhealthy attitude in him toward God, he would have tended to deny it, because he would not have been aware of this scarcely perceptible

erosion of truth, and accumulation of Egyptian darkness within him. I am quite impressed with the ability of our environment to reshape our thinking in the most subtle, but nonetheless dangerous ways without our being aware of what is happening to us.

Likewise today, men and women are being constantly subjected to even greater evil influences with the alarming capacity of robbing them of their sense of the need of God without their realizing it. Instead, they are led to look to man as the great problem-solver. Christians need to become aware of what could be happening to them as day by day they are exposed to influences which seem so harmless, but which over a considerable length of time, are deadly in their cumulative effect.

Our Environment

Today, we are surrounded with a much more concentrated array of the products of human skills and achievements than were the ancient dwellers in the Valley of the Nile. We could never list them all in the limited space available in this paper. Therefore, those which are mentioned are but samples of the rest. Here are a few.

1. GREAT CITIES

There are the great cities, the centers of which are made up of giant clusters of impressive buildings. In some cases and times, these are higher than the clouds.

2. LARGE CORPORATIONS

Associated with these gleaming structures are business corporations boasting assets worth billions of dollars. It is no surprise that the leaders of these business organizations feel no need of God's power to sustain them. Why should they feel any sense of need when they have such wealth at their command?

3. SPORTS AND SPORTING EVENTS

Next let me mention sporting events at all levels of competition where the honor and praise of man is supreme and the honor of God is considered worthless.

Here we might pause a moment to investigate more closely what happens within a person when he watches sporting events. You will notice first of all that, the higher the competitive level, the more intense the interest on the part of the observer, and the more anxious he is that his side wins. Thus the whole objective is to win, to be the best, to have the highest score, to be above the others.

Those who give their lives to winning sports, have dedicated their time, energies, and skills, not to the elevation of their fellow men, but to their degradation. Much time and expense are devoted to fine-tuning every movement, quickening every reflex, and strengthening every muscle, until body and mind have been fully prepared to beat any opponent.

Such a man is cultivating traits of character which are opposed to Christian principles.

Think and pray until the truth of this statement dawns upon your mind!

The sportsman is determined to win and hold the highest place for himself no matter what the cost to others might be. The only restrictions placed upon him are the rules of the game. However, do not be deceived by his obedience to these rules. This does not turn a bad thing into a good thing. On the contrary, it is only the sheep's clothing covering the wolf beneath.

The Christian, by contrast, is constrained by the motivating power of the love of God to bring the greatest possible blessing to all within his reach, no matter what the sacrifice to himself might be. The true child of God never takes advantage of any weakness which exists in either friend or foe. Instead, as God provides the opportunity, he works to protect his neighbor and impart strength to replace the weakness.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 225:

Our mission is the same as that of our Master, of whom it is written that He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by Satan. *Acts 10:38.*

But how can a person be charged with the love of God and at the same time exert to the uttermost every power he has to crush his fellow man, outdo him, and take every advantage of him. Such would be impossible. If you still play or watch sport, the next time you do, take a few moments to honestly analyze your feelings and attitudes toward the other side.

Do you find yourself filled with tender love for them? Are you there to fill their day with happiness? Are you fearful that they might suffer injury? Are you worried that they might be humiliated?

This is how the Spirit of Christ would lead you to think if you were there. However, the fact is that if you, as a Christian, felt this way, then you would not even be there in any case.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 500:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁴ The love of Christ [said Paul,] constrains us.

This was the actuating principle of his conduct; it was his motive power. If ever his ardor in the path of duty flagged for a moment, one glance at the cross caused him to gird up anew the loins of his mind and press forward in the way of self-denial. In his labors for his brethren he relied much upon the manifestation of infinite love in the sacrifice of Christ, with its subduing, constraining power.

When Christians indulge an interest in watching competitive sport in the face of the deadly effects involved therein over a long period of time, they do so because they think that it is a harmless pastime. It is far from being that. No one can permit this influence to have any place in his life whatsoever if he intends being serious about making adequate preparation to face the beast and his image, and also to obtain a fitness to enter heaven.

Fortunately, no one needs to remain in the grip of this sin. There are steps which can be taken which effectively cancel out the power of these forces to harm us, and thus safeguard us against this evil.

The first such protection provided by the Almighty is afforded by heeding a plain “Thus says the Lord,” whether we understand why God requires it or not. God commands it, so we obey without question or objection even though we do not see or understand what the danger is. There are many such directives from on High which the Lord decrees we shall obey. Here is one of them:

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 456:

I could refer to chapter after chapter of the Old Testament Scriptures that contain great encouragement. These Scriptures are a treasure house of precious pearls, and all need them. How much time is spent by intelligent human beings in horse racing, cricket matches, and ball playing! But will indulgence in these sports give men a desire to know truth and righteousness? Will it keep God in their thoughts? Will it lead them to inquire, How is it with my soul?

All the powers of Satan are set in operation to hold the attention to frivolous amusements, and he is gaining his object. He is interposing his devisings between God and the soul. He will manufacture diversions to keep men from thinking about God. The world, filled with sport and pleasure loving, is always thirsting for some new interest; but how little time and thought are given to the Creator of the heavens and the earth!

This statement lists a number of reasons for not becoming involved as a player or spectator of sporting events. Sporting events will not give men a desire to know truth and righteousness. They will not keep God in their thoughts. They will not lead them to enquire, How is it with my soul?

Obedience to the Light

This is a plain voice of warning from the Fountain of all righteousness and truth. We who desire to inherit eternal life must obey these commands without question or hesitation even though

at this stage we may not be able to understand why this is so necessary. But, the promise is that if we step out in faith and obedience, we shall know with a growing depth of definite conviction, the reasons for denying ourselves of these indulgences. Then we shall find that God asks us to give up only that which will do us harm.

The Review and Herald, March 28, 1912:

After asking the Lord for a knowledge of his will, for heavenly wisdom, for the light of the Holy Spirit, the petitioner will search the Scriptures, and find that passages that were dark to his mind have suddenly grown clear, and he understands his duty as never before. Jesus said:

John 7

¹⁶ My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

The knowledge of divine truth is promised to those who will render obedience to the light and truth that have been given to them. An entrance into the strait gate is not dependent upon the possession of learning or riches, but it is dependent upon the possession of a teachable spirit. He who appreciates the first ray of heavenly light, and appropriates it, and walks in it, bringing his actions into harmony with that ray, and becoming sanctified through it, will receive yet more light. He will understand that the gospel is the plan of salvation.

There indeed is a wonderful promise, the beauty and power of which should not be permitted to be lost upon us. How blessed are they who read the word of the living God, and, as soon as they catch a ray of light, obey it. To such is promised greater and still greater light.

But, on the other hand, should the Lord open our minds to see living truth, and we choose to remain in disobedience of that light, the Lord will open no further light to us until we do choose to obey that which has already been given. But, each time the Source of all truth and righteousness holds the living truth out to us and we decline the opportunity to wholeheartedly embrace

that light, then the voice of God becomes less distinct until it speaks no more to our hearts.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 187:

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer.

If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: "God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people."

Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus.

Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: "They are joined to their idols, let them alone," and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels.

Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.

Thus no one who cherishes the hope of eternal life can afford to be careless in the matter of strict obedience to the divine commandments. This is especially true in view of the increasing proximity to the closure of human probation after which it will be forever too late to gain the purity of mind and character required of all who shall be saved. The spotless robe in which the King must find us clothed when He comes in to examine the guests, is right-

eousness without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Otherwise we shall be cast into outer darkness with no hope of eternal life.

The Convicting Power of the Holy Spirit

So far, I have made a few points in regard to simple, trusting obedience being one means of overcoming the influence of our evil environment. Now I shall direct your attention to a second way by which we can be divorced from worldly influences of which competitive sport is one typical problem. This second way is not a substitute for the first, but is to be used in conjunction with it.

This way is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Through this mighty agency the person is brought to see what damage he is causing himself by the continued presence of an evil habit. This realization is powerful enough to lead him to renounce his sinfulness.

There are many however who find that reading the commands of God does not make a strong enough impression on their minds to positively lead them to cast away sin once and for all. This does not mean that the word of God lacks the power required to solve the problem. The power is there, of that there is no question, but they have failed to reach out by faith and resolutely grasp the divine provision of saving grace. Thus the Lord, because of their unbelief, cannot speak the word of power needed to permanently cleanse them from their self-destroying habits. Yet, He does not cast them off while they remain truly repentant. The situation is clearly explained in the following paragraph:

Steps to Christ, p. 64:

There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged.

Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Said the beloved John,

1 John 2

¹ These things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

And do not forget the words of Christ,

John 16

²⁷ The Father himself loves you.

He desires to restore you to himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that has begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance.

Though they do make mistakes and fail in respect to some sins to immediately put away the evil habits, they refuse to surrender themselves to be controlled by the forces of darkness, but need a further incentive to spur them on to victory. Fortunately, the Lord does not cut them off immediately, but gives them time to awaken to a realization of their urgent need to positively reject the evil habits so vigorously destroying them.

They are given further probationary time until the day comes when they will realize what actual damage is being done to them by their bad habits. They will then know that the bad situation which already exists as a result of cherishing those destroying habits would only become worse unless those practices are immediately terminated for the remainder of their lives.

When any one of these sufferers has his eyes opened so that he truly sees the connection between his way of life and the suffering from which he cannot of himself escape, he is like a man awakened from a horrible dream, and is mightily moved to eliminate those evils from his life—forever.

There is one such life of which I am aware. This person had suffered for years from the effects of habits developed early in life. As a youth he felt no noticeable effects, but as he grew older, sickness, suffering, and the loss of certain physical powers took the joy out of living. However, he did not immediately connect these limitations with his life style. In his consciousness, the two were unrelated, until one day the Holy Spirit flashed the truth into his mind that one was the fruit of the other. The message came with convincing power and he immediately set his will to obey.

Because he understood the gospel and knew how to apply it to his situation, he was able to make effective his decision to positively and permanently eliminate those evils from his life. Years have now passed, and, so far as I have been able to see, this man remains free from those habits and practices. Having his eyes opened to see and understand what he was doing to himself was just the added incentive he needed to give up the way of the world.

Coming to Conviction

The question now is:

“How shall I come to the place where I shall be enabled to understand for myself how my habits of life are destroying me personally?”

In some cases, it is relatively easy, but in other instances, it can be very difficult. However, if we follow the procedures found in the sacred writings, we shall speedily know what habits destroy us and which strengthen us. The procedures are quite simple, easy to understand, and are not difficult to follow. Take your copy of the sacred books and read them through looking for every reference which mentions a bad habit, and describes its evil effects on our lives. By faith say:

“That is the picture of what will happen to me unless a great work of reformation is done in me immediately.”

Without doubt or question, fully and frankly believe that it is the truth simply because the Word of the living God declares that it is. Then act in accordance with this revelation of inspired truth by making sincere, humble, and frank confession of the problem. Claim for yourself those powerful promises in which God has pledged that He will break the power of indwelling sinfulness and set us free.

In order to make the point as clear as possible, I will give a specific example. I will begin by choosing a statement dealing with an injurious habit pattern which applies to many of us in varying degrees. This statement lays down God's command that we break the habit of uncontrolled thoughts. It then proceeds to tell us what responsibilities we incur, the damage being done, and how difficult it will be to break up the pattern:

Messages to Young People, p. 75-76:

You should control your thoughts. This will not be an easy task; you cannot accomplish it without a close and even severe effort. Yet God requires this of you; it is a duty resting upon every accountable being. You are responsible to God for your thoughts. If you indulge in vain imaginations, permitting your mind to dwell upon impure subjects, you are, in a degree, as guilty before God as if your thoughts were carried into action. All that prevents the action is the lack of opportunity.

Day and night dreaming and castle-building are bad and exceedingly dangerous habits. When once established, it is next to impossible to break up such habits, and direct the thoughts to pure, holy, elevated themes. You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses, if you would control your mind, and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of grace alone can accomplish this most desirable work. You are weak in this direction....

You have become wayward, bold, and daring. The grace of God has no place in your heart. In the strength of God alone can you bring yourself where you can be a recipient of His grace, an instrument of righteousness. Not only does God require you to control your thoughts, but also your passions and affections.

Your salvation depends upon your governing yourself in these things. Passion and affection are powerful agents. If misapplied, if set in operation through wrong motives, if misplaced, they are powerful to accomplish your ruin, and leave you a miserable wreck, without God and without hope.

This statement speaks for itself in the sternest of warnings and covers a wide range of habits under the general subject of thought control. It begins with day and night dreaming in which the dreamer imagines himself accomplishing the most marvelous of feats before admiring crowds, of being a mighty war lord vanquishing the enemy, and so forth. Always, it is self which is being highly esteemed, the exaltation of yourself above God. In it all, you, puny handful of dust, are the one who, in your imaginings, is upheld as the great Problem-solver in God's place. In fact God is not mentioned. No place is given Him in these habit patterns. He simply does not exist.

Deceptive Story-Telling

There is so much in our environment which is calculated by Satan to generate and to feed the habit of impure imaginings. The desire to indulge the passions in this manner is very strong indeed. Let us consider the reading of exciting stories and the watching of the televised version of them which is even more exciting. The fact that they are fictitious is not the basis for rejecting them. A true story can be just as damaging as a fictitious one. It depends on the structure of the tale, what is its message, and how it is told. Jesus mostly taught true stories when He used them to illustrate saving truth, but there was an instance when he used fiction to make His point. I am referring to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

The structure of popular books and television programs, and day and night dreams, all follow the same pattern. The story begins with the presentation of a well-established, life threatening problem, or one in the process of development. Needed is a master problem-solver with the courage, strength, and skill to do the

job. Such a person eventually comes forward, and, at fearful risk to himself, grapples with and finally overcomes the problem and becomes the illustrious hero, the man of the hour. It is all very fascinating, highly entertaining, so very exciting, and seemingly harmless.

But how could it be harmless? That is the question. If you will have your eyes opened to see for yourself what this deadly habit is doing to you personally, then you will make haste to put it away and be done with it!

The worst possible damage which can be sustained is spiritual which, though difficult to detect, can be revealed to us if we know what to look for. Here is one easily applied test for those who still read exciting books or watch televised stories. Settle down as usual after supper to enjoy your reading or watching, making sure that you give this pastime your usual undivided attention.

After devoting the usual length of time to this evening occupation, immediately pick up your Bible or a book like *The Desire of Ages*, and see if you can give the same attention to one of these books for the same period of time. As well, see if you can kneel and earnestly pray until your soul is blessed and your Saviour is real to you.

You will find that you cannot sustain the same attention nor interest in the spiritual word as you do in the environment of exciting works of fiction, nor will you be able to commune with God in prayer. You might be able to “say your prayers,” but you will not be able to connect with the Sovereign of the universe and commune with Him.

If your problem is as serious as this, then you will know that this pattern of life has damaged you just as it did to the young woman in the statement above. Are you prepared to realize that the same words to her also describe your spiritual state? Do you see the need to reverse your treacherous steps? Here again are some of the words describing her desperate and almost hopeless condition!

Messages to Young People, p. 76:

You have become wayward, bold, and daring. The grace of God has no place in your heart. In the strength of God alone can you bring yourself where you can be a recipient of His grace, an instrument of righteousness.

While not everyone will be in as serious a condition as was this woman, be assured that if you do have a problem in this respect and do not correct it, then you will end up in as bad a situation as was this woman.

The Struggle to Overcome

It would be well worth your while to extend the experiment as follows: For the next three months, completely discontinue reading or watching exciting stories while spending as much time as possible reading *The Desire of Ages* and praying. At the same time keep searching for whatever habit patterns in your life are damaging to your communion with God. If this work is taken up seriously and faithfully performed, I can guarantee that you will find a very noticeable improvement in your personal religious experience. Then you will begin to realize the sad state you were in before adopting these measures.

But, settle it in your mind that the establishing of a rich, satisfying, personal communion with God will not be an easy task. It will require hard, stern battles with self.

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 141-142:

He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Selfishness and pride will make a stand against anything that would show them to be sinful.

We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and habits that strive for the mastery. We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in his thrall. God alone can give us the victory. He desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways.

But He cannot work in us without our consent and cooperation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to cooperate with God.

The gaining of the victory in this urgent work of reformation which follows the revival will not be an easy task. As in the case of Moses, it will require the...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248:

...severest mental and moral discipline, and God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort.

Once the destructive powers of bad habits have been revealed to us, we have a powerful incentive to utterly discontinue their practice. But this is only accomplished through the promised power of God without which we have no hope of deliverance.

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 380:

His power awaits the demand of those who would overcome. The reprov-er is to animate his hearers so that they shall strive for the mastery. He is to encourage them to struggle for deliverance from every sinful practice, to be free from every corrupt habit, even if his denial of self is like taking the right eye, or separating the right arm from the body. No concession or compromise is to be made to evil habits or sinful practices.



23. Everlasting Righteousness

IN THE last chapter, I directed your attention to ways in which we can be powerfully influenced to delete the destructive effects of our sin-cursed environment from our lives.

One of those was the realization of how extensively we have been damaged by our habit patterns. When we clearly see what we have been doing to ourselves, that our sufferings and losses are the fruit of our own seed sowing, and that, unless there is a decided change for the better, things will only become worse, then we have a powerful motivation to end the reign of our evil habits. God alone can break their power, but He can do His part only when He has our earnest pleas to this effect.

The Work of Restoration

In due time, once the elimination of known bad habits has taken place, a great deal of increasing physical relief will be experienced as faith and obedience clear the way for God to exercise His healing power. Care must be taken not to expect too much, too quickly.

While we desire God to work direct miracles which bring instant restoration such as that experienced by the first leper to come to Christ for healing, more likely we will find that the healing will be a slow, rebuilding process. This is what I have observed in the healings of others, and experienced in my own case when it comes to obtaining deliverance from the effects of evil habits upon us.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 127:

The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature's process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind.

God could heal all diseases instantly, and in some cases He does, but in many others He does not. Instead, He works through nature wherein the rebuilding process is gradual.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 70:

In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask; but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin.

It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.

Galatians 1

⁴ [Christ] gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

1 John 5

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us:

¹⁵ And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Human nature being what it is, there is a very good reason for this. It is for our best good that God works this way. Human beings will usually rise to what can be at times quite remarkable heights in order to meet an emergency, but once the danger is passed, will sink back into the old patterns again, even the very ones which caused the trouble in the first case. This is particularly true of the unconverted.

The Problem of Reversion

Sister White recalls taking a voyage from Portland, Maine, to Boston, during which a fearful storm overtook the ship. Terrified passengers fell upon their knees promising God that their future lives would be wholly dedicated to Him if He would but save them.

The storm abated and the ship came safely into Boston harbor, but the consecrations were forgotten as the people laughed at their former fears. Obviously, as a result of seeing their lost condition, they were changed, though not in heart. However, as soon as the danger was over, they all reverted to their original state of mind.²⁰

We can expect these reactions from those who have little if any faith to begin with, but we should be able to expect better things from those of us who are God's professed children. However, this problem of reversion is one which has never been overcome except by a scattered few.

Let us consider a typical example of this recurring phenomenon in a person from whom one would think this problem had been eliminated. I am referring to Joshua, the warrior leader who followed Moses as the commander of the Israelites, and upon whom rested the responsibility for the conquest of Jericho.

In the destruction of Jericho, everything was done in strictest obedience to God's personal commands, and wonderful were the results achieved. Great light blessed the Hebrew host in the experiencing of this victory such as is written in the following paragraph:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 491, 493:

The Israelites had not gained the victory by their own power; the conquest had been wholly the Lord's; and as the first fruits of the land, the city, with all that it contained, was to be devoted as a sacrifice to God. It was to be impressed upon Israel that in the conquest of Canaan they were not to fight for themselves, but simply as instruments to execute the will of God; not to seek for riches or self-exaltation, but the glory of Jehovah their King. . . .

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will

²⁰ The story is told in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 80.

help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.

Behind Joshua and all Israel were forty years of desert wandering during which they learned the fearful cost of trying to take the Promised Land without faith combined with obedience. After the fiery serpents had taken the lives of so many, there were several remarkable triumphs. First was the utter defeat of the formidable forces of Sihon, king of the Amorites, which was followed by the equally remarkable destruction of the powerful armies of Og, King of Bashan. These victories appeared to indicate sufficient faith and dedication on the Israelites' part to quickly give them possession of the Promised Land.

These astonishing victories were as things ought to have been, for defeat has no real place among the forces of righteousness. These triumphs of faith and obedience gave great promise that a new day had dawned for God's children. They had worked according to correct principles and procedures, and highly convincing were the results. But, the question is: Were those gains sealed in them, or would they revert to their own ways of doubt and disobedience?

Though they probably lacked the spiritual perception to see it, that was the question facing the Hebrews as they came to the Jordan River. The records of the past were far from encouraging. Time after time the faith and obedience which had brought deliverance was followed by reversions to their old ways once more. Thus they had demonstrated that they were not sealed so that they could not be moved. Yet this is what God must have before He can lead His armies forth to the battle against His foes. Never will this be more true than in the final battle which we are now facing.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1161:

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be

moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.

So they came to the Jordan doubtless unaware of the test they would face as to whether the principles which they had faithfully followed into victory would prove to have been sealed in them so they could not be moved.

The answer to that question was very quickly made apparent as Balaam’s bewitching temptations were the means of seducing thousands into sin when the tribes were camped by the Jordan just prior to their crossing over. This led the way for a mighty cleansing of the encampment and a fresh opportunity to be sealed into the truth thus far revealed.

In the strength of the faith thus gained, they crossed the flooded Jordan and established their presence at Gilgal against Jericho. Joshua was now faced with his first confrontation against an enemy force since the death of Moses, and apparently was fully aware of the spiritual procedures to be followed if victory was to be assured. Therefore, he carefully sought the Lord in great humility for a detailed battle plan. This was faithfully supplied to him by the Lord, and was as faithfully followed.

The results were that the towering fortifications behind which the people of the city sought refuge, came crashing down, the people were exposed to the in-rushing Hebrews, and, without the loss of a single life among God’s people, Jericho was eliminated as a strategic factor in the conquest of Canaan.

The victory was achieved by God’s people because of their faith and obedience. They were being taught that:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will

help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.

Such a victory as that gained by the army of Israel in the overthrow of Jericho, is worthy of the highest commendation, not because of the ruthless enthusiasm with which they may have wielded their slaughter weapons, but because of their implicit faith in God's instructions and their faithful obedience to them. As time passed, of course, and their knowledge of God's character increased, the weapons used by the Lord's people were to be changed from the carnal weapons of force, to those that Christ used, the prevailing power of truth and love.

The Desire of Ages, p. 759:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.²¹

The fact that Israel had faithfully obeyed the instructions given them for the vanquishing of Jericho, does not prove that they were a sealed people with whom there was no turning back. In fact, under Joshua's personal leadership, they immediately reverted to their old ways again when the time came to plan the overthrow of the small town of Ai. This move guaranteed their deprivation of any further victories until they once more were humbled into seeing that faith in God's power and wisdom, and strict obedience to God's commands, could alone make them the all-conquering force which God intended they should be.

With the destruction of Jericho, a wave of great confidence in themselves had washed over the triumphant people. In this condi-

²¹ For a detailed examination of this truth, see the book, *Behold Your God* by F. T. Wright.

tion they approached the next obstacle, the small town of Ai. God was relegated to the background in their planning of the overthrow of this seemingly insignificant town.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493:

The great victory that God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because He had promised them the land of Canaan they felt secure, and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God.

The result was all that could have been expected. Victory was not sealed in them, they had turned back from the Lord's principles to the following out of their own ways, and they were thoroughly defeated by a much weaker enemy.

Of all people at that time, Joshua should have been sealed against any reversion from the one perfect procedure which would have assured them of victory. He was a man of great faith who had been present among the Hebrews when they departed from Egypt over forty years before. In that wonderful deliverance, he had seen that God's power alone could effect such a victory.

In the great series of deliverances which followed, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the defeat of the Amalekites, the provision of the manna, and the revelations of the law of God and of the gospel in the sanctuary, his faith was deepened and the sealing of God's ways in him was extended. Acting out his great faith, he stood by faithful Caleb at Kadesh-barnea, assuring the people that the Canaanites were unable to resist the Almighty, and that possession of the Promised Land was assured to them.

Then he was witness to the dreadful consequences incurred by the Israelites when, in their unbelief, they cast aside their faith and in consequence refused to obey. The entire generation from twenty years old and upwards was doomed never to enter the land of Canaan.

And Joshua had passed through the great battles against the giant kings, Og of Bashan and Sihon of the Amorites. He not only crossed the flooded Jordan and witnessed the defeat of Jericho, but had personally received the instructions for both. Now before him lay the little problem of Ai. How alone should he have led the people under his command to relate to it?

The answer is exceedingly simple! He should have done once again what he had done before the onslaught of Jericho. He should have drawn aside to confess the inability of himself and his people to be their own plan makers, and then have asked the Lord for instructions. That would have been faith in the power and wisdom of God. It would have been implicit confidence that the plan by which God would deploy His power to achieve the desired results was a perfect plan.

In response, God would have revealed that there was a spoiler in the camp who must firstly be uprooted from among God's people. Then, in due time, the detailed plan for the attack would have been given and obeyed without modification of any kind. All that would have been the course which would have been followed by a man sealed with the seal of the living God. We conclude therefore that, even though Joshua has a very good record, it cannot be said that he had immovably settled into the truth. It is a disappointing blot on the career of a great and godly man, but, worse still, it was the ever recurring tragedy of Israel who delayed the accomplishments of God again and again because they kept forgetting God's ways.

The Signs of the Times, June 23, 1881:

Alas, that in the history of God's chosen people the sorrowful story of apostasy and its punishment must be so oft repeated!

God gave them repeated opportunities to become so established in the truth that they would be sealed against reversion forever, but, up until Daniel's day, they followed every revival of the sealing work with another apostasy.

Everlasting Righteousness

Finally God announced that he had appointed a limitation on them in which they either became sealed against sin forever, or were eternally rejected. Here is that announcement:

Daniel 9

²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

A. T. Jones makes the following comments:

Everlasting righteousness, remember. Not a righteousness for today and sin tomorrow, and righteousness again and sin again. That is not everlasting righteousness. Everlasting righteousness is righteousness that is brought in and stays everlastingly in the life of him who has believed and confessed, and who still further believes and receives this everlasting righteousness in the place of all sin and all sinning.

This alone is everlasting righteousness; this alone is eternal redemption from sin. And this unspeakable blessing is the gracious gift of God by the heavenly ministry which He has established in our behalf in the priesthood and ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.²²

Everlasting righteousness which is the same as making an eternal end of all sinning, is total and permanent sealing against sin. It is, as quoted earlier in this chapter, a settling into the truth both intellectually and spiritually so they cannot be moved regardless of what powerful pressures or subtle temptations might be brought to bear upon them.

To achieve this level of sealing requires a strength of resolution which can only be achieved by the closest connection with God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Fix your mind on what

²² *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* by A. T. Jones, chapter 16 "The Times of Refreshing," p. 121-122.

the sealing really is and with great determination resolve that there will be no compromise, no turning back. Be like Joseph who was compelled to live in the very heart of the most corrupt city in the world of his time and in the midst of it all was like one who neither saw the allurements of that place nor heard its subtle call. Here is a record of the decision which he made:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude and perform every duty with fidelity. One day's experience had been the turning point in Joseph's life. Its terrible calamity had transformed him from a petted child to a man, thoughtful, courageous, and self-possessed.

As we know so well, he maintained that resolution by carefully preserving the seal against sin. He settled into the truth so that he could not be moved.

Arriving in Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, captain of the king's guard, in whose service he remained for ten years. He was here exposed to temptations of no ordinary character. He was in the midst of idolatry. The worship of false gods was surrounded by all the pomp of royalty, supported by the wealth and culture of the most highly civilized nation then in existence.

Yet Joseph preserved his simplicity and his fidelity to God. The sights and sounds of vice were all about him, but he was as one who saw and heard not. His thoughts were not permitted to linger upon forbidden subjects. The desire to gain the favor of the Egyptians could not cause him to conceal his principles. Had he attempted to do this, he would have been overcome by temptation; but he was not ashamed of the religion of his fathers, and he made no effort to hide the fact that he was a worshiper of Jehovah.

Temptation is Not Sin

Let us catch the instruction in the words:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 214:

The sights and sounds of vice were all about him, but he was as one who saw and heard not. His thoughts were not permitted to linger on forbidden subjects.

Provided a person is a new creature in Christ Jesus, he whose thoughts are under complete control, can, as Joseph did, seal out iniquity and sinfulness, and seal in righteousness forever. This does not mean that an evil thought never entered his mind, for this would not be true in fact. If it were true, Joseph would have been an extraordinary man like unto whom there would have been no other. The truth is that Satan is able to suggest evil thoughts to the best of men, but if these are not entertained, there is no stain of sin. As was Joseph's practice, there must be no lingering over evil thoughts.

I have found the following statement to be a great relief and blessing to so many who have struggled with guilt because they were harassed by the inexplicable presence of evil thoughts in their minds. All need to discern that sin commences to be present only when the evil thought is not immediately rejected. Here is the statement:

The Review and Herald, March 27, 1888:

There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men; but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence. Oh, that we each might become a savor of life unto life to those around us.

So be assured that Satan has the power to suggest thoughts and arouse feelings which annoy even the best of men. In our sinful world this is normal. And Joseph, as one of the best Christian men, had to deal with such temptations. He did this by refusing to dwell upon them.

Here now is a practical story telling in simple, accurate terms how to cope with the arousal of wrong feelings and the entertain-

ment of evil thoughts. It begins with the emphasis that the believer in Jesus must have a personal walk with God which must be kept very much alive, for he cannot do that which must be done without the living presence in him of God's power. Without that indwelling might, he would find that he was weaker than his enemies. He would not be able to maintain a seal nor would he be able to control his thoughts and feelings, which instead would control him.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 299:

And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.

The brother who is the subject of this story was certainly enjoying a rich spiritual experience at a time when he was working on a farm. One afternoon, he and his employer were working together repairing a fence when the employer began to relate a short story which, as it unfolded, promised to be very interesting. All went well until the concluding sentence which gave the story a dirty twist.

Our brother was dismayed by this unexpected development and by the fact that the undesirable story was now imprinted on his mind like a dirty blot on a clean white garment. As he was repairing the fence, he thought about what he could do to obtain cleansing from the stain. Upon completion of the fence, the employer sent him off on his own to do other work. Our brother was relieved to be alone to fight this problem.

So the struggle began. He would push the story out of his thinking and try to concentrate on thoughts of purity and peace, but to no avail. As often as he pushed them out of his mind, just so often they returned, but he utterly refused to give up the strug-

gle. Then quite suddenly he saw that he had been trying to achieve the right thing in the wrong way. He declared to himself:

“This way in which I have been trying to gain the victory, is attempting salvation by my own works. It is not according to the principles and procedures laid down in the message we teach.”

He immediately stopped what he was doing, bowed in prayer, and made his confession as follows:

“Lord, I see where I have been attempting to save myself from my sinfulness, this plague spot on my life, but I cannot cleanse myself from this ugly stain, but you can. So, I give it to you, dear Lord. Please cleanse me from this stain so effectively that I will have no memory of it any more.”

The evil story was expunged from his mind and very soon he was quite unable to recall it. Never again did that story bother him. Its power was broken and its usefulness to Satan was lost forever so far as he was concerned. Now, much later, he can recall absolutely nothing of that story.

Type and Antitype

An essential condition to which Moses needed to be uplifted through his preparation for his lifework, was that he be sealed against recurring sin. In his life, sin was to be ended, and everlasting righteousness brought in, before he could fulfill his divinely appointed work. Unfortunately there were several times when even he failed. Falling short, he was not permitted to lead Israel across the Jordan, but was buried on the eastern side instead.

Those who have dedicated all they are and have to the building of God's kingdom according to His principles and procedures, are the antitype of Moses. His assignment was to lead Israel to the Promised Land and then on until the gospel had been preached throughout the entire world, and he, translated.²³ Regretfully, be-

²³ See *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 57.

cause of the unbelief of the majority, Israel came short of entering into that rest.

Now to us is given another day of opportunity, which will exchange the failure of the past for the success of the future only if there are no more reversions. Each believer must be so sealed both intellectually and spiritually that he cannot be moved. An end of sins must be made, and everlasting righteousness must be brought in if we are to see the truth triumph. Then we can go home.

Amos 4

¹² Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!



24. Communion with Nature

IN THE previous chapter, the necessity of forsaking our harmful habits was stressed to the point where there must be no more reversions, but only eternal obedience. It was taught that the ever recurring reversions which follow every revival, must be terminated, and replaced with the establishment of everlasting righteousness.

The Suffering Caused to God

One powerful motivation for this achievement is a very clear realization of the effect those habits have on our lives. When we see for ourselves how devastated we are, and to what extent we have been robbed of our powers, we will be roused to take positive action to rid ourselves of those silent but effective destroyers.

But this knowledge of what our sins are actually costing us is far from being the most effective motivation in this regard. The motivation I have mentioned so far is a selfish one. What we desperately need is an awareness of what our sins are doing to the Eternal Father and His Only Begotten Son. Let us then give earnest consideration to this aspect of the case.

Education, p. 263:

Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator.

All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him.

When there came upon Israel the calamities that were the sure result of separation from God, subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death, it is said that:

Judges 10

¹⁶ His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

Isaiah 63

⁹ In all their affliction He was afflicted:...and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old.

If we were as spiritually perceptive as we might and ought to be, we would be far better able to get a true concept of the message of this paragraph. We would then realize that God does not distance himself from human suffering. We would then know for ourselves that the Almighty One suffers intensely every time humans commit sin, and every time they suffer in consequence.

Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him.

When a loved one suffers injury or becomes ill or dies, we experience pain or grief which can be very intense and prolonged. But that is only the suffering emanating from one event in one person's life. Imagine how much greater our suffering would be if our entire family were to be snatched from us, or how much greater still if all the believers were led into captivity as in the days of Daniel and his three friends.

But God does not suffer grief only over one person, nor over a family of persons, nor over a church filled with believers, nor over a nation, but over an entire planet. He has the capacity to bear such an overwhelming burden, but not without suffering the most intense grief because of it all. Obviously, it is beyond the capacity of man to understand how great is the grief and the suffering which God is bearing all the time.

There is something we, as redeemed, uplifted members of the body of Christ should know, and that is that every time we commit sin, the heart of God is rent with pain so great and so intense that it would be impossible for anyone of us to endure it. If we at the same time, had to suffer this pain along with God to the limits of our capacity, how different would be our attitude toward our cherished sinful habits! How swiftly would we...

The Great Controversy, p. 425:

Through the grace of God and [our] own diligent effort...be conquerors in the battle with evil.

Obviously, there is a vast difference between what God and men suffer when sin is committed. The pure, unchanging, and unchangeable God is by far the greatest sufferer in the universe, and, at the same time, He is the one whose hatred and rejection of sin are absolute.

Hatred of Sin

For our part, unless we have become like Joseph or Daniel, the usual tendency is to become benumbed by all the commonness of transgression. Thus, instead of experiencing greater and still greater grief, we are troubled less and less by this important kind of suffering. This is a frightening development, dangerous in its very nature, and must be reversed without delay.

If our abhorrence of sin decreases, then, as time goes by, we will feel less and less suffering and grief each time we come into contact with it. In fact, if we are given enough time to develop in this way, we will eventually turn from hating sin to loving it.

On the other hand, it follows that as the Spirit of God in us increases, the more will our reactions against sin be like His. We will hate what He hates, and be grieved as He is grieved.

The Signs of the Times, September 4, 1893:

Of Christ it is written,

Hebrews 1

⁹ You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

God hates sin. It is the work of Satan to allure to evil. Satan has worked adroitly with bewitching power to fascinate the mind with iniquity, and make righteousness to appear undesirable. We need to remember continually that our secret sins are in the light of God's countenance. Of ourselves we cannot see or realize how grievous are our secret sins in the sight of God.

Under the influence of Satan we are led to pursue a course of evil until our hearts become hardened, our conscience seared, and our thoughts are brought into captivity to the prince of evil. But God is ever seeking to impress our hearts by His Holy Spirit, that we shall be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come.

We may place our will on the side of God's will, and in His strength and grace resist the temptations of the enemy. As we yield to the influence of the Spirit of God, our conscience becomes tender and sensitive, and sin that we have passed by with little thought, becomes exceeding sinful; for we begin to realize that our secret sins are in the light of His countenance.

God hates sin. He hates Sabbath breaking, adultery, stealing, covetousness, the making and worshiping of idols, and all other forms of iniquity. His children are like unto their Father and as such hate what He hates. But while God's hatred is absolute and cannot be further intensified, ours is influenced by various factors which mostly weaken rather than strengthen our abhorrence of sinfulness.

Therefore, we must make it the urgent quest of our lives to identify and positively reject all those factors which weaken our sense of the sinfulness of sin. At the same time, we must seek out and cultivate those which effectively restore in us the same hatred for sin which is found in the heart of the everlasting Father. Then, as our spiritual faculties come more and still more in tune with God, we shall find ourselves suffering the same grief which He suffers every time sin is committed.

What a powerful incentive this is against all sin and sinning. A man is motivated to give up sinful habits when he sees what they are doing to him, but how much more powerfully will he be moved to make an end of sin when he sees what his sinning is doing to God! This will be true in proportion to his love for God. The greater his love for our loving heavenly Father, the stronger will be his urge to put away sin and bring in everlasting righteousness.

When we find however that the committal of sin before us or by us produces little if any concern over the grief suffered by God, then we have cause for considerable alarm. We are being warned by our lack of spiritual perceptiveness that we must urgently go to work on obtaining a very real and active love for God. This work must be undertaken by us without delay for there is absolutely no time to spare.

This is not to claim that every believer in Jesus is at the same low level of spirituality, for this would not be true. But, no matter how advanced you might be, I am confident that all will recognize that there is no limit to what can be accomplished.

Laying Aside Every Weight

Gaining ground in this uphill struggle will require the utmost dedication of every power at our command. This is a work which must be well advanced before the latter rain can fall. Then the latter rain itself will mature our experience to even greater heights, and by the end of Jacob's trouble, our hatred of sin will be perfect. Then everlasting righteousness will have been brought in and an eternal end will have been made of all sin and sinning.

If there is one thing which is clear to me, it is that we have no leeway in this quest for eternal life. The work will require a total commitment, the giving up of earthly treasure in exchange for the pearl of great price. Upon the altar of sacrifice must be placed every cherished possession which is not directly related to our pursuit of the righteousness of Christ. We cannot afford to carry any unnecessary baggage, or spend time and money on activities unrelated to gaining a crown of eternal victory. This may require our being stripped of such earthly possessions which Heaven classifies as idols.

At the outset of his second forty years of life, Moses was stripped of everything which was his except the one suit of clothes he wore in his flight from Egypt. Gone were his royal robes, his shining armor, and his weapons. Separated from him were his beautiful chariots, his splendid war horses, and his pow-

erful armies. Never again would he sleep in the imperial palace. No more would trained servants be quick to execute his bidding. All that was gone from him forever. His life would never be the same again.

For the next forty years Moses, stripped of his immense wealth, would lead a life of relative poverty and hardship, but what a blessing it proved to be. From that school he emerged as the meekest, and therefore the most powerful man in the world, a status which God could never have achieved in him back in Egypt.

The necessity for divesting ourselves of everything which does not contribute to our hatred of sin is reiterated in the Scriptures in words such as these from the apostle Paul:

Hebrews 12

¹ Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

I am not suggesting that we strip ourselves as drastically as Moses was, for that would be too extreme under present circumstances. But I do see the necessity of strictly limiting ourselves to that which we need and nothing more. Non-essentials are better deleted from our lives.

Moses was not the only one whose life testified to the value of cutting away everything not essential to his mission. John the Baptist was another. Both of these men are very important to us for the ministry performed by each of them was a type of the mission we are called upon to fulfill. Of John the Baptist it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 101:

In preparing the way for Christ's first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord's second coming.

Communing with God Through Nature

There is much about these two mighty Christians which they held in common. For instance, both of them spent a large proportion of their lives beholding the Lord as magnificently revealed in creation. Both of them went far beyond simply admiring the beauties of God's handiwork. They had advanced to that high level of Christian experience where, even during their preparation period, they were actually capable of communing with God through nature. To them, working, traveling, or even strolling along was an experience in communing with God.

1. JESUS CHRIST

Later, when Christ walked among men, He demonstrated the same remarkable powers as it is written:

The Desire of Ages, p. 70:

John 7

¹⁵ How does this man know letters, having never learned?

This does not indicate that Jesus was unable to read, but merely that He had not received a rabbinical education. Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were given to the study of God's word.

And spread out before Him was the great library of God's created works. He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky. Apart from the unholy ways of the world, He gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature. He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man.

From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. For this He found resources in nature; new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God. The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life.

This paragraph describes a penetration into the heart of God's created works which was absolutely remarkable. The created word was His teacher, not by pouring knowledge into a receptacle, but by fellowshiping together. The light received by Christ so far exceeded that of the greatest minds of His time, as day exceeds night. Without using any of the scientific knowledge accumulated up till His time, he obtained knowledge that not only far exceeded that of the best minds of His day, but penetrated far into the future.

One would expect that Christ must have regained the capacity of our first parents to actually hold...

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 51:

...converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.

It must have been in a very special sense that they were able to converse with leaf, flower, and tree, for the general meaning of the expression, "to hold converse or conversation," involves at least two intelligent beings talking with each other. We would not classify leaves, flowers, and trees as being intelligences with the capacities for holding conversations with human beings. At the same time we have these words of Inspiration before us which we must accept by faith until clearer light shall be given. Without a doubt we shall have a far better understanding of these mysteries as time goes by. Of all men since the fall, Jesus would have been the One best able to hold converse with leaf, flower, and tree.

Education, p. 81:

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this Man.

This would have been true of Christ had He taught only in the realm of the physical and the intellectual, or in matters of theory and speculation solely. He might have unlocked mysteries that have required centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that, till the close of time, would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention. But He did not do this. He said nothing to gratify cu-

riosity or to stimulate selfish ambition. He did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character; that which will enlarge man's capacity for knowing God, and increase his power to do good. He spoke of those truths that relate to the conduct of life and that unite man with eternity.

Always what He discovered in nature were the most beautiful revelations of the character of God. These were glorious presentations of the righteousness or sinlessness of God. One must expect to find that a person who was irradiated with such perfection of love, would find sin repulsive, and would be as grieved in spirit as His Father would be. And so it is written of our Saviour that:

The Desire of Ages, p. 111:

Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit.

2. MOSES

Moses likewise was placed in a position where he was taken far beyond the limitations experienced by those who have never learned to commune with God in nature. In Midian he communed with God until his soul was flooded with righteousness or sinlessness, which is the very peace of heaven.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 248, 251:

Shut in by the bulwarks of the mountains, Moses was alone with God. The magnificent temples of Egypt no longer impressed his mind with their superstition and falsehood. In the solemn grandeur of the everlasting hills he beheld the majesty of the Most High, and in contrast realized how powerless and insignificant were the gods of Egypt. Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses seemed to stand in His presence and to be over-shadowed by His power.

Here his pride and self-sufficiency were swept away. In the stern simplicity of his wilderness life, the results of the ease and luxury of Egypt disappeared. Moses became patient, reverent, and humble, "very meek, above all the men which were upon the

face of the earth” (*Numbers* 12:3), yet strong in faith in the mighty God of Jacob.

This is a wonderful description of what Moses saw, understood, and experienced as a result of his communings with God through nature. He found God’s name written everywhere. Moses seemed to stand in His presence and to be overshadowed by His power. This is far more than merely admiring the glorious beauties of nature, even though they reflect the loveliness of the everlasting Father. This is discovery, this is fellowship, this is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and this is communion.

The end result in the life and ministry of Jesus was the development of righteousness, peace, and power in Him. This too was the end result of the same ministry in Moses’ life. He became filled with righteousness, as it is written:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 251:

Moses became patient, reverent, and humble, “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (*Numbers* 12:3), yet strong in faith in the mighty God of Jacob.

Patience, reverence, and humility are beautiful and powerful aspects of righteousness. He who is blessed with these attributes most assuredly will hate sin and be grieved by it even as God hates it and is grieved by it.

3. JOHN THE BAPTIST

So it was also in the experience of John the Baptist. He too learned the wonderful light, life, and power to be acquired by communing with God through His created works. He was a man whom God had appointed to break down the barriers erected across the pathway of the coming Redeemer. To discharge this responsibility, John would need to be an extraordinary Christian. To accomplish this God called him from an early age away from the highways and thoroughfares of human society.

The Desire of Ages, p. 101:

In the natural order of things, the son of Zacharias would have been educated for the priesthood. But the training of the rabbinical schools would have unfitted him for his work. God did not send him to the teachers of theology to learn how to interpret the Scriptures. He called him to the desert, that he might learn of nature, and nature's God.

Here we find at least one very vital element which all three—Jesus, Moses, and John the Baptist—held in common. They all held close communion with God through nature. Furthermore, the ministry of all three of them would have been seriously deficient and inadequate without the knowledge, skill, and power acquired through years of this fellowship and communion.

I suggest that you now return to the quotation from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 70, and after earnest prayer for divine enlightenment:

- Study over and over the paragraph describing how extensively Jesus gathered material for His ministry from the lives of plants and animals.
- Carefully consider the great library of God's created works, which was spread out before Him, and which He read like a native language.
- See what abundant treasures of knowledge and wisdom were being acquired from His communion with nature, for use in His preaching of the gospel.
- Meditate upon the enrichment of His messages of divine enlightenment, and be convinced that without the ministry from nature's treasure house, Christ could never have developed a character as strong as His was, nor have gained the power to successfully defeat the devil and establish the plan of salvation.

So it was with John the Baptist.

The Desire of Ages, p. 101-102:

It was a lonely region where he found his home, in the midst of barren hills, wild ravines, and rocky caves. But it was his choice

to forgo the enjoyments and luxuries of life for the stern discipline of the wilderness. Here his surroundings were favorable to habits of simplicity and self-denial. Uninterrupted by the clamor of the world, he could here study the lessons of nature, of revelation, and of Providence.

The words of the angel to Zacharias had been often repeated to John by his God-fearing parents. From childhood his mission had been kept before him, and he had accepted the holy trust. To him the solitude of the desert was a welcome escape from society in which suspicion, unbelief, and impurity had become well-nigh all-pervading. He distrusted his own power to withstand temptation, and shrank from constant contact with sin, lest he should lose the sense of its exceeding sinfulness.

Neither Jesus, Moses, nor John the Baptist communed with nature alone, but as this paragraph affirms, John studied...

...the lessons of nature, of revelation, and of Providence.

Moses wrote the books of *Genesis* and of *Job* during the second forty year period of his life, and Jesus even as a boy had accumulated a vast store of spiritual power and knowledge from the writings of the Old Testament.

The Desire of Ages, p. 102:

John found in the wilderness his school and his sanctuary. Like Moses amid the mountains of Midian, he was shut in by God's presence, and surrounded by the evidences of His power. It was not his lot to dwell, as did Israel's great leader, amid the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes; but before him were the heights of Moab, beyond Jordan, speaking of Him who had set fast the mountains, and girded them with strength.

The gloomy and terrible aspect of nature in his wilderness home, vividly pictured the condition of Israel. The fruitful vineyard of the Lord had become a desolate waste. But above the desert the heavens bent bright and beautiful. The clouds that gathered, dark with tempest, were arched by the rainbow of promise. So above Israel's degradation shone the promised glory of the Messiah's reign. The clouds of wrath were spanned by the rainbow of His covenant-mercy.

All the revelations of the gospel to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures engaged his most earnest attention. Deeply he dug into each of those books in his insatiable quest for spiritual light, purity, perfection, and power. And what was the result?

He found all that for which he sought! He gained the light, purity of character, strength and nobility of purpose, abhorrence of sinfulness, and strength to resist temptation which every sincere believer in Jesus would be glad to possess.

The Desire of Ages, 103:

He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was forgotten. He beheld the majesty of holiness, and felt himself to be inefficient and unworthy. He was ready to go forth as Heaven's messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine. He could stand erect and fearless in the presence of earthly monarchs, because he had bowed low before the King of kings.

The end product of communion with nature, the revelations of the Holy Spirit, and the providences of God, was all that was needed to produce these three mighty men: Jesus, Moses, and John the Baptist. All were men of the deepest humility and therefore of righteousness, purity, power, and peace.

Today, he who lays hold of the same provisions of divine grace and power will, in time, come to realize the development in himself of the same preparedness for fulfilling the Lord's will in terminating the reign of sin and bringing in the long-awaited kingdom of eternal peace.

For many years we have understood that communion with God in prayer and the study of the sacred Scriptures is very important for our present and future spiritual welfare, while the key role of intimate communion with nature has been largely ignored. It is now apparent that each believer must earnestly labor to establish such a communion with nature as was attained by Jesus, Moses, and John the Baptist.

There are those of us who have experienced difficulty in establishing communion with God through His written word. These may feel disheartened when they see the necessity for establishing communion with nature, but no one is more anxious for us to enter into this relationship than is the Lord, our Problem Solver, who will teach us how to do it.



25. Making War in Righteousness

FINALLY, after eighty years of preparation in various schools, God deemed Moses fit to undertake his lifework of leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Forty years before that time, Moses had considered himself fully prepared for his divinely appointed mission, but in this assessment of his abilities, he was quite mistaken.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 342:

Moses supposed that his education in the wisdom of Egypt had fully qualified him to lead Israel from bondage. Was he not learned in all the things necessary for a general of armies? Had he not had the greatest advantages of the best schools in the land?—Yes; he felt that he was able to deliver them.

God's Character or Satan's?

He who would deliver Israel from Egypt had to do the work as a true revelation of God's beautiful character of redeeming love, but Moses unwittingly sought to begin his work by using a method which reflected Satan's character, not God's.

Had God accepted and blessed with success Moses' proposed plans for solving the problem of the enslavement of His people, an unrighteous nation working by wrong principles would have replaced an equally unrighteous nation working by the same unrighteous principles and procedures. Nothing is to be gained by such a replacement. Instead, evil kingdoms must be replaced by righteous kingdoms.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 342:

He first set about his work by trying to gain the favor of his own people by redressing their wrongs. He killed an Egyptian who was imposing upon one of his brethren. In this he manifested the spirit of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and proved himself unfit to represent the God of mercy, love, and tenderness.

His first attempt was not a manifestation of mercy, love, and tenderness, and was not therefore a revelation of the righteous character of God. With the methods Moses began to employ, God's kingdom could not have been built, for they are not according to His ways of kingdom building. All who build a kingdom by these procedures, sow ruin to reap ruin.

It is the everlasting truth that those who live by the sword, shall perish by the sword. History witnesses to this, for, every nation which has been raised to power by the use of weapons has in due time perished as they made others perish. It was for these reasons that God could not bless his efforts and therefore:

Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 342-343:

He made a miserable failure of his first attempt. Like many another, he then immediately lost his confidence in God, and turned his back upon his appointed work; he fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. He concluded that because of his mistake, his great sin in taking the life of the cruel Egyptian, God would not permit him to have any part in the work of delivering His people from their cruel bondage.

But the Lord permitted these things that He might be able to teach him the gentleness, goodness, long-suffering, which it is necessary for every laborer for the Master to possess; for it is these characteristics that constitute the successful workman in the Lord's cause.

In the gathering of all Israel into the promised land, Moses was appointed to build God's kingdom according to God's ways of kingdom-building. Essentially it was to be a kingdom of righteousness, and as such, a revelation of the just and righteous character of the Almighty One.

When Moses set out to accomplish the divine purposes by unrighteous means, Jehovah would not bless his offering. Therefore, when, forty years later, God through Moses successfully delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, it was done by the employment of the principles of righteousness, the revelation of the character of God, the manifestation of mercy, love, and tenderness.

On the surface of it, what use were such weapons in breaking the Egyptian stranglehold on the world of that time? From the human point of view, they possessed no value whatsoever.

This is not so easily seen and understood by some who ask what the difference is between what Moses stepped forward to do, and what God actually did. Moses, by using whatever deadly weapon was at his command, slew the Egyptian. It appears that forty years later, God destroyed the land of Egypt by wielding even more terrible weapons which were at His command such as hail, fire, tempest, the river turning to blood, and the drowning of the army in the Red Sea. Moses struck the Egyptian, and he died. God, it seems, struck the Egyptians and destroyed them. On the surface, it appears that there is no difference.

But in actual fact there must be a considerable difference, for God would never correct Moses for doing what He himself would do. Therefore God was right in what He did in Egypt, and Moses was wrong in what he did. God's behavior was the manifestation of mercy, love, and tenderness, while the action of Moses was the revelation of a merciless spirit of harshness and hatred.

A Manifestation of Love

Let us briefly examine the position which God took toward the Egyptians to see how it was a true manifestation of love, mercy, and tenderness. It is the truth that our everlasting Father loves all men including even His worst enemies. For this reason, we who are called upon to be God's children, are required to love our enemies even as God loves His.

Medical Ministry, p. 253-254:

Just before making this requirement, [be you therefore perfect] the Saviour said to His disciples:

Matthew 5

⁴⁴ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.

We are to love our enemies with the same love that Christ manifested toward His enemies by giving His life to save them.

Many may say, “This is a hard commandment; for I want to keep just as far as I can from my enemies.” But acting in accordance with your own inclination would not be carrying out the principles that our Saviour has given.

⁴⁴ ...do good, [He says,] to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

This scripture illustrates one phase of Christian perfection. While we were yet enemies of God, Christ gave His life for us. We are to follow His example.

God loved the Egyptians with redeeming love, for which reason, long before the days of Moses, He sent Joseph as a messenger of salvation to cancel out the effect of the seven years of terrible drought. God designed that just as surely as He, through the Egyptians had preserved the world from starvation, so they were to become partakers of His character of love and give as had been given to them. God planned that they should freely receive the gospel, and become His ministers of the gospel to stand side by side with Israel in the proclamation of God’s saving, redeeming love.

But the people of the Nile missed their glorious opportunity. Pride in their power, wealth, and prosperity warped their sense of values until they lost all sight of a kingdom built on love, mercy, and tenderness, and became cruel, merciless, and oppressive. Worst of all they enslaved the children of Israel to whom they owed so much.

But the God of justice and righteousness did not react to this corruption angrily or vindictively. With Him there was no counter-hatred, but only the manifestation of forgiving love yearning for His lost children. He continued to make His sun to shine upon the unjust Egyptians which they, in turn, devoted to still further oppression of the chosen people, to worsening iniquity, and to casting aside the divine precepts.

The outworking of all this was an ever widening separation from God, until, by the time of Moses' return to Egypt, they were on the verge of losing their connection with God altogether. Had this happened, Satan would have been free to destroy the nation according to his power and choice.

Satan's object was to engulf the Egyptians in a ruin of such magnitude as would encompass all the Hebrews as well. This would mean the death of the royal line into which the Saviour was to be born, and the breaking of the plan of salvation, for God would have shown himself incapable of keeping His promises to faithful Abraham.

It was a time of terrible crisis, though the Egyptians and the Israelites were both insensible to their danger of being exterminated. The Egyptians were an imminently endangered nation because of their defiance of heaven which placed them outside the circle of divine protection, while the Hebrews, having lost their grip on eternal realities, were classed by Satan as his lawful prey.

All Satan had to do to effect this annihilation of Hebrew and Egyptian alike was to lead them both into such depths of iniquity that they would be deprived of God's protection. The principle involved is spelled out in the following statement:

The Great Controversy, p. 36:

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one.

But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest.

The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty.

Moses was to begin his lifework by carrying to the Egyptians a loving warning of their true peril combined with a clear call to enter into the obedience which would divert the deadly threat to their very existence.

Moses could never have been the messenger of these gracious tidings to Pharaoh at the end of the first forty years of his life. At that time, he did not cherish in himself the actual spirit of forgiveness. If he had, he could never have slain the Egyptian so violently. There is no way Moses could have loved that Egyptian, for no one violently deprives of life a person whom he loves. The fact that he did slay his enemy that day is all the proof needed that Moses was not fitted to reveal God's character.

Revelation at the Burning Bush

So, it was a case of sending him on to another forty years of schooling at the end of which he was introduced to the burning bush, the revelation of the principles he was to use in the execution of his commission.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 251-252:

Exodus 2

²³ And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

The time for Israel's deliverance had come. But God's purpose was to be accomplished in a manner to pour contempt on human pride. The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod the symbol of His power.

Leading his flocks one day near Horeb, "the mountain of God," Moses saw a bush in flames, branches, foliage, and trunk, all burning, yet seeming not to be consumed. He drew near to view the wonderful sight, when a voice from out of the flame called him by name. With trembling lips he answered, "Here am I."

He was warned not to approach irreverently:

Exodus 3

⁵ Put off your shoes from off your feet; for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.

⁶ I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...

It was He who, as the Angel of the covenant, had revealed himself to the fathers in ages past.

⁶ ...And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Jesus Christ is the Angel of the covenant. His Father's presentation of Him on that momentous day so long ago, is the revelation of truth so far-reaching, so sublime, so pure, so limitless, so powerful, so effective, that eternity will not be sufficient to reveal all that is contained in those few simple words.

They are worthy of the most earnest contemplation, for they are filled with faith, hope, and love. They reveal the character of God, His way of kingdom building, His almighty power devoted to saving men from sin unto holiness, and infinitely more.

Anyone whose mind and heart are purified from sin, and are blessed with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, will understand how awed Moses was when the Presence in the fire in the bush revealed himself.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1099:

It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vi-

sion; it was a living reality, something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God. God was conversing with humanity.

Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words,

Exodus 3

⁶ I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, “as a man speaks unto his friend.”

The revelation of Christ in the burning bush was given in a certain, specific context—that of the proposed, imminent deliverance of the Hebrew host from Egypt. Forty years before, Moses had formulated his plan for the release of his people, and had gone so far as to initiate it, when God permitted the scheme to fail.

Now, forty years later, God used the burning bush to present His plan to Moses, to show him the way in which the release of Israel was to be accomplished. It would be seen that in God’s plan, there was no place for military operations of any kind. Any deaths which might take place such as that of Egypt’s first born, and the drowning of the army in the Red Sea, would not be the act of God, but would be the natural maturing of a harvest of their own seed sowing.

The God of the Patriarchs

God’s announcement of himself at the burning bush is highly significant. He said:

Exodus 3

⁶ I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

As noted in an earlier chapter in this series, there had been a progression in the unfolding of the knowledge of God's character from Abraham's day, on through the life of Isaac, his son, and Jacob his grandson. Lest we have forgotten that progression from each of those noble lives to the next, I will briefly summarize the main points again as they pertain to military solutions.

Abraham of Ur of the Chaldees did not entirely leave the evil influences of that wicked city behind when, under the Lord's leading, he departed, never to return. Though it was by faith in God's role as his plan maker that he abandoned his homeland, he did not possess unquestioning faith in the Almighty as his life preserver. This is evident from his maintaining a small private army for the protection of those in his encampment.

After the one-night war with Lot's captors, Abraham was deeply distressed, for, understanding the retaliatory spirit with which his enemies were charged, he could expect that, once they had recovered their strength and had allied themselves with other powerful forces, they would return to exact a terrible revenge.

The Lord came to him to assure him of His personal protection, that He would be his shield, and would so preserve his seed until his offspring could not be numbered. Thereafter, Abraham never needed to engage in war to protect his people again. He lived a life of peace until he finally died.

Thus God moved Abraham and his household away from the use of military solutions, to gospel solutions instead. So thoroughly was this new way of living established in Abraham's life, that the sword had disappeared from the hand of Isaac and in turn of Jacob, even though the latter's sons had given the people around them grave cause for provocation.

Moses, in drawing up his plan for the deliverance of his people, had misread the history of the past. No doubt he had gone back in his thinking to the brilliant victory won by Abraham who had sought, received, and acted in accordance with divine guidance in his one night war against the captors of Lot.

Of considerable assurance to him would have been the special, personal blessing conferred upon Abraham by the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek. In Moses' mind, the pronouncement of such a blessing upon Abraham from such a person, could only be interpreted as being expressive of Heaven's total approval of the course followed by the father of the faithful. Therefore, to Moses, the means employed by Abraham under God's personal blessing were the assurance that Abraham had worked according to God's ways, whereas God, in actual fact, was but showing His acceptance of the best that Abraham knew up to that point in his knowledge and experience.

Moses would have been quite satisfied that the successful outcome of the battle in which Abraham fought was due to God's personal blessing, and he was convinced that all he had to do was to duplicate those procedures in order to wage an equally successful war against Egypt.

Like the Jews in Christ's day, Moses had complete confidence in the Almighty power of the Most High to rout any foe no matter how numerous, heavily armed, experienced in battle, or belligerent they might be, nor how ill-prepared for war his forces were. So he made the plans for the exodus of his people in full faith that God would supply the power, while Moses worked out the strategy.

The slaying of the Egyptian was the first step in that battle plan. It was an approach to the problem which God could have accepted and blessed in the early days of Abraham's life, but one which fell far short of the much higher levels of righteousness to which He expected His people to have advanced by the time the exodus was due to take place.

There seems to be one difference between the approach of Abraham to the problem confronting him, and Moses' approach to the situation he faced. Abraham took the entire problem to the Lord from whom he received instructions which he carefully obeyed. There is no record of Moses having done likewise. He ap-

pears to have assumed that he was acting under God's direct guidance, and sought to initiate the struggle for deliverance by killing the Egyptian.

Had Moses sought guidance from God as Abraham had, and had acted upon the instruction thus received, he would have saved himself failure, loss, impossibility, and defeat. But even then it would have required another forty years of special preparation before he was mentally and spiritually fit to do God's work, God's way. So then, even if he had received accurate instructions telling how the exodus was to be carried out, he would not have had the spiritual maturity to carry them out as instructed.

Because he lacked that spiritual maturity, he proceeded in his great zeal for God's cause to make the all-too-common mistake of attempting to take the work into his own hands.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 247:

In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone.

Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises.

God made it very clear that Moses' plans, even though they appeared to be like those given to Abraham, were totally unacceptable in His plan for the release of Israel. Those procedures which involved the use of violent means as employed by Abraham, belonged to his time and place. God expected His people to have advanced far beyond that point, as in fact Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had.

But through the darkness which had crept in during the long years of slavery, Israel had fallen behind even Abraham's under-

standing. Thus Moses proposed to solve the problem with a military solution, thinking by so doing, that he was acting according to God's will.

It required a further forty years to bring Moses to the place where he had the spiritual maturity to discard a military solution in favor of one composed of mercy, love, and tenderness, administered by the meekest man then living. When Moses had been brought to that place in his life, he could be classified with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, according to the word of God:

Exodus 3

⁶ I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

When God identified himself with these great patriarchs from the past, He was directing the attention of Moses to the education He had given to those men, and the changes in them which He had achieved. He was not merely talking about the men of the past, but was drawing the attention of Moses to what He had been likewise doing in him. Thus, he who had been devoted to maintaining battle-ready warriors, had been changed into the divine likeness, employing as a result, the graces of mercy, love, and tenderness.

So, He revealed that the divine purpose was conveying Moses from the position where he could attempt to carry out God's will by committing murder, to the place where he could read the message of the burning bush, and act in harmony with it.

That burning bush was much more than a spectacular display designed, as an extraordinary phenomenon, to grip one's attention with an impressive demonstration of God's power and skill. Instead, the burning bush was a presentation of gospel truth:

- A wonderful revelation of how God would lead his people out of Egypt; out of the bondage of sin; out of Babylon;
- How He would defeat the beast and his image; how He would win the last great battle on this earth;

- How He would effect the resurrection from the dead; how He would confer immortality on His beloved people;
- How He would lead them into heaven; and would finally settle them in the world made new.

The burning bush is a message of hope, joy, fullness of victory, and fragrant with the blessedness of heaven to those who can understand the messages contained therein.

I believe Moses could understand all this by the time he was introduced to it, and when he could, he was ready for his life's work.



26. The Burning Bush

IN THE Scriptures of truth, the actions of both God and men are often highly symbolic, the message being conveyed without words.

An example of this is found in the slaying of the sacrificial lamb for the morning and evening consecration services of the sanctuary. No word was required by the officiating priest in the actual slaying of the animal, and even it died in silence for it was dumb. But what tremendous symbolism is contained in that simple ceremony. There is found food for study, the supply of which eternity shall never exhaust.

In the symbolic actions of the washing of His disciples' feet, in the breaking of the bread, and in the serving of the wine, Jesus had very little to say, but what messages He carried by those actions!

The Teaching of Symbols

In like manner Moses declared the way in which he intended to lead Israel out of bondage into the promised land. In the cruel oppression of that one taskmaster over that one slave, Moses saw the plight of the entire nation, but he expressed none of this in words. Instead, he struck the Egyptian so violently that he immediately died. By this symbolic action, he announced for all to see that this was the way in which he would set his people free.

We should see nothing less than this in Moses' actions. In fact, if we do, we have failed to discern much of the message contained in this symbolic incident. We are to learn to view historical events, not merely as such, but as teachers of righteousness on the one hand, and exposures of evil on the other.

God's removal of Moses into the wilderness was also a symbolic action by which the Lord announced to him and to the Israelites in general, that He would have nothing to do with the way Moses had declared he would deliver his people. Further-

more, by removing Moses to live for forty years in the wilderness, the Lord declared the alternative manner in which He would obtain their deliverance. In place of a death-dealing weapon, He handed Moses a shepherd's staff. Thus God designed that Moses should learn that it would not be by military might that their rescue from Egypt would be achieved, but by gentle leadership such as a kind shepherd provides for his trusting sheep.

Moses however misread God's actions and no doubt the Israelites did too. He interpreted the message from God above to be the announcement that he had been rejected as the divinely appointed leader in the coming exodus.

It was forty years after Moses' flight from Egypt that God appeared in the burning bush thereby announcing in symbolic language just how He would set His people free. Here was revealed the battle plan of the Almighty, the qualifications which must be possessed by those involved, and the principles of operation from which no deviation could be tolerated.

The Message of the Burning Bush

To some, this might seem to be saying too much, but this is not possible. No statement issuing from either voice or pen can overemphasize the critical necessity of becoming in ourselves, burning bushes. Therefore, it is extremely important that we do not misread the message in the burning bush, for, until we can successfully and accurately interpret that message, we cannot be used by God to be His instruments in finishing His work.

As I wrote at the end of the last chapter:

“That burning bush was much more than a spectacular display designed, as an extraordinary phenomenon, to grip one's attention with an impressive display of God's power and skill. Instead, the burning bush was a presentation of gospel truth:

- A wonderful revelation of how God would lead His people out of Egypt; out of the bondage of sin; out of Babylon;

- How He would defeat the beast and his image; how He would win the last great battle on this earth;
- How He would effect the resurrection from the dead; how He would confer immortality on His beloved people;
- How He would lead them into heaven; and would finally settle them in the world made new.”

Since this is so, it is time for us to dig deeply for the hidden treasure so that we might understand the message contained in that symbol and, to our immense, everlasting profit, make it our personal experience.

If you find that you obtain but a limited comprehension of what the burning bush means to you, then it is time to register in your mind the deepest concern over your spiritual well-being. You should fear that you could be the victim of Laodicean blindness, and in your great need, hasten to Him who alone can supply that need by anointing your eyes with the spiritual eye-salve. Lay out the problem before Him, cling to Him in your importunity, and refuse to let go until Heaven hears.

This is the greatest of subjects, which, when properly understood, will work marvels of transformation throughout your entire being.

The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1099:

It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vision; it was a living reality,— something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God.

God was conversing with humanity. Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words,

Exodus 3

⁶ I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, “as a man speaks unto his friend.”

It is clear from this statement, that there is little if any light in the manifestation of the Deity for those who are but casual, surface-readers of God’s holy word, but for those who seek and obtain the ministry of the Holy Spirit as their teacher, wonderful revelations will be given which will fill the soul with joy unspeakable.

This must be so, for that which the burning bush symbolizes is the one great means whereby we are brought into fellowship with our all-loving heavenly Father. Such communion is the fullness of joy and peace.

So, with a solemn sense of our very great need, let us embark on our search to discover the vital message of the burning bush, so that the sheer power of that revelation of living truth might become the dominant influence emanating from within ourselves.

God the Plan Maker

When the time came that sin appeared in the courts of heaven and spread to this earth, God and man became alienated from each other, and mankind was utterly lost. A great gulf separated the two. The latter had not the capacity to devise a plan whereby he might be saved, and even if he had obtained the wisdom to formulate such a plan, he definitely had not the power by which the scheme could be put into effect.

These facts cannot be controverted, for they are affirmed every day by simply observing men ever seeking to find eternal life for and by themselves apart from God, or by making plans for God to bless.

But only God has the wisdom to form any plan whereby man can be saved, and only He has the power to put any such plan into effect. So, the almighty Creator was faced with the options of simply leaving man to deservedly perish, or to devise a rescue operation.

Infinite love was the factor which decided the issue. God so loved the world that He literally gave himself in the Person of His Only-begotten Son that men might not perish, but, instead, become the recipients of eternal life, provided they met the conditions which were necessary for the appropriation of the splendid gift.

The needs for human salvation were not satisfied by simply forgiving man for his rebellion and his sinful deeds. Much, much more than all that was involved, for sin is a very subtle force, a deep-seated malady which requires a solution of great power and complexity to solve. But, while the plan has to be so simple that even a child could understand it, yet it would require the unlimited resources of eternity to plumb its depths or to encompass its lengths and breadths.

However, irrespective of how complex and deep-seated the sin-problem might be, God has met every need required to terminate it. Yet it will require an eternity of the most intense study by minds far more powerful than any found on the earth today, to understand its mysteries. Even then, there will arise fresh evidences of God's redeeming love, His perfect righteousness, flawless justice, forgiving mercy, and boundless grace to delight the researcher into divine truth.

A Revelation of the Incarnation

Yet, while the truth in the fullness of all its details will fill eternity, it can be and is pictured in a burning bush which, though burning, was not consumed. This was an extraordinary phenomenon. Who had ever encountered such a thing before! When a flammable bush catches alight, it burns down to the ground where it is no longer a bush, but only a scattering of powdery,

white ash, but here was a bush which, though burning, was not destroyed.

Moses' attention was captured by this seeming violation of natural law, and he turned toward the bush to give it a more thorough examination. He hoped to obtain a clearer understanding of what was happening. It was then that the voice of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Covenant Angel, spoke to him.

The Signs of the Times, August 24, 1891:

Forty years was Moses in this training school in the mountains. At Mount Horeb the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

Exodus 3

² ...he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

³ And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

⁴ And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.

⁵ And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.

⁶ Moreover He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, was in that bush. This meant that before Moses was a revelation of humanity combined with divinity, otherwise referred to as the Incarnation, Christ in you the hope of glory, and the seed principle. The same glorious truth is pictured in the typical sanctuary where the presence of God dwelt in a building entirely constructed of earthly, sin-cursed materials.

The Desire of Ages, p. 23:

God commanded Moses for Israel,

Exodus 25

⁸ Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them,

and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people.

Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them.

The presence of God in the earthly sanctuary and in the burning bush were the same—divinity come down to earth. But, because men could not endure the intense glory unshielded, God had to find a dwelling place among men where His presence would not obliterate them. That was achieved by His coming and dwelling in human flesh.

The Desire of Ages, p. 23:

So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life.

John 1 [RV, margin]

¹⁴ The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

The Signs of the Times, July 7, 1898:

Christ veiled His divinity beneath the garb of humanity. This was the only way in which He could approach men. Had He not done this, He could not have conversed with men, and gathered them around Him to hear the grand and elevating truths which were to be to them eternal life. It was a part of the plan that He should hide the brightness of His glory, that, during His earthly life, He should humble himself to man's estate.

This veiling of His divinity with a bush, a human being, or a tabernacle, seems utterly inadequate, for how could any one of these have the capacity to shield a sinner from the glory which no man can endure and live? It would seem that the instant in which divinity clothed itself with humanity, the latter would utterly be consumed. But it is not!

So it remains the greatest of mysteries that divinity could reside in a bush, a tabernacle, or sinful humanity. This is something

which is beyond the capacity of humanity to comprehend at the present time, and so it will forever be as it is written:

The Signs of the Times, October 24, 1906:

Science is too limited to comprehend the atonement; the mysterious and wonderful plan of redemption is so far-reaching that philosophy can not explain it; it will ever remain a mystery that the most profound reason cannot fathom. If it could be explained by finite wisdom, it would lose its sacredness and dignity. It is a mystery that One equal with the eternal Father should so abase himself as to suffer the cruel death of the cross to ransom man; and it is a mystery that God so loved the world as to permit His Son to make this great sacrifice.

The fact that this is a mystery beyond the comprehension of the most powerful human mind, does not justify our closing the book on this subject, for much can be understood by those who, with minds illuminated by the Holy Spirit, dig deeply for the hidden treasure. The rewards of spiritual illuminations thus opened to our wondering gaze are beyond computation. The spiritual experience and power of such dedicated individuals will grow to wondrous proportions, and joy and gladness will mark their successful ministries wherever they go.

The dominant message of the burning bush and similar symbols, is that heaven and earth are reconnected. The bridge, spanning the awful gulf created by sin, has been erected, the separation between man and God has ended, and the pathway is open for all who will, to enter the gates to God.

In order for these things to be so, God had to come to man where he is in the very depths of the pit, tabernacled in sinful flesh, and there impart to him His life.

The burning bush is not only the picture of this life made resident in the sinner, but it is also the guarantee that it is possible for divinity to dwell in mortal, sinful humanity without immaculate divinity destroying humanity. The bush was not consumed.

On many of those occasions recorded in the Scriptures when men of God have found themselves in God's presence, they have been filled with fear. Thus, at the burning bush:

Exodus 3

⁶ Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, he reacted with fear.

Judges 13

²² And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God!

In the cases of men who were not blessed with the gift of salvation, the appearance of a divine being was enough to scatter them in all directions. I think, for instance, of the men who were with Daniel when he was given the vision of Christ. Describing his experience, Daniel said:

Daniel 10

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them so that they fled to hide themselves.

Then there was the time when the battle-hardened soldiers guarding Christ's tomb "shook for fear of him, and became like dead men,"²⁴ when the angel Gabriel appeared before them.

While very real fear of the consequences of being in God's literal presence has possessed men ever since sin has entered, it is more unusual than usual for men to die from this cause. On one such occasion occurred the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who entered the tabernacle with strange fire in their censers.

²⁴ *Matthew 28:4.*

Jacob would have suffered the same fate if his cry: “I will not let You go, except You bless me,”²⁵ had not been the plea of the penitent for true deliverance.

The Review and Herald, January 14, 1902:

Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

It cannot be said that the bush was itself the actual shield, for it did not have the capacity to perform such a task. It was the symbol of that in which the divine presence was shrouded, so that man could come into that presence and not die.

The Youth’s Instructor, December 20, 1900:

This lesson contains instruction that is profitable for all. Here is revealed a symbol radiant with the glory of Christ, the Great Teacher. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was not a cedar of Lebanon, but a lowly bush, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded his glory in a most humble type, that Moses might look upon it, and live. God declared,

Exodus 33

²⁰ You cannot see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

All the manifestations of God’s glory have been shrouded, that man might behold it, and not be consumed. Veiled in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, God could honor finite man by communicating to him His will, and imparting to him His grace. God’s glory must be subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite man may look upon it.

By contrast, it is the work of false religion to keep humanity and divinity separated as far from each other as the heavens are above this earth. The thought of a pure, perfect, sinless, holy God coming down to dwell in fallen, sinful human nature is too great a mystery for them to accept. They can see only a holy God

²⁵ *Genesis 32:26.*

dwelling in holy flesh, and one must admit that this theology is by far the more pleasing to the human ears.

This is especially so when the holy flesh doctrine excuses the candidate for heaven from the disciplines of obedience. That is, those who love sin so much that they want to be saved in it, and not from it, are the ones who love the theory that a righteous God can only dwell in holy, sinless, immaculate flesh. Thus they expect to be delivered from sinning when they die and not before. That is why holy flesh theologies are by far the most popular among fallen mankind.

This fact is revealed in the encounter between King Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans. These reputedly wise men were employed by the Babylonian monarch to explain the mysteries of life. Consequently, when the king dreamed of the great image, and desired to understand its meaning, he immediately summoned these leading religionists of the nation to provide him with the interpretation of the image. He fully expected them to do so, and was astonished and infuriated when they confessed that the task was beyond their capacities.

Furthermore, they declared that there was not a person living on the earth who had the necessary connection with the far distant gods needed to acquire the information sought by the king. The story is recorded in the Scriptures as follows:

Daniel 2

⁸ The king answered and said, I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm:

⁹ If you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.

¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requires, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

The Christian's God dwells not only with, but in sinful, mortal flesh and blood, for that is the only flesh available on this sin-cursed earth. Any other kind was lost to us when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Fortunately for those seeking salvation, it is the only kind through which deliverance from sin can be brought to the human family. Sinless flesh can be found throughout heaven, but it cannot reach us where we are, tabernacled in sinful flesh on this earth. The dream given to Jacob when he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth, is the spiritual revelation of this.

The Desire of Ages, p. 311:

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost.

But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (*Romans* 8:3), He lived a sinless life.

Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The lowly bush composed entirely of the sin-cursed dust of the earth corresponds to the bottom half of the ladder, while the fire in the bush corresponds to the top half of the ladder. Thus in both revelations of truth, the plan of salvation is beautifully portrayed.

It is not sufficient however, for us to merely view this wonder from afar. Instead, we must become in ourselves, burning bushes in which divinity is combined with humanity. We must become

living temples, dwelling places for the Most High, fit habitations for the Holy Spirit. Then we can effectively pray for the latter rain which will not come until our preparation is complete.

But as it was with Moses, so it will be again. When the preparation is complete, the latter rain power, which will gather the children of God from the bastions of error, and unite them in one body prepared to meet the Bridegroom and to stand against the apostasy of the world, will come in fullness of power and glory.



Appendix 1 – Like Unto Me

Moses as a Type of Christ

CONTENTS

<i>Exodus</i>	400
<i>Leviticus</i>	414
<i>Numbers</i>	415
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	419
<i>Joshua</i>	423
<i>Psalms</i>	423
<i>Matthew</i>	424
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	424
<i>Acts</i>	425
<i>Hebrews</i>	426

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁵ The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.

¹⁶ For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.

¹⁷ The Lord said to me: What they say is good.

¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

John 5

³⁹ Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 480:

Moses was a type of Christ. He himself had declared to Israel,

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁵ The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, *like unto me*; unto Him you shall hearken.

God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty before he could be prepared to lead the hosts of Israel to the earthly Canaan. The Israel of God, journeying to the heavenly Canaan, have a Captain who needed no human teaching to prepare Him for His mission as a divine leader; yet He was made...

Hebrews 2

¹⁰ ...perfect through sufferings;

¹⁸ [and] in that He himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

Our Redeemer manifested no human weakness or imperfection; yet He died to obtain for us an entrance into the Promised Land.

Hebrews 3

⁵ And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

⁶ But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

THE following is a list of some of the ways in which Moses is a type or picture of Jesus Christ. It was compiled from a few different comparison lists I gathered from articles on the Internet.

One of these books was *Gleanings in Genesis*, by A. W. Pink. Another list which appeared often on the Internet was credited to Karl Lohman, but I was not able to verify who he was or which book the list might have come from. Other lists were uncredited. I also added a few entries from the book, *Our Banquet*, by H. A. St. John, from Chapter XXX, "Moses and Christ."

I have combined all these and arranged them according to the order of books and chapters in the Bible.

Exodus

Exodus 1

BIRTH

The birth of Moses occurred when his nation was under the dominion of a hostile foreign power, when they were groaning under bondage to a Gentile king. *Exodus* 1:8-10.

The birth of Jesus occurred when the Jews were in bondage to the Romans. *Luke* 2:1-5; *Matthew* 2:1 compare with *Luke* 24:21.

INFANCY

In infancy his life was endangered, imperiled by the reigning king, for Pharaoh had given orders to kill every Hebrew male child. *Exodus* 1:15-23.

The reigning king, Herod, also tried to kill Christ in infancy by slaying the Hebrew children in Bethlehem. *Matthew* 2:16-18.

Exodus 2

A HUMBLE CRIB

Moses' mother put him in the river in a basket. *Exodus* 2:3.

Jesus' mother put him in a manger (feeding trough). *Luke* 2:7.

NAME SIGNIFIES SALVATION

Moses means drawn out of water. *Exodus* 2:10. Drawing out of water is a picture of salvation. *Isaiah* 12:3. Moses brought to Israel the way of salvation.

Jesus' name in Hebrew is Yeshua which means "the Lord saves." Jesus brought the way of salvation.

NATIONALITY

Moses was an Israelite. He was one of the people—like his brethren. *Exodus* 2:1-2.

So Jesus took hold of the seed of Abraham, became subject to death, was raised up "of his brethren" (*Leviticus* 25:48), and calls

His people His brethren. *Hebrews 2:16, 9-14; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38.*

SAVED IN EGYPT

The favor of God was upon Moses, even as an infant. Pharaoh's daughter took him out of the river and he became a prince of Egypt. *Exodus 2:5.*

Christ fled to Egypt for safety. *Matthew 2:13.* The favor of God was upon Jesus. Wise men worshiped Him and presented gifts to Him. *Matthew 2:11.*

ADOPTION

Moses was the child of another, he yet was made the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Thus he had a mother, but no father. Moses was brought up by a man who was not his natural father. *Exodus 2:9-10.*

Here is prefigured the mystery of the Virgin-birth. Christ was the Son of Another, even the Son of God. But, born into this world, He had a mother, but no human father. Yet was He, as it were, adopted by Joseph. *Matthew 1:19-21; Luke 2:33.*

COMPASSION

Moses, when grown, saw the burdens of his brethren and had compassion on them. *Exodus 2:11.*

Jesus saw His people as sheep without a shepherd and had compassion on them. *Mark 6:34.*

CONDESCENDING GRACE

Though legally the "son of Pharaoh's daughter," yet he regarded the Hebrew slaves as his brethren. *Exodus 2:11.*

Christ is not ashamed to call His poor followers, brethren. *Hebrews 2:11.*

GENTILE BRIDE

Moses as deliverer was initially rejected by his people and took a Gentile bride, Zipporah. *Exodus 2:11-14, 16-21.*

Jesus as Deliverer was initially rejected by His people and took a Gentile bride, the Church. *2 Corinthians* 11:2.

REJECTION BY HIS BRETHREN

When Moses tried to help his brethren, they rejected him as a ruler and judge over themselves. *Acts* 7:26-27.

Christ was also rejected as ruler and judge by His own people. *John* 1:11. *Luke* 19:14.

CALLED OUT OF EGYPT

Both of them were “called from Egypt.” *Exodus* 2:15; *Matthew* 2:13.

SOJOURNING AMONG THE GENTILES

“Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.” *Exodus* 2:15.

Following Christ’s rejection by the Jews, we read, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.” *Acts* 15:14.

KINDNESS AT A WELL

Moses at a well, away from his own land, was kind to the daughters of the priest of Midian and watered their flock (not the usual custom). *Exodus* 2:15-17.

Jesus at a well, outside Israel’s borders, was kind to a Samaritan woman and offered her water (not the usual custom. *John* 4:4-11.

EXILED UNTIL KING DIES

Moses was in exile in a foreign land until the king of Egypt died. *Exodus* 2:23; *Hebrews* 11:23.

Jesus was in exile in a foreign land until King Herod died. *Matthew* 2:13-20.

Exodus 3

OBSCURITY

Before he entered upon his mission to lead God’s children out of Egypt, Moses spent many years in obscurity. Who had sup-

posed that this one, there “at the backside of the desert,” was destined to such an honorable future? *Exodus* 3:1.

So it was with the incarnate Son of God. Before He began His public ministry, He was hidden away in despised Nazareth. Who that saw Him there in the carpenter’s shop, dreamed that He was ordained of God to the work of redemption? *Luke* 4:22; *John* 1:46.

TIME IN THE WILDERNESS

Both spent time in the wilderness before taking on their callings. *Exodus* 3; *Matthew* 4:1-11.

SHEPHERDS

Moses learned to be a shepherd. *Exodus* 3:1. Then later he was a shepherd of God’s people. *Psalms* 77:20.

This is also the character which Christ sustains to His elect among the Gentiles. Jesus called himself the “good shepherd” who came to lay down His life for the sheep. *John* 10:11-16.

CALLED IN SUPERNATURAL WAY

Moses began his ministry in a supernatural way—a bush burned with fire, but was not consumed, and God spoke from the midst of the bush. *Exodus* 3:2-4.

Jesus began His ministry in a supernatural way—a dove descended on Him and a voice from Heaven spoke. *Matthew* 3:16-17.

God told Moses to remove his sandals because he was on holy ground. *Exodus* 3:5.

John the Baptist said he was not even worthy to loosen the sandals worn by Jesus because he was the Holy One. *Mark* 1:7; *Luke* 3:16; *John* 1:27.

DELIVERERS

Moses was sent down from Mount Sinai in Midian in Arabia, to take the people of ancient Israel out of Egypt, and to lead them to Mount Sinai, and after that to an earthly Promised Land. *Exodus* 3:10; *Acts* 7:34-36.

Jesus the “New Moses” was sent down from Heaven, to take a “spiritual Israel” (the saints) out of a “spiritual Egypt,” to lead them into a heavenly Promised Land, a heavenly mountain, the Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem in Heaven. *Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 11:16; 12:22.*

The one was typical of the other. Jesus, like Moses, was not only to deliver, but to rule the Israel of God. *Acts 3:26; Romans 11:26; Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33; Matthew 2:6.*

God sent Moses to deliver His people because He knew their sorrows. *Exodus 3:7.*

God sent Jesus to deliver His people because He knew their enslaved, brokenhearted state. *Luke 4:18.*

MINISTERS

Both had ministries to the nation of Israel. *Exodus 3:1-10; Matthew 15:21-28.*

COMMISSION FROM GOD

Moses was called of God to emancipate His people from the house of bondage. *Exodus 3:10.*

Christ was sent forth into this world to “seek and to save that which was lost.” *Luke 19:10.*

MEEKNESS

Moses was very humble, saying “Who am I?” *Exodus 3:11.* He is called “very meek.” *Numbers 12:3.*

Jesus was “meek and lowly,” calling all to find rest for their souls in Him. *Matthew 11:28-30; 21:5.*

Exodus 4

FIRST TO PERFORM MIRACLES

It should be noted that Moses is the first one mentioned in the Old Testament that performed miracles. *Exodus 4:1-5.*

Christ is the first in the New Testament. *John 2:1-11.* (John the Baptist performed none. *John 10:41.*)

POWER OVER NATURE AND MAN

The first two signs Moses performed showed power over nature, and power over man. *Exodus* 4:2-9.

The first two miracles Jesus performed showed power over nature and power over man. *John* 2:1-17; 5:19-20.

POWER OVER SATAN AND LEPROSY

The first two signs that Moses wrought showed power over the serpent, and power over leprosy. *Exodus* 4:6-9.

After Christ began His public ministry, we read of His power over Satan (*Matthew* 4:10-11), and His power over leprosy. *Matthew* 8:3.

APOSTLESHIP

Moses was God's apostle unto Israel, for "apostle" signifies one "sent forth": "Now therefore go." *Exodus* 4:12.

So Christ was the Sent One of God (*John* 9:4); yea, in *Hebrews* 3:1 He is designated "the Apostle."

SIGNS AND WONDERS, MIRACLES

Moses commission from God was confirmed by power to work miracles. *Exodus* 4:17.

So also Christ's mission was authenticated by wondrous signs. *Matthew* 4:23-24; 11:4-5.

RETURN TO HIS OWN LAND

In *Exodus* 4:19 we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought your life."

The antitype of this is found in *Matthew* 2:19: "An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young Child's life."

ACCEPTANCE BY HIS BRETHREN

Moses' acceptance is recorded in *Exodus* 4:29-31. How different was this from his first appearing before and rejection by the Hebrews. *Exodus* 2.

How beautifully it prefigured the acceptance of Jesus by many after His death and resurrection. *Acts* 6:7.

Exodus 5

DEALING WITH WICKED KINGS

Moses dealt with the wicked king, Pharaoh. *Exodus* chapters 5 to 12.

Jesus dealt with the wicked king, Herod. *Luke* 13:31-32.

NO REPUTATION

Moses, who had been of high reputation in Egypt as a commander and a wise man, lost it all, and became of no reputation in Egypt before his mission began; and indeed when he came to his own people to deliver them, they did not appreciate his efforts in their behalf. *Exodus* 5:20-21.

So Jesus, when He came to this world on His great mission, took on Him the nature of man, and became of no reputation. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. *Philippians* 2:7; *John* 1:11.

PRAYERFULNESS

An example of this has just been before us, but many other instances are recorded. Moses was, pre-eminently, a man of prayer. At every crisis he sought unto the Lord. *Exodus* 5:22, 8:12, 9:33, 14:15, 15:25, 17:4, etc.

Note how often in Luke's Gospel, Christ is also presented as a Man of prayer. *Luke* 3:21; 9:18; 9:29; 11:1.

Exodus 7

ANNOUNCING SOLEMN JUDGMENTS

Again and again he warned Pharaoh and his people of the sore punishment of God if they continued to defy him. *Exodus* chapters 7 to 12.

So also Christ declared, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” *Luke* 13:3.

MIRACLES WITH WATER

Both did miraculous things to/on large bodies of water. *Exodus* 7:20; 14:16, 27; *Matthew* 8:23-27; *Mark* 6:45-51.

Exodus 8

DEALING WITH HARDENED HEARTS

Both dealt with folks who hardened their hearts. *Exodus* 8:15; *Mark* 6:45-52.

Exodus 9

SAVED TO SERVE

The reason behind Moses’ liberation of the Hebrews was for them to serve God. *Exodus* 9:1.

The reason behind Jesus’ liberation of mankind is for us to serve God. *Hebrews* 9:14; 12:28.

POWERFUL ROD

Moses now wielded a rod of mighty power. *Exodus* 9:23; 10:13; 14:16.

So also it is written of Christ, “You shall break them with a rod of iron.” *Psalms* 2:9.

Exodus 12

KEPT THE PASSOVER

Both kept the Passover. *Exodus* 12; *Hebrews* 11:28; *Luke* 22:11; *Matthew* 26:17-19.

DELIVERANCE THROUGH BLOOD

Moses delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage through Blood. *Exodus* 12:13, 23. Lambs without blemish were slain. Their blood protected Hebrew homes from death.

Jesus delivered all mankind from the bondage of sin through Blood—His Blood, shed on the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *John* 1:29; *Hebrews* 9:11-15.

A REMEMBRANCE MEAL

Moses instructed Israel to remember the Lord's deliverance *Exodus* 12:25-27 via a covenant meal (Passover).

Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His deliverance from the sin via a covenant meal (Passover, the "Lord's Supper"). *Luke* 22:14-20.

Exodus 14

MIRACLES WITH WATER

Both did miraculous things to/on large bodies of water. *Exodus* 7:20; *Exodus* 14:16, 27; *Matthew* 8:23-27; *Mark* 6:45-51.

Exodus 15

LEADERSHIP OF ISRAEL'S PRAISE

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel." *Exodus* 15:1.

Of Christ it is written, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise You." *Psalms* 22:22; *Matthew* 26:30.

PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH WATER

Moses gave the Israelites sweet water to drink. *Exodus* 15:22-25; 16:25; *Numbers* 20:11.

Jesus promised living water to all who believe in Him. *John* 4:10, 14; 7:37-38.

OPPOSED BY OTHERS

Though Israel were so deeply indebted to Moses, yet again and again we find them "murmuring" against him. *Exodus* 15:24, 16:2, etc.

The Jews murmured at Jesus. *John* 6:41; *Luke* 15:2.

HEALING

God revealed His healing power through Moses. *Exodus* 15:26.

God revealed His healing power through Jesus. *Matthew* 4:23.

Exodus 16

FED THE PEOPLE

Moses gave God's hungry people (a multitude) bread from heaven to eat (manna). *Exodus* 16:15.

Jesus fed a hungry multitude (5000) with five loaves and two fishes. *Matthew* 14:19-21; *Mark* 8:1-9.

Moses told the people to gather manna every morning—daily bread. *Exodus* 16:20-21.

Jesus taught His disciples to feed their souls with spiritual bread daily. *Matthew* 6:11. Jesus said that He was the true bread from heaven that gives life to the world. *John* 6:33.

PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH WATER

Moses gave the Israelites sweet water to drink. *Exodus* 15:22-25; 16:25; *Numbers* 20:11.

Jesus promised living water to all who believe in Him. *John* 4:10, 14; 7:37-38.

Exodus 17

LIFE THREATENED

So fiercely did the ungrateful Hebrews oppose Moses that, on one occasion, they were ready to stone him. *Exodus* 17:4.

People were also ready to stone Jesus. *John* 8:59, 10:31.

OUTSTRETCHED ARMS

Both had outstretched arms with 2 men beside them, and in both cases there was a war going on. *Exodus* 17:8-16; *Matthew* 27:38.

In Moses' case, it was a physical war with Amalek. In Christ's case, it was a spiritual war with the devil (*Isaiah* 50:8 in the context of the crucifixion).

Exodus 18

JUDGES

Moses was Israel's judge, the final authority in decision-making. *Exodus* 18:13-26.

Jesus executed justice and judgment. *John* 5:27, 30. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. *2 Corinthians* 5:10. Jesus will judge all at His appearing. *2 Timothy* 4:1.

Exodus 19

GIVING THE LAW ON A MOUNTAIN

Moses received God's Law on a mountain and told the people what God expected of them. *Exodus* 19:3.

Jesus set the law back in its proper place on a mountain (the Sermon on the Mount). *Matthew* 5:1.

PROPHETS

Moses, a prophet, was a mouthpiece for God. He spoke the words God gave him. *Exodus* 19:7-8.

Jesus, as a prophet spoke the words that God gave Him. *John* 8:28-29.

GOD APPEARED IN A CLOUD

God came to Moses in a thick cloud. *Exodus* 19:9, 24:16.

God came to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in a thick cloud. *Mark* 9:7.

Exodus 24

MESENTERS

He was the mouthpiece of God: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord." *Exodus* 24:3.

Compare *Hebrews* 1:2: “But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Moses sprinkled the blood of the first covenant on the people. *Exodus* 24:8.

Jesus sanctified the people with His own blood, the blood of the New Covenant. *Hebrews* 13:12.

COMMANDMENTS

God gave Moses commandments to teach His people. *Exodus* 24:12.

God gave Jesus commandments to teach His people. *John* 13:34.

Exodus 31

WRITTEN REVELATION

See *Exodus* 31:18: “And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.” *Acts* 7:53: “You who received the law as delivered by angels.”

Compare with *Revelation* 1:1: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John.”

JOINING HEAVEN AND EARTH

It is striking to behold in *Exodus* chapters 31 to 34 how Moses passed and re-passed between Jehovah in the mount and the camp of the congregation: expressive of his equal access to heaven and earth.

Compare with *John* 3:13: “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.”

Exodus 32

UNWEARIED LOVE

Though misunderstood, envied, and opposed, nothing could alienate the affections of Moses from his people. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” *Song* 8:7.

Beautifully is this seen in *Exodus* 32. After Israel repudiated Jehovah and had worshiped the golden calf, after the Lord has disowned them as His people (*Exodus* 32:7), Moses supplicates God on their behalf, saying “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of your book which You have written.” *Exodus* 32:31-32.

How this reminds us of Him who “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” *John* 13:1. Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, has shown the greatest love for the sheep, by giving His life for them. When He was in this world He was a mighty pleader, spending whole nights in prayer to His Father for a wayward and rebellious people. He wept over Jerusalem because they would not be gathered into the sheltering fold, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. He poured out strong cries and tears, and was heard—always heard. *John* 10:11; *Luke* 6:12; 19:41-42; *Matthew* 23:37; *Hebrews* 5:7.

INTERCESSION

Moses interceded with God for Israel when He was angry with His people. *Exodus* 32:11-14, 34.

Jesus interceded with God on behalf of sinful man; He “made intercession for the transgressors” (*Isaiah* 53:12) and became the final sacrifice for sin. *Matthew* 20:28; *Hebrews* 7:25.

HOLY ANGER

See *Exodus* 32:19: “And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.”

Compare with *Mark* 3:5: “And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, Stretch out your hand. He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.” *Matthew* 21:12: “And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.”

ARRAIGNING OF THE RESPONSIBLE HEAD

See *Exodus* 32:21: “And Moses said to Aaron, What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?”

Compare with *Revelation* 2:20: “But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.”

LEADERSHIP

Moses was the head and director of God’s people, as He said to him, “Lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken.” *Exodus* 32:34.

So Christ is called, “The Captain of their salvation.” *Hebrews* 2:10.

Exodus 33

PLACE OUTSIDE THE CAMP

See *Exodus* 33:7: “Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.”

Compare with *Hebrews* 13:12-13: “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.”

FACE TO FACE COMMUNION WITH GOD

God spoke with Moses face to face. *Exodus* 33:11; *Deuteronomy* 34:10; *Numbers* 12:6, 8. “Face to face” is a Hebrew idiom which means “mouth to mouth.”

Jesus had an intimate “face to face” relationship with God, His Father. *John* 1:18; 14:31.

Exodus 34

INTIMATE COMMUNION WITH GOD

“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” *Exodus* 34:10.

So, on earth, Christ was “the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.” *John* 1:18.

MAKING A COVENANT

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” *Exodus* 34:27.

Christ is denominated, “the Mediator of a better covenant.” *Hebrews* 8:6.

FASTED FOR FORTY DAYS

Moses fasted for 40 days and 40 nights when he received the Torah (the instructions and directions of how to live). *Exodus* 34:28.

Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights when He was tempted in the wilderness. *Matthew* 4:1-2; *Luke* 4:2.

DELIVERING THE LAW FROM A MOUNTAIN

Moses delivered the ten commandment Law from Mount Sinai. *Exodus* 34.

Jesus delivered the law of His kingdom (the Sermon on the Mount) from a mountain. *Matthew* 5:1.

FACE SHONE WITH GLORY

Moses’ face shone with the glory of God. *Exodus* 34:29, 35.

Jesus' face shone with the glory of God. *Matthew* 17:1-12.

Exodus 39

BLESSING OF THE PEOPLE

“And Moses blessed them.” *Exodus* 39:43.

So too we read in *Luke* 24:50: “And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them.”

Exodus 40

PRIESTS

Moses was a Priest in the Old Testament Sanctuary on Earth. *Exodus* 40.

Jesus is our great High Priest in the Sanctuary in Heaven. *Hebrews* 4:14.

INSTRUCTION IN WORSHIP

God told Moses how He wanted to be worshiped—at the Tabernacle. *Exodus* 40.

God told Jesus how He wanted to be worshiped—“in spirit and in truth.” *John* 4:23-24.

Leviticus

Leviticus 8

WASHING HIS BRETHREN WITH WATER

“And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.” *Leviticus* 8:6.

This was a foreshadowing of what is recorded in *John* 13:5: “After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet.”

ANOINTING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Moses anointed the tabernacle with oil (the Old Testament emblem of the Holy Spirit). *Leviticus* 8:10.

Jesus anointed the early church with the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire. *Acts 2:1-3, 33.*

PRIESTS

Moses was a priest on this Earth, offering up sacrifices to God. *Leviticus 8:15-16; 19:23; Psalm 99:6.*

Christ, as Priest, “offered himself without spot to God.” *Hebrews 9:14.*

Leviticus 24

LIGHT

Moses commanded the children of Israel to keep their lamps burning continually. *Leviticus 24:2.*

Jesus commanded His children to put their light on a lampstand and let it shine before men. *Matthew 5:15-16.*

Numbers

Numbers 7

REWARDING GOD’S SERVANTS

Moses portioned out the rewards to God’s people. *Numbers 7:6, 32:33, 40.*

Jesus will give a reward to every man according to his work. *Revelation 22:12.*

Numbers 11

GREAT SORROWS

Moses felt keenly the base ingratitude of the people. Mark his plaintive plea as recorded in *Numbers 11:11, 14.*

So too the Lord Jesus suffered from the reproaches of the people: He was “the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” *Isaiah 53:3.*

THE SEVENTY

Moses selected seventy elders to help him with his work. *Numbers* 11:16, 24-25.

So Christ selected seventy laborers to help Him in His work. *Luke* 10:1.

Numbers 12

FORGIVING SPIRIT

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses...Has the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken also by us?” *Numbers* 12:1-2. But he answered not a word.

How this pointed to Him who, “when He was reviled, reviled not again.” *1 Peter* 2:23.

INTERCESSION

When Miriam was stricken with leprosy because of her revolt against her brother, we are told, “Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech You.” *Numbers* 12:13.

Jesus did the same to those who rebelled against Him: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” *Luke* 23:34.

CRITICIZED BY RELATIVES

Moses was criticized and challenged by his relatives. *Numbers* 12:1-2.

Jesus was criticized and challenged by His relatives. *John* 7:5; *Matthew* 13:57.

MEEKNESS

Moses is called “very meek.” *Numbers* 12:3.

Jesus was “meek and lowly,” calling all to find rest for their souls in Him. *Matthew* 11:28-30; 21:5; *2 Corinthians* 10:1.

SERVANTS

Both were called God’s servants—“my servant.” *Numbers* 12:7; *Matthew* 12:14-21.

FAITHFUL

Moses was faithful in God's house. *Numbers 12:7; Hebrews 3:5.*

So Christ is "the faithful and true Witness." *Revelation 3:14.* Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, was faithful to Him that appointed Him. *Hebrews 3:16.*

FACE TO FACE COMMUNION WITH GOD

God spoke with Moses face to face. *Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:8.* Face to Face is a Hebrew idiom which means "mouth to mouth."

Jesus had an intimate "face to face" relationship with God, His Father. *John 14:31.*

DEALING WITH LEPERS

Both dealt with lepers. *Numbers 12:10-15; Matthew 8:1-4.*

Numbers 13

THE TWELVE

Moses chose 12 men, 1 of each tribe and sent them out to scout the land. They returned with fruit. *Numbers 13:1-27; Deuteronomy 1:23.*

Jesus chose 12 men and sent them out to gather souls for His kingdom (to bear fruit). *Matthew 10; Luke 9:1-6.*

Numbers 14

PRAYING FOR ISRAEL'S FORGIVENESS

Moses besought God to pardon the iniquity of His people. *Numbers 14:19.*

Jesus, on the cross, besought God to forgive the iniquity of those who were crucifying Him. *Luke 23:34.*

GOD LISTENED

God listened to Moses. *Numbers 14:20.*

God listened to Jesus. *John 11:41-42.*

PROMISE TO THE CHILDREN

Moses said that the “little ones” in the wilderness would enter the Promised Land. *Numbers* 14:31.

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belonged to the “little ones.” *Mark* 10:14.

Numbers 15

COMMANDMENTS

Moses told the Israelites to remember and do all the commandments of the Lord. *Numbers* 15:38-39.

Jesus told His disciples to keep His commandments if they would abide in His love. *John* 15:10.

Numbers 16

AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

Korah and his friends rose up to challenge the authority of Moses. *Numbers* 16:3.

The chief priests and elders challenged the authority of Jesus. *Matthew* 21:23.

SENDING AWAY WICKED MEN

Both told wicked men to depart. *Numbers* 16:26; *Matthew* 25:41.

MIRACLES TO SHOW AUTHORITY

Moses told the Israelites that God would show that He had sent Moses by doing signs and wonders. *Numbers* 16:28.

Jesus told His disciples that the works He did were to prove that the Father was in Him and He was in the Father. *John* 14:10-11.

Numbers 20

PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH WATER

Moses gave the Israelites sweet, “living water” to drink. *Exodus* 15:22-25; 16:25; *Numbers* 20:11.

Jesus promised living water to all who believe in Him. *John* 4:10, 14; 7:37-38.

Numbers 21

LOOK AND LIVE

Moses made a fiery serpent on a pole and the Israelites were healed when they looked upon it. *Numbers* 21:4-9.

Jesus was lifted up on a pole. All who looked upon Him by faith (as He took their sin) were healed. *John* 3:14-15.

Numbers 27

INTERCESSION

“And Moses brought their cause before the Lord.” *Numbers* 27:5.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” *Hebrews* 7:25.

Numbers 31

PAYING TRIBUTE

Both paid tribute. *Numbers* 31:41; *Matthew* 17:24-27.

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 3

DEATH FOR THE BENEFIT OF GOD’S PEOPLE

“But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes.” *Deuteronomy* 3:26. “It went ill with Moses for their sakes.” *Psalms* 106:32.

What marvelous foreshadowings of the Cross were these! One should die for the sake of others.

Deuteronomy 4

ADMONISHING TO KEEP COMMANDMENTS

“You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it, that you may keep the

commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”
Deuteronomy 4:2.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” *Matthew 28:20.*

TEACHERS

Both were teachers. *Deuteronomy 4:5; John 18:20.*

PROPHECIES

Both spoke of future tribulation. *Deuteronomy 4:30-31; Matthew 24:21-22.*

Deuteronomy 5

MEDIATORS

Moses was a mediator between God and his people. *Deuteronomy 5:5.*

Jesus is our advocate between us and the Father. *1 Timothy 2:5.*

Deuteronomy 18

PROPHETS

Moses, as a prophet, spoke the words that God gave him. *Deuteronomy 18:18.*

Jesus, as a prophet, spoke the words of His Father. *John 7:16; 8:28.*

Deuteronomy 19

INNOCENT BLOOD

Both had a connection to innocent blood. *Deuteronomy 19:9-10; 21:7-9; Matthew 27:3-4.*

TWO OR THREE WITNESSES

Moses said that in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses a truth would be established. *Deuteronomy 19:15.*

Jesus said that where 2 or 3 were gathered in His name, He would be in their midst. *Matthew 18:20.*

Deuteronomy 28

PROPHECIES

Moses prophesied about the future of Israel (*Deuteronomy 28*) and the blessings that would come on the tribes (*Deuteronomy 33*).

Jesus prophesied about the future of the church (*Matthew 24; Luke 21*) and the blessings that would come on the churches (*Revelation 2 & 3*).

Deuteronomy 31

LAWGIVERS

Both Moses and Jesus were “lawgivers.” Both have a connection to the law—Moses, humanly speaking, wrote the law, but Jesus Christ fulfilled the law. *Deuteronomy 31:9; Matthew 5:17*.

APPOINTING OF ANOTHER COMFORTER

Moses did not leave his people comfortless, but gave them a successor. *Deuteronomy 31:23*.

Jesus did not leave his people comfortless, but gave them a successor. *John 14:16, 18*.

Deuteronomy 32

DIED AT THE END OF WARFARE

Moses died, fell asleep like a tired warrior on Mount Nebo. *Deuteronomy 32:49-50*.

Jesus died, when His warfare ended, on Mount Calvary. *Luke 23:33*.

Deuteronomy 33

KINGS

Moses was “king in Jeshurun.” *Deuteronomy 33:4-5*.

Jesus was “king of the Jews” and is King in Zion. *John 18:33-40; 19:19-22; Luke 1:32-33*.

Deuteronomy 34

FORESHADOWING OF GLORY

Just before his decease, or death, the Lord gave Moses, on the top of a mountain, a grand vision of all the land of Canaan, then told him he could not go over, his death was at hand. *Deuteronomy* 34:1-4.

So Jesus, just before His decease, or death, went up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured, and for a little time was surrounded with the glory that awaited Him in the future. But they that were with Him, spoke to Him of His decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem, and then the glory departed. *Matthew* 17:1-5; *Luke* 9:28-31. He came down to die.

UNABATED STRENGTH

Moses, at the end of his life, was still full of vigor: “His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.” *Deuteronomy* 34:7.

Jesus, at the end of his life, after a night and day of being dragged around, whipped, beaten, and being nailed to a cross, still cried out with a loud voice, at his death: “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” *Matthew* 27:50.

MOURNING AT DEATH

Both had people weep when they died. *Deuteronomy* 34:8; *John* 20:11.

PROVIDENTIAL BURIAL

Moses had a providential burial—“the Lord buried him.” *Deuteronomy* 34:5-6. Jesus was not buried by His enemies, nor by His openly avowed followers. He had a providential burial. *John* 19:38-42.

CAME OUT OF THE GRAVE

Both died but did not stay in their burial places. *Deuteronomy* 34:5-6; *Jude* 9; *Matthew* 17:1-9; *Matthew* 28.

PROPHETS

Both were prophets. *Deuteronomy* 34:10; *John* 6:14.

FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

Moses was the first prophet to see God “face to face.” *Deuteronomy* 34:10; *Numbers* 12:6-8; *Exodus* 33:11; 34:29-30, 33; 33:13-14; 34:6-8. Yet he only caught a glimpse.

But Christ came from the very bosom of the Father and had been with Him for eternity. (*Matthew* 11:27, *John* 14:9, *John* 10:30).

Deuteronomy 40

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

Moses was appointed to build the earthly tabernacle: “On the first day of the first month shall you set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.” *Exodus* 40:2.

Jesus was appointed to build the living temple of the church: “Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.” *Zechariah* 6:12.

PERFECT OBEDIENCE

“Thus did Moses according to all that the Lord commanded, so did he.” *Exodus* 40:16.

What a lovely foreshadowing was this of Him who could say, “I have kept my Father’s commandments.” *John* 16:10.

COMPLETING OF HIS WORK

“So Moses finished the work.” *Exodus* 40:33.

What a blessed prefiguration was this of Him who declared, “I have finished the work which You gave me to do.” *John* 17:4.

Joshua

Joshua 1

DEATH

Both had to die before entrance into Canaan was possible: “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to you.” *Joshua* 1:2.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.” *John* 12:24.

GIVING AN INHERITANCE

Moses gave to the Israelites the inheritance of the earthly Canaan: “The land which Moses gave you on this side of Jordan.” *Joshua* 1:14.

In Christ believers “have obtained an inheritance.” *Ephesians* 1:11. This is the heavenly inheritance of the New Earth, New Jerusalem, and eternal life.

Psalms

Psalm 103

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WORKS AND WAYS

“He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.” *Psalms* 103:7.

“For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that himself does: and He will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” *John* 5:20.

Psalm 106

ENVIED BY OTHERS

Moses was envied. *Psalms* 106:16

Jesus was envied. *Mark* 15:10; *Matthew* 27:18.

ELECTED

In *Psalms* 106:23 he is called, “Moses His chosen.”

So God says of Christ, “Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, my elect.” *Isaiah* 42:1.

Matthew

Matthew 17

APPEARING AFTER DEATH

Moses was one of the two Old Testament characters which, after his death, returned to this earth in New Testament times on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Matthew* 17:3)—a type of Christ’s second coming to the earth.

Jesus reappeared after His resurrection from the dead (seen by many for the next 40 days). *Acts* 1:3. He will also come again from Heaven. *John* 14:3. *Revelation* 1:7.

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 10

BAPTISMAL HEADSHIP

Remarkably is this brought out in *1 Corinthians* 10:1-2: “All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses.”

So obedient Christians are “baptized unto Jesus Christ.” *Romans* 6:3.

Acts

Acts 1

ASCENDED TO HEAVEN IN GLORIFIED BODIES

That Moses, after his resurrection, ascended to Heaven and now has his abode with Jesus and the holy angels, cannot reasonably be doubted. He was with Elijah on the Mount (*Matthew* 17:3), and

Elijah was taken up to Heaven. *2 Kings* 2:11. Moses was and is glorified.

So Jesus, forty days after His resurrection, and from the Mount of Olives, in the sight of His disciples, ascended up to Heaven. *Acts* 1:9-12. Jesus was glorified.

Acts 7

BELOVED OF GOD

“In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair to God.” *Acts* 7:20.

How blessedly did he, in this, foreshadow the Beloved of the Father! His estimate of the “fairness” of that Child which lay in Bethlehem’s manger, was evidenced by the sending of the angels to say unto the shepherds: “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” *Luke* 2:11.

WISDOM

“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” *Acts* 7:22.

Compare this with Christ, of whom it is said: “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” *Colossians* 2:3.

MIGHT

Moses was “mighty in words and in deeds.” *Acts* 7:22.

Behold the antitype of this in *Matthew* 13:54: “They were astonished, and said, Whence has this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works?”

SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL

Moses was filled with a deep compassion for his suffering kinsmen according to the flesh, and he yearned for their deliverance. *Acts* 7:23-24.

Christ was filled with pity toward His enslaved people, and love brought Him here to deliver them. *Galatians* 1:4; *Matthew* 23:37; *Luke* 1:54-55.

EARLY KNOWLEDGE OF HIS MISSION

Long years before he actually entered upon his great work, Moses discerned, “how that God by his hand would deliver them.” *Acts 7:25.*

So as a Boy of twelve, Christ said to His perplexed mother, “Wist you not that I must be about my Father’s business?” *Luke 2:49.*

DRIVEN TO THE WILDERNESS

When Moses was forty years of age, he thought the time had come, and that he was prepared to enter upon his great mission. But instead, he was driven to the wilderness to obtain an additional fitness for his work. *Acts 7:25-29.*

So Jesus, when baptized in Jordan, and anointed by the Holy Ghost for His mission, and said: “The time is fulfilled,” was driven of the Spirit into the wilderness, to get an additional experience, to better qualify Him for His great work. *Mark 1:12.*

UNDERWENT TRAINING PERIOD OF FORTY

It took Moses forty years to gain the additional experience in the wilderness, necessary to fit him for his important mission. *Acts 7:30.*

But Jesus, in the battle of the wilderness, conquered in forty days. *Luke 4:2-13.*

ANGELS APPEARED AT THE END OF THE TRAINING

At the close of Moses’ forty years trial in the wilderness, an angel appeared to him in the burning bush, instructed, strengthened and encouraged him to engage at once in the great work of his life. *Acts 7:30-34.*

So at the end of Jesus’ forty days conflict and experience in the wilderness, angels came and ministered unto Him, and He was thereby strengthened. *Matthew 4:11.*

DELIVERER

Moses perfectly fulfilled his God-given commission and led Israel out of the house of bondage: “The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer.” *Acts 7:35*.

So Christ affirmed, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” *John 8:36*.

Hebrews

Hebrews 11

RENOUNCING THE WORLD

Moses rejected the royal heritage that he could have had as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and identified with God’s suffering people instead. *Hebrews 11:24-27*.

Jesus left His position of rulership, riches, and glory in Heaven to follow a life of suffering and shame on this Earth. *Philippians 2:6-7; Matthew 4:8-9; Hebrews 12:2*.

Jude

INTEREST AT DEATH

Both had important “dignitaries” interested in their dead bodies. For Moses: Michael and the devil. *Jude 9*.

For Jesus: the Pharisees, the Roman soldiers, Pilate, and Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. *Matthew 27:62-65; 28:11-15; Mark 15:43-45; John 19:38-41*.

The devil carefully guarded the body of Moses. Of course he did not fear that man would steal him away, for no man knew of his burial place; but he evidently feared that some of the heavenly beings that conducted his funeral service, might take him away. *Jude 9*.

The devil, with all the power at his command, aided by a band of Roman soldiers, sealed the stone, and carefully guarded the sepulcher of Jesus. *Matthew 27:63-66*.

RAISED FROM THE GRAVE

It is evident from *Jude* 9, that Michael [Christ] raised Moses from the dead. His appearance with Elijah, on the Mount of Transfiguration, is another proof that he was raised from the dead. *Matthew* 17:1-5.

So Jesus, on the morning of the first day of the week, rose from the dead to die no more. *Mark* 16:9; *Revelation* 1:18.

BODIES DID NOT SEE CORRUPTION

When Michael came to raise Moses from the dead, the devil disputed his right to the body. Hence it appears that his body had not yet seen corruption. It might have been the third day. *Jude* 9.

Our Heavenly Father did not suffer Jesus, His Holy One, to see corruption, but sent an angel to call Him to life again the third day. *Acts* 2:31-32; *Matthew* 28:2-4.

Appendix 2 – Camp Meeting Report

Messenger and News Review, August 1991

By Andreas Dura

Editor's Note: This report mentions how the message on Gabriel in particular, and the angels in general, fit into the framework of the messages given up until that point.

The Camp Meeting in Dickendorf

ON MONDAY we began our study of the angels. Why is it that the Lord has given us light on the ministry of the angels just at this time? It is because we will soon be in the final struggle with the powers of darkness, and it is necessary for us to know who the participants in this battle are.

Up to now we have received light about the Father's work, Jesus' work, the work of the Holy Spirit, and our own work in this contest. We have also learned about our opponent in this battle—the king of the North.

But up to now we have thought very little about one other participant in this final struggle—the angels. Most people think of the angels in terms of fairy stories, and that is how they are often pictured. Many doubt the existence of angels, and those who do believe in them hardly know anything about them. Angels did not seem to be so important to us, and, since they are mostly invisible, they seemed very distant from us too.

But for God's people this is no longer the case. We are to be co-workers with these heavenly beings who have a much deeper, personal interest in the prosperity of God's people on earth than we realized in the past. In our cooperation with the angels, there is a work for us to do which the angels will not do for us under any circumstances. And it is for this reason that they are waiting with almost impatient eagerness for us to be ready to work together with them.

Why is it that the angels have such a deep, personal interest in the prosperity of God's people? This becomes more understandable when one appreciates the fact that there are two kinds of an-

gels in heaven. The created angels who have never fallen into sin, and the redeemed who are made like the angels after being raised to immortality. These have also appeared on earth as angels. Up to Christ's incarnation, there were not many redeemed living in heaven. There were Enoch and Elijah who had been translated, and Moses who had been resurrected to immortality.

We were amazed to see that the archangel Gabriel was the resurrected Moses. After Christ, he is the highest among the host of the Lord, the one who fills the place that Lucifer vacated. Not only he, but also Enoch, Elijah, and those who rose with Christ and went with Him to heaven now fill the places of the fallen angels. So we can better understand how it is that the angels have such an interest in this earth. Heaven has truly been brought nearer to earth.

Why is it that Moses took the position of the highest in the host of the Lord after Christ? It is because He was the humblest man on earth.

Numbers 12

³ (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Proverbs 22

⁴ By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life.

This thought led us into a deeper study of humility. This virtue is a basic requirement for cooperating with the heavenly powers. True humility is also the requisite for the members of the church to become one so that the Lord can send us the Latter Rain.

The study of the life of Moses showed us what true humility is and it also showed us how this virtue can be learned.

Appendix 3 – A Personal Testimony

By Frank Zimmerman

SINCE I, like the boy who brought the five barley loaves and two small fishes to the feeding of the five thousand, had a small role to play in the miraculous development of this message about Gabriel, I thought it good to relate how it all unfolded here, as a testimony to what God will do for His people, if they will appreciate and cherish the truths He is revealing, by diligently searching into them.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 116:

If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward, in appreciation of the divine gifts, a flood of healing virtue would pour in.

I first heard the 1888 message, as revived and taught in the message of Fred Wright, in 1982. It provided me the answer to my own personal problem of slavery to sin, and I was deeply impressed with the studies on “The Seed Principle”²⁶ which pointed out how much higher man was to be lifted by the redemption provided by Jesus Christ, the new spiritual father to the human family.

I was equally impressed with the studies on Melchizedek,²⁷ which sprang out of the Seed Principle. These truths, drawn from the priestly ministry of the Old Testament, which were a shadow of the ministry of Christ and His Sons in the temple in heaven, again reinforced the high destiny that awaited the redeemed: to be co-laborers with Christ himself, in His ministry to the unfallen worlds of the universe.

In the studies on Melchizedek, we had seen that this priest, who met Abraham, and who was of the heavenly-priesthood order, had to be one of the redeemed, since those positions are reserved for Christ’s sons. This is confirmed in *Revelation* chapters 4 and 5,

²⁶ See *The Living and the Dead*, by F. T. Wright.

²⁷ See *Melchizedek*, by F. T. Wright.

where the redeemed are seen ministering with Christ in the heavenly temple, holding positions closer to him than even the un-fallen angels.

Since there was only one redeemed person, namely Enoch, who had gone from earth to heaven in Abraham's day, we saw that this mysterious figure Melchizedek, could be none other than the redeemed Enoch, under his new heavenly name.

With those truths in my mind, I had been studying the writings of Edward Irving, a minister of the Second Advent awakening in England and Scotland, and a contemporary of William Miller. He ministered in the early 1800's and wrote two precious volumes covering the first six chapters of the book of *Revelation*. Irving also strongly emphasized the high positions that awaited the redeemed, and drew the conclusion that the angel who brought the visions of the *Revelation* to John, must have been one of the redeemed, since they are given the highest positions of responsibility in the new kingdom. My first thought on reading that was:

“Oh, Irving must be wrong! I'm sure Ellen White mentions that the angel who brought the *Revelation* to John was none other than Gabriel, and everyone knows that he is an angel, not a redeemed person.”

“Everyone knows” however, is not a “thus says the Lord,” but simply tradition! So I started to consider further what statements there were about Gabriel, and whether this was a realistic proposition or not.

One thing that became clear is that the first mention of Gabriel was in the book of *Daniel*, well after the creation, and also after the appearance of Melchizedek. So from a time standpoint, it was certainly feasible.

Gabriel also seemed to take up a good share of the work that Christ had been doing. Before the times of Daniel, it was often Christ who appeared to the patriarchs and prophets. From the time of Daniel forward, it was often Gabriel. Actually, there are

only four mentions of him directly: twice in the book of *Daniel*, where he is given his commission to make Daniel understand; once in appearance to Zacharias, to inform him of the birth of John the Baptist, and once in appearance to Mary, to inform her of Jesus' birth.

But what is significant is that previous to the appearance of Gabriel, it would have been Christ who appeared to give important messages to God's people; but now it was Gabriel who had taken that role.

At the beginning of his ministry, Gabriel tells Daniel that there is none other but himself and Michael (the heavenly name of Christ before his appearance on earth) who know and understand the secrets that he is revealing to Daniel. *Daniel* 10:21. In the book of *Luke*, Gabriel is introduced as the one who...

Luke 1

¹⁹ ...stands in the presence of God.

These statements show his high position.

Through an understanding of God's faithfulness in His callings, we are left to surmise that the other appearances of a chief messenger angel in the New Testament times, must have been Gabriel. This would include strengthening Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, bringing the truths of *Revelation* to John, opening the tomb of Christ, appearing with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, freeing the apostles from prison, etc.

The next question naturally was:

“Well then which of the redeemed was this angel?”

Since there were only two others (Moses and Elijah) besides Enoch, who had been taken to heaven before the times of the prophet Daniel, Gabriel would have to be one of those two. A brief consideration made it clear that Moses was the preeminent one. The amazing number of parallels between Moses and Christ, as set down in [Appendix 1](#) also nail this truth down.

So with these thoughts in mind, I wrote to Fred Wright on January 22, 1991, and framed the question as follows:

In reading some of Edward Irving's thoughts on the book of *Revelation* recently, he expressed the idea that the angel who gave the revelation to John (*Revelation* 1:1) was a member of the church in heaven because the proper order for revealing light is from the church to the angels, not from the angels to the church. His argument is based on *Ephesians* 3:10, and I won't go into all the details of it here. The scriptures that he raised that I thought interesting were the following:

(*Start of Quote from Irving, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Book 1*)

1. *Revelation* 22:9 – The same angel who was commissioned to reveal these things to John, says of himself, "I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book."

"A question might be made with respect to the grammatical construction both of the English version, and of the original, whether the thing here declared be that he was one of the brotherhood of the prophets, or that he was a fellow-servant with John and with them. I incline to receive the former interpretation as the just one, and to believe the sense of the passage to be, that he was John's fellow-servant, of John's brethren the prophets, and of the company of the Church who observed or kept the words of this book; expressing three things thereby:

"The first: That he might not be worshiped, being himself a servant such as John;

"The second: That his office while on earth had been to prophesy; and

"The third: That in the state where now he was, he was an observer of the words of this book, which, all neglected as it is on earth, has the special observation of the Church in heaven.

"If any one should prefer the other interpretation; though it will not bear all this information, it will bear thus much, that he was a fellow-servant with the beloved disciple, and with his

brethren the prophets, and with those who kept the words of this book.

“And even this, as it appears to me, is conclusive as to his being one of the Church; for though angels be called ministering spirits (*Hebrews 1:14*), they are not called God’s servants—which expression is given to the Church (*Revelation 1:1*) to whom the prophecy was consigned by God,—but ministering spirits (literally, ‘spirits of the liturgy’, *i.e.* whose office is connected with the service of God, and how connected is straightway told us,) sent forth unto deaconship, for the sake of those that are about to inherit salvation.

“The meaning of which I take to be this, that angels have not co-equal rank with the Son, or with those who are heirs with Him of glory, but do stand unto them in the relation of deacons to the Church, for external ministry and outward accommodation; having, as I shall show hereafter, certain provinces of nature and providence to watch over, which they govern for the glory of Christ and His Church, but not intermeddling in the spiritual dignity of the kingdom of grace.

“As providence is to grace, so I believe angels are to the Church; as the dispensation of Moses was to the gospel, so I believe angels are to the Church: therefore the law is said to be given by the ministry of angels, but the gospel by the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers: therefore also the law is called the elements of this world, and the rudiments of the world, being, as it were, an image made by means of angels out of those worldly rudiments over which they have the control, but not the reality of grace, which came by Jesus Christ.

“And therefore the apostle, admitting that the ages past have been under angels, declares thus concerning the age to come, which it is the object of the Apocalypse to reveal: ‘Unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.’ *Hebrews 2:5*.

“While, therefore, I firmly believe that, under the former dispensation, God did make use of angels to convey His mind to the prophets, because that Christ was not yet glorified, I believe that from this great epoch they have not been made use of for the administration of the kingdom of grace, but glorified saints only,

such as can be called with respect to the apostles, ‘fellow-servants’; charged with the same apostolic ministry within the veil with which they were charged without. And, accordingly, we have those who ministered in word and doctrine to the churches called angels of the churches. *Revelation 1:20*.²⁸

But, still further to show that the angel’s description of himself will bear no other interpretation than that which we have given above, let me refer to another passage, where an angel (one of those who pour out the vials, *Revelation 17:1*) being in like manner solicited to accept worship, in the same terms refuses it: “I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” *Revelation 19:10*. The construction of the original is exactly the same here as in the other place. Now, of the angels who poured out the vials, whereof this angel was one, we have a very particular description in the 15th chapter, where, in the sixth verse, they are represented as coming out of the holy place of the temple in heaven, in the raiment of priests, with the girdle as it would seem of high priests, to signify that they are of the church of the firstborn ones, or perhaps that they are both kings and priests, being of the order of Melchizedek.

“And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.” *Revelation 15:6*. But be this as it may, both their dress and the place from which they issue forth declare them to be priests; and if so, then belong they to the church of redeemed men, to whom this dignity appertained (*Revelation 1:6*); and to whom alone it appertains of all the creatures of God, as we shall show, when we come to treat of the several ascriptions of praise, and loyal attestations of fealty, presented to the Lamb, in the 5th chapter of this book. For there it belongs only to the four beasts, and twenty-four elders, to take to themselves the honor of royal priesthood, as to them only to speak concerning the book, in respect to which the angels and other creatures are entirely dumb.

Now it can be shown, I think, beyond a question, that these four living creatures, and four-and-twenty elders, are the church in heaven.

²⁸ *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, vol. 1, p. 31-32.

(End of Quote from Irving)

What troubled me about Edward Irving's application of the angel to one of the priest-kings in heaven was the fact that Ellen White clearly states that the angel that brought the *Revelation* to John was Gabriel:

"The words of the angel, 'I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,' show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts...the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men."²⁹

"It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, 'His angel,' whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John..."³⁰

Then the thought occurred to me, if Enoch was renamed Melchizedek when he went to heaven, might not Gabriel be the new name of one of the redeemed? Since the earliest mention I can find of Gabriel is in the visions of Daniel, that would allow Moses or Elijah to fill that place. In *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1123, we are told:

"In the supreme crisis, when heart and soul are breaking under the load of sin, Gabriel is sent to strengthen the divine sufferer, and brace him to tread His bloodstained path. While the angel supports His fainting form, Christ takes the bitter cup, and consents to drink its contents."

In *The Desire of Ages*, p. 693, we are given more details:

"Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God. In this awful crisis when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Fa-

²⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 99.

³⁰ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

ther's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant.

“He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.”

A number of things stand out in that quote. First of all, we are told that Gabriel occupies the position from which Satan fell, and although we know that it only takes a created life (as opposed to a begotten life) to fill that position, yet we are also told that the positions that Satan and his angels left are to be filled by redeemed men.

“Satan urges...‘Are these the people who are to take my place in heaven and the place of the angels who united with me?’”³¹

“...the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord.”³²

Secondly, the fact that this angel came to Christ in the hour of His greatest agony and suffering would also add weight to the thought that he is one of the redeemed, for at the time of the transfiguration, we are told that Moses and Elijah were specifically selected to commune with Christ, to comfort Him, to sympathize with Him, because they had gone through similar trials.

“Now heaven had sent its messengers to Jesus; not angels, but men who had endured suffering and sorrow, and who could sympathize with the Saviour in the trial of His earthly life. Moses and Elijah had been colaborers with Christ. They had shared His longing for the salvation of men...These men, chosen above every angel around the throne, had come to commune with Jesus concerning the scenes of His suffering, and to comfort Him with the assurance of the sympathy of heaven.”³³

³¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 473.

³² *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.

³³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 422, 425.

If for these reasons men were sent to Christ at that time, how much more so would it be appropriate to send Him a comforter who had passed through similar trials during His struggle in Gethsemane? A further thought along this line is that the final song of the 144,000, who go through a similar experience as that of Christ in Gethsemane, is called the “song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” *Revelation* 15:3. Notice here how Moses is also called “servant,” just as the angel described himself to John.

If this final song of great deliverance is the song of Moses and the song of Christ, it would be most fitting for Moses to be the one sent of God to strengthen Christ in his final struggle, for he, above all others knew this song and its experience. Just as Christ was strengthened in His conflict, so will the 144,000 be strengthened “by an angel,” that is, by the “voice” of their brethren (from the graves) who depend on them to do their work faithfully.

The angel who gave the *Revelation* to John also identified himself as being “of your brethren the prophets.” Would this not be another indication that it could be Moses, seeing as he was foremost among the prophets, and the one singled out as being a type of Christ as Prophet?

I will mention just one more point on this topic. In *Daniel* 9:21, Gabriel is referred to as “the man Gabriel,” although I realize that angels can appear as men and be called such.

This has probably been a bit of a strange idea for you to read through, and I admit it seemed a bit strange to me at first, but I would like your thoughts on it. Do you have any references to Gabriel on the Ellen White CD. that would establish the point one way or the other?

Fred replied in a letter dated April 10, 1991:

Dear Frank,

I found your thoughts on Gabriel being the new name of Moses, as Melchizedek is the new name of Enoch, very convincing and very beautiful. Even so, I will reserve judgment for a little while just as a precautionary measure.

The CD-ROM found 75 paragraphs in which the name, “Gabriel” appeared at least once. Most of them related to *Daniel 9 & 10* and to the instruction given by Gabriel to the Baptist’s parents. The ones you quoted were also there, of course. There was one apart from these, which I found interesting. Here is a print-out of it:

“Had Christ come in His former glory, humanity could not have endured the sight. When the angel Gabriel came to Daniel to give him skill and understanding, Daniel could not look upon him. The angel had to reveal himself as a man before he could speak with the prophet. Thus we see the wisdom of God in planning that Christ should come as a man.”³⁴

The letter was interrupted as Fred left it for the evening and in the morning he continued the letter with the following:

I must say that I am awe-inspired with the beautiful truth that Gabriel and Moses are one. I plan to print this in the April *Messenger*...I wonder now what is Elijah’s new name? but not as a matter of mere curiosity. If it is good for us to know, the Lord will reveal it.

Now I had better close and get this in the mail.
Thank you again for your communication.

In Christian love,
Fred T. Wright

Thus the message on Gabriel in particular, and the angels in general, developed, and became the theme for our camp meetings in 1991 and 1992.

As that theme unfolded before our wondering eyes, and we saw how the Lord developed humility and meekness in the character of Moses, and how closely his life paralleled that of Jesus, we gained an appreciation of just why Moses went on to become Gabriel, the mightiest of the Lord’s hosts, next in power and authority to Jesus Christ himself.

³⁴ *The Youth’s Instructor*, February 22, 1900.

We also gained a new appreciation of what we must become if we wish to be counted among those redeemed in that everlasting kingdom promised to Abraham and his seed.

Matthew 5

⁵ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.



