

Lesson 11

Jesus, Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Sabbath Afternoon, March 5

It was ... singlehearted purpose to win the race for eternal life that Paul longed to see revealed in the lives of the Corinthian believers. He knew that in order to reach Christ's ideal for them, they had before them a life struggle from which there would be no release. He entreated them to strive lawfully, day by day seeking for piety and moral excellence. He pleaded with them to lay aside every weight and to press forward to the goal of perfection in Christ.

Paul pointed the Corinthians to the experience of ancient Israel, to the blessings that rewarded their obedience, and to the judgments that followed their transgressions. He reminded them of the miraculous way in which the Hebrews were led from Egypt under the protection of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. ... By these acts God had acknowledged Israel as His church. ... The Hebrews, in all their travels, had Christ as a leader. The smitten rock typified Christ, who was to be wounded for men's transgressions, that the stream of salvation might flow to all.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 315.

Just as surely as we have a personal Saviour, we have also a personal adversary, cruel and cunning, who ever watches our steps, and plots to lead us astray. He can work most effectually in disguise. Wherever the opinion is entertained that he does not exist, there he is most busy. ...

Aim to be faithful students in the school of Christ, learning daily to conform your life to the divine Pattern. Set your faces heavenward, and press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. Run the Christian race with patience, and rise superior to every temptation, however grievous it may be, that shall come to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God; and if you are desirous of taking the first upward step, you will find His hand stretched out to help you. It remains with you, individually, as to whether you walk in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, or in the darkness of error. The truth of God can be a blessing to you only as you permit its influence to purify and refine your soul.

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 79.

The competitors in the ancient games, after they had submitted to self-denial and rigid discipline, were not even then sure of the victory...

Such is not the case in the Christian warfare. Not one who complies with the conditions will be disappointed at the end of the race. Not one who is earnest and persevering will fail of success. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The weakest saint, as well as the strongest, may wear the crown of immortal glory. All may win who, through the power of divine grace, bring their lives into conformity to the will of Christ.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 369.

Sunday, March 6: The Righteous Will Live By Faith

[The] Christian life is more than many take it to be. It does not consist wholly in gentleness, patience, meekness, and kindliness. These graces are essential; but there is need also of courage, force, energy, and perseverance. The path that Christ marks out is a narrow, self-denying path. To enter that path and press on through difficulties and discouragements requires men who are more than weaklings.

Men of stamina are wanted, men who will not wait to have their way smoothed and every obstacle removed, men who will inspire with fresh zeal the flagging efforts of dispirited workers, men whose hearts are warm with Christian love and whose hands are strong to do their Master's work.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 497.

“Although I have been twice disappointed,” wrote [William Miller], “I am not yet cast down or discouraged. ... My hope in the coming of Christ is as strong as ever. I have done only what, after years of solemn consideration, I felt it my solemn duty to do.” ... “One thing I do know, I have preached nothing but what I believed; and God has been with me; His power has been manifested in the work, and much good has been effected.” ...

God did not forsake His people; His Spirit still abode with those who did not rashly deny the light which they had received, and denounce the advent movement. In the Epistle to the Hebrews are words of encouragement and warning for the tried, waiting ones at this crisis: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Hebrews 10:35-37.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 407.

[God] has given to every man his work, and He calls upon all to begin to work just where they are. He cannot do what He desires to do until the human agent acts his part.

At times the arm of faith seems too short even to touch the Saviour's garment, but there stands the promise, with God behind it: “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.” (Isaiah 58:9). ...

It is not our efforts that bring victory. It is seeing God behind the promise, and believing and trusting Him. Grasp by faith the hand of infinite power. The Lord is faithful who hath promised.

Questions will arise that cannot be settled by any amount of thinking. Do not spend time trying to settle them. Take up the work waiting to be done, trusting in God as your wisdom. His righteousness will go before you, and the questions that have troubled you will answer themselves.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 133.

Monday, March 7: By Faith, Abraham ...

Abraham's unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith and reliance upon God to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: "God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me."

Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. ... The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 524.

It is Satan's purpose to destroy men's confidence in God, to make them dissatisfied with their condition in life, and to lead them to seek a knowledge of what God has wisely veiled from them, and to despise what He has revealed in His Holy Word.

There are many who become restless when they cannot know the definite outcome of affairs. They cannot endure uncertainty, and in their impatience they refuse to wait to see the salvation of God. ... If they would but trust in God, and watch unto prayer, they would find divine consolation. Their spirit would be calmed by communion with God. The weary and the heavy-laden would find rest unto their souls if they would only go to Jesus.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 687.

A deeper and wider experience in religious things is to come to God's people. Christ is our example. If through living faith and sanctified obedience to God's word we reveal the love and grace of Christ, if we show that we have a true conception of God's guiding providences in the work, we shall carry to the world a convincing power. A high position does not give us value in the sight of God. Man is measured by his consecration and faithfulness in working out the will of God. If the remnant people of God will walk before Him in humility and faith, He will carry out through them His eternal purpose, enabling them to work harmoniously in giving to the world the truth as it is in Jesus. He will use all—men, women, and children—in making the light shine forth to the world and calling out a people that will be true to His commandments. Through the faith that His people exercise in Him, God will make known to the world that He is the true God, the God of Israel.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 274.

Tuesday, March 8—Moses: Believing in the Unseen

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. ... 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.—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 245.

In the upbuilding of His work the Lord does not always make everything plain before His servants. He sometimes tries the confidence of His people by having them move forward in faith. Often He brings them into strait and trying places, bidding them go forward when their feet seem to be touching the waters of the Red Sea. It is at such times, when the prayers of His servants ascend to Him in earnest faith, that He opens the way before them and brings them out into a large place.

The Lord wants His people in these days to believe that He will do as great things for them as He did for the children of Israel in their journey from Egypt to Canaan. We are to have an educated faith that will not hesitate to follow His instructions in the most difficult experiences. “Go forward” is the command of God to His people.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 271.

All who will turn from the pleasures of earth, and with Moses choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, will, with faithful Moses, receive the unfading crown of immortality and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. ...

The work of salvation is not child’s play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward. ... All who are engaged in this warfare with Satan and his host have a close work before them. They must not be as impressible as wax, that the fire can melt into any form. They must endure hardness as faithful soldiers, stand at their post, and be true every time.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 101, 102.

Wednesday, March 9: By Faith, Rahab and the Rest ...

The advancing hosts of Israel found that knowledge of the mighty workings of the God of the Hebrews had gone before them, and that some among the heathen were learning that He alone was the true God. In wicked Jericho the testimony of a heathen woman was, “The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.” Joshua 2:11. The knowledge of Jehovah that had thus come to her, proved her salvation. By faith “Rahab perished not with them that believed not.” Hebrews 11:31. And her conversion was not an isolated case of God’s mercy toward idolaters who acknowledged His divine authority. In the midst of the land a numerous people—the Gibeonites—renounced their heathenism and united with Israel, sharing in the blessings of the covenant. ...

Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise.

—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 369, 370.

Christianity promises no exemption from sorrow. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Faith is needed, strong, trusting faith, which believes that God will bring His children into no temptation greater than they are able to bear. What such faith has power to do is told by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. Speaking of those who in the face of persecution and death had maintained an unshaken trust in God, he says:

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ... And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:33-35).

In this world these heroes of faith were counted unworthy of life; but in heaven they are enrolled as sons of God, worthy of the highest honor.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 268.

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet “it is profitable for thee.”

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 62.

Thursday, March 10: Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

In the heavenly race we can all run and all receive the prize. There is no uncertainty, no risk, in the matter. We must put on the heavenly graces, and, with the eye directed upward to the crown of immortality, keep the Pattern ever before us. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The humble, self-denying life of our divine Lord we are to keep constantly in view. And then as we seek to imitate Him, keeping our eye upon the mark of the prize, we can run this race with certainty, knowing that if we do the very best we can, we shall certainly secure the prize.

When we have this great inducement before us, cannot we “run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith”? He has pointed out the way for us, and marked it all along by His own footsteps. It is the path that He traveled, and we may, with Him, experience the self-denial and the suffering, and walk in this pathway imprinted by His own blood.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 358, 359.

Without His grace, our efforts cannot bring lasting benefit. It is through the grace of Christ that we are to be overcomers; through the merits of His blood we are to be of that number whose names will not be blotted out of the book of life. Those who are final overcomers will have the life that runs parallel with the life of God, and wear the crown of the victor. When such great and eternal reward awaits us, we should run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. ...

... Everything that blots and stains the soul must be removed, must be cleansed from the heart. We must know what it means to be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. ... Will you accept the great provision of salvation, and through the merits of the Infinite Sacrifice made in your behalf, become a partaker of the divine nature? God has given His only-begotten Son, that through His shame, suffering, and death, you might have glory, honor, and immortality.

—*Signs of the Times*, June 15, 1891.

Give up your self-confidence and self-sufficiency, brethren, and follow the meek Pattern. Ever keep Jesus in your mind that He is your example and you must tread in His footsteps. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He for our sins was once the meek, slain lamb, wounded, bruised, smitten, and afflicted.

Let us, then, cheerfully suffer something for Jesus' sake, crucify self daily, and be partakers of Christ's sufferings here, that we may be made partakers with Him of His glory, and be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.

—*Early Writings*, pp. 113, 114.

Friday, March 11: For Further Reading

The Upward Look, “The Great Exemplar,” p. 134;

My Life Today, “O God! Help Me to Higher Levels,” p. 105.