

Lesson 4

Seeing the Goldsmith's Face Sabbath Afternoon, July 16

“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. . . .” This is the process, the refining, purifying process, which is to be carried on by the Lord of hosts. The work is most trying to the soul, but it is only through this process that the rubbish and defiling impurities can be removed. Our trials are all necessary to bring us close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

— *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 541.

The conflicts of earth, in the providence of God, furnish the very training necessary to develop characters fit for the courts of heaven. We are to become members of the royal family, the sons of God, and “all things work together for good” to those who love God, and submit themselves to His will.

Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, He is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of His children, and He leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weakness. God knows them better than they know themselves, and He understands how to lead them. . . .

If we will trust Him, and commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps in the very path that will result in our obtaining the victory over every evil passion, and every trait of character that is unlike the character of our divine Pattern.

— *Our High Calling*, p. 316.

Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?

— *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 320, 321.

Sunday, July 17

“In His Image”

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores.

John was a teacher of holiness, and in his letters to the church he laid down unerring rules for the conduct of Christians. “Every man that hath this hope in him,” he wrote, “purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” 1 John 3:3; 2:6. He taught that the Christian must be pure in heart and life. Never should he be satisfied with an empty profession. As God is holy in His sphere, so fallen man, through faith in Christ, is to be holy in his sphere.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 559.

The more you study the character of Christ, the more attractive will He appear to you. He will become as one near you, in close companionship with you; your affections will go out after Him. If the mind is molded by the objects with which it has most to do, then to think of Jesus, to talk of Him, will enable you to become like Him in spirit and character. You will reflect His image in that which is great and pure and spiritual. You will have the mind of Christ, and He will send you forth to the world as His spiritual representative.

—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 65.

I have been shown that in the future we shall see how closely all our trials were connected with our salvation, and how these light afflictions worked out for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” . . .

. . . The years of self-denial, of privation, of trial, affliction, and persecution that Paul endured, he called a moment. The things of the present time were not considered worth mentioning when compared with the eternal weight of glory that awaited them when the warfare should be over. These very afflictions were God’s workmen, ordained for the perfection of Christian character. Whatever may be the circumstances of the Christian, however dark and mysterious may be the ways of Providence, however great his deprivation and suffering, he may look away from them all to the unseen and the eternal. He has the blessed assurance that all things are working for his good.

—*Ellen G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1099.

Monday, July 18

Faith Amid the Refining Fire

The Christian who loves his heavenly Father may not discern by outward providences or visible signs any heavenly favor above that given those with little or no consecration. Often he is sorely afflicted, distressed, perplexed, and hedged in on every side. Appearances seem to be against him. . . .

. . . Job was stripped of his earthly treasures, bereaved of his children, and made a spectacle of loathing to his friends, but in God's time He showed He had not forsaken His servant. . . .

If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet.

—In Heavenly Places, p. 271.

God will reward the man of faith and obedience. If this faith is brought into the life experience, it will enable everyone who fears and loves God to endure trials. Moses was full of confidence in God because he had appropriating faith. He needed help, and he prayed for it, grasped it by faith, and wove into his experience the belief that God cared for him. He believed that God ruled his life in particular. He saw and acknowledged God in every detail of his life and felt that he was under the eye of the All-seeing One, who weighs motives, who tries the heart. He looked to God and trusted in Him for strength to carry him uncorrupted through every form of temptation. He knew that a special work had been assigned to him, and he desired as far as possible to make that work thoroughly successful. But he knew that he could not do this without divine aid, for he had a perverse people to deal with. The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed.

—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 651, 652.

When trials come to us, let us not dwell upon the greatness of the difficulties and feel that we cannot have joy in the Lord. It is true we will have changes of feelings. There will come to us times of discouragement and depression. But shall we live by feeling or by faith? When our brethren and friends speak unadvisedly, and cause us grief, let us not be cast down. Let us remember that we are in a world of trial and grief, of sorrow and disappointment. When these experiences come to us, they should drive us to Christ. If they do not, we meet with loss. . . .

The purging is not pleasant, but let us remember that Christ came to our world and took humanity that He might bear the afflictions that humanity must bear and be an example of faithful endurance under every form of trial. God wants us to realize that we are a part of the great human family, and that we must bear its tests.

—The Upward Look, p. 252.

Tuesday, July 19

Jesus' Last Words

We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven. . . .

. . . Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 413, 414.

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, "have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God's blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

God calls upon His people to be bright lights in the world shining amid the darkness of sin. Living the life of the Life-giver brings its reward. He went about doing good. This, every true follower of His will do, filled with a sacred sense of his loyalty to God and his duty to his fellow beings. Through the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, Christians are to grow in grace, constantly drawing nearer perfection of character.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 177.

Wednesday, July 20

“The Wise”

God chose from among the Gentiles a people for Himself, and gave to them the name of Christian. This is a royal name, given to those who join themselves to Christ. . . . Peter says: “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” . . .

O that God’s people would take Him at His word, and lay hold of the wonderful treasure of knowledge opened to them! . . .

We have before us the highest, holiest example. In thought, word, and deed Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path that He trod, saying, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 291.

One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man’s ideas or arguments. Those who refuse to follow God’s way will finally receive the sentence, “Depart from Me.” But when we submit to God’s way, the Lord Jesus guides our minds and fills our lips with assurance. We may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. An indwelling Saviour makes His power our property. The truth becomes our stock in trade. No unrighteousness is seen in the life. We are able to speak words in season to those who know not the truth. Christ’s presence in the heart is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 71.

The day is coming, and it is close upon us, when every phase of character will be revealed by special temptation. Those who remain true to principle, who exercise faith to the end, will be those who have proved true under test and trial during the previous hours of their probation, and have formed characters after the likeness of Christ. It will be those who have cultivated close acquaintance with Christ, who, through his wisdom and grace, are partakers of the divine nature. But no human being can give to another, heart-devotion and noble qualities of mind, and supply his deficiencies with moral power. We can each do much for each other by giving to men a Christlike example, thus influencing them to go to Christ for the righteousness without which they cannot stand in the judgment. Men should prayerfully consider the important matter of characterbuilding, and frame their characters after the divine model.

Our precious Redeemer is standing before the Father as our intercessor, and is preparing mansions for all those who believe in him as their personal Saviour.

—*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 16, 1896.

Thursday, July 21

Character and Community

Those who are of the household of faith should never neglect the assembling of themselves together; for this is God's appointed means of leading His children into unity, in order that in Christian love and fellowship they may help, strengthen, and encourage one another. . . .

As brethren of our Lord, we are called with a holy calling to a holy, happy life. Having entered the narrow path of obedience, let us refresh our minds by communion with one another and with God. As we see the day of God approaching, let us meet often to study His Word and to exhort one another to be faithful unto the end.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 166.

While Paul possessed high intellectual endowments, his life revealed the power of a rarer wisdom, which gave him quickness of insight and sympathy of heart, and brought him into close touch with others, enabling him to arouse their better nature and inspire them to strive for a higher life. His heart was filled with an earnest love for the Corinthian believers. He longed to see them revealing an inward piety that would fortify them against temptation. He knew that at every step in the Christian pathway they would be opposed by the synagogue of Satan and that they would have to engage in conflicts daily. . . .

The Corinthian believers needed a deeper experience in the things of God. They did not know fully what it meant to behold His glory and to be changed from character to character. They had seen but the first rays of the early dawn of that glory. Paul's desire for them was that they might be filled with all the fullness of God, following on to know Him whose going forth is prepared as the morning, and continuing to learn of Him until they should come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 307, 308.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. . . .

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.

—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 29, 30.

Friday, July 22
For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “God Promises Us a New Heart of Flesh,” p. 100;

Testimonies for the Church, “Press Together,” vol. 6, p. 292.