

The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels.

Written in 1879-1880 by Ellen G. White.

Chapter One.

The Fall of Satan.

Satan in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance, and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Jesus, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and in his ambition assumed command which devolved on Christ alone. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 1}

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was he to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon it. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him. Satan was jealous and envious of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge his supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, Satan bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into counsel with the Father in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself. Satan thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted; but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God himself. He gloried in his loftiness. He knew that he was honored by the angels. He had a special mission to execute. He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God, had shone especially upon him. Satan thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself? {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 2}

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied, and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved he related the preference God had given to Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the precious liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor upon himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey him. There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into his unsearchable wisdom and ascertain his purposes in exalting his Son Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 3}

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this first great rebel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Jesus Christ, and with forcible reasons sought to convince Satan that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which he had conferred upon his Son. They clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God, and his mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that he had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They had urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that he had heretofore received. The angels wept, and anxiously sought to move Satan to renounce his wicked design and yield submission to their Creator. All had heretofore been peace and harmony, and what could occasion this dissenting, rebellious voice? {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 4}

Satan refused to listen, and turned from the loyal angels, denouncing them as slaves. These angels, true to God, stood in amazement as they saw that Satan was successful in his effort to excite rebellion. He promised them a new and better government, in which all would be freedom. Great numbers signified their purpose to accept Satan as their leader and chief commander. As he saw his advances were met with success, he flattered himself that he should yet have all the angels on his side, and that he would be equal with God himself, and his voice of authority would be heard in commanding the entire host of heaven. Again the loyal angels warned Satan, and assured him what must be the consequences if he persisted; that he who could create the angels, could by his power overturn all their authority, and in some signal manner punish their audacity and terrible rebellion. To think that an angel should resist the law of God which was as sacred as himself; they warned the rebellious to close their ears to Satan's deceptive reasonings, and advised Satan, and all who had been affected by him, to go to God and confess their wrong for even admitting a thought of questioning his authority. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 5}

Many of Satan's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels, and repent of their dissatisfaction, and be again received to the confidence of the Father and his dear Son. The mighty revolter then declared that he was acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences; for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 6}

The loyal angels hasten speedily to the Son of God, and acquaint him with what is taking place among the angels. They find the Father in conference with his beloved Son, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. The great God could at once have hurled this arch deceiver from heaven; but this was not his purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with his own Son and his loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side, and his character and purposes would be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable. If God had exercised his power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence he took another course; for he would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host, his justice and his judgment. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 7}

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at their head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, heaven's great commander. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 8}

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God, and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand his purposes. God informed Satan that to his Son alone he would reveal his secret purposes, and he required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy a place in heaven. Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven? He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ, and to defend his position in heaven by force of might, strength against strength. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 9}

Good angels wept to hear the words of Satan, and his exulting boasts. God declared that the rebellious should remain in heaven no longer. Their high and happy state had been held upon condition of obedience to the law which God had given to govern the high order of intelligences. But no provision had been made to save those who should venture to transgress his law. Satan grew bold in his rebellion, and expressed his contempt of the Creator's law. This Satan could not bear. He claimed that angels needed no law; but should be left free to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right; that law was a restriction of their liberty, and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did. The condition of the angels he thought needed improvement. Not so the mind of God, who had made laws and exalted them equal to himself. The happiness of the angelic host consisted in their perfect obedience to law. Each had his special work assigned him; and until Satan rebelled, there had been perfect order and harmony among the angels in heaven. Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and his loyal angels, engaged in conflict with the arch rebel and those who united with him. The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left. All was again peaceful and harmonious as before. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 10}

The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with angels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 11}

Chapter Two.

The Creation.

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated, of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and other bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain. Its surface was diversified with hills and mountains. These, however, were not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger, and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 12}

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to his Son, "Let us make man in our image." 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. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 13}

This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. While they lived in obedience to God, this circle of light enshrouded them. Although everything God had made was in the perfection of beauty, and there seemed nothing wanting upon the earth which God had created to make Adam and Eve happy, yet he manifested his great love to them by planting a garden especially for them. A portion of their time was to be occupied in the happy employment of dressing the garden, and a portion in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation. Their labor was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. This beautiful garden was to be their home, their special residence. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 14}

In this garden the Lord placed trees of every variety for usefulness and beauty. There were trees laden with luxuriant fruit, of rich fragrance, beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, designed of God to be food for the holy pair. There were the lovely vines which grew upright, laden with their burden of fruit, unlike anything man has seen since the fall. The fruit was very large, and of different colors; some nearly black, some purple, red, pink, and light green. This beautiful and luxuriant growth of fruit upon the branches of the vine was called grapes. And it was the happy labor of Adam and Eve to form beautiful bowers from the branches of the vine, and train them, forming dwellings of nature's beautiful, living trees and foliage, laden with fragrant fruit. {ST, January 9, 1879 par. 15}

The earth was clothed with beautiful verdure, while myriads of fragrant flowers of every variety and hue sprang up in rich profusion around them. Every thing was tastefully and gloriously arranged. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, the glory of which surpassed all other trees. Its fruit looked like apples of gold and silver, and was to perpetuate immortality. The leaves contained healing properties. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 1}

Very happy were the holy pair in Eden. Unlimited control was given them over every living thing. The lion and the lamb sported together peacefully and harmlessly around them, or slumbered at their feet. Birds of every variety of color and plumage flitted among the trees and flowers, and about Adam and Eve, while their mellow-toned music echoed among the trees in sweet accord to the praises of their Creator. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 2}

Adam and Eve were charmed with the beauties of their Eden home. They were delighted with the little songsters around them, wearing their bright yet graceful plumage, and warbling forth their happy, cheerful music. The holy pair united with them, and raised their voices in harmonious songs of love, praise, and adoration, to the Father and his dear Son, for the tokens of love which surrounded them. They recognized the order and harmony of creation, which spoke of wisdom and knowledge which were infinite. Some new beauty and additional glory of their Eden home they were continually discovering, which filled their hearts with deeper love, and brought from their lips expressions of gratitude and reverence to their Creator. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 3}

Chapter Three.

The Temptation and Fall.

In the midst of the garden, near the tree of life, stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree was especially designed by God to be a pledge of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. Of this tree the Lord commanded them not to eat, lest they die. He told them that they might freely eat of all the trees of the garden except one; but if they ate of that tree they should surely die. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 4}

When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But the Creator chose, in his all-wise arrangements, to test their loyalty before they could be rendered eternally secure. They were to enjoy his favor, and he was to converse with them, and they with him. Yet he did not place evil out of their reach. Satan was permitted to tempt them. If they endured the trial, they were to be in perpetual favor with God and the heavenly angels. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 5}

The hour for joyful happy songs of praise to God and his dear Son had come. Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note, then all the angelic host united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through Heaven. But now, instead of strains of sweetest music, discord and angry words fall upon the ear of the great rebel leader. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 6}

Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from heaven with him. Before their fall not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination were among them. Previous to their rebellion these things had been unknown in Heaven. Satan now beheld the terrible results of his rebellion. He shuddered, and feared to face the future, and to contemplate the end of these things. Where was he? Was it not all a horrible dream? Was he shut out of Heaven? Were the gates of Heaven never more to open and admit him? Bright, holy angels bow before the Father, but no more will Satan unite with them in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God. Could he be again as when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And this was not all; he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself--angels who had never thought to question the will of Heaven, or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds, presenting before them that they might enjoy a greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them. A responsibility now rests upon him from which he would fain be released. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 7}

These fallen spirits had become turbulent with disappointed hopes. Instead of greater good, they were experiencing the sad results of disobedience and disregard of law. Never more would these unhappy beings be swayed by the mild rule of Jesus Christ. Never more would their spirits be stirred by the deep, earnest love, peace, and joy, which his presence had ever inspired in them, to be returned to him in cheerful obedience and reverential honor. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 8}

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone, in meditation upon the past, the present, and the future. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from Heaven was passing. Satan called him, and intreated an interview with Christ. This was granted. He then related to him that he repented of his rebellion, and wished again to enjoy the favor of God. He was willing to take the place which had been assigned him, and be under Christ's command. The Son of God wept at Satan's woe, but told him, as the mind of the Father, that this could never be. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. The peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received back; for sin originated with him; the seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would still have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 9}

Satan did not repent of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused. The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of Heaven, the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced in not finding his expectations realized, were the cause of his grief. To be commander out of Heaven, was vastly different from being thus honored in Heaven. The loss of all the privileges of Heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 10}

The great change in his position had not increased his love for God, nor for his wise and just law. When Satan became fully convinced that it was impossible for him to be re-instated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 11}

God knew that such determined rebellion would not remain inactive. Satan would invent means to annoy the heavenly angels, and show contempt for his authority. As he could not gain admittance within the gates of Heaven, he would wait just at the entrance, to taunt the angels and seek contention with them as they should pass in and out. He would seek to destroy the happiness of Adam and Eve. He would endeavor to incite them to rebellion, knowing that this would cause grief in Heaven. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 12}

His followers were seeking him; and he aroused himself, and assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could in any way beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to share with them of God's mercy. If they should fail to obtain pardon, they could unite with Adam and Eve, whose transgression would place them also in a state of rebellion; and thus they could take possession of Eden, and hold it as their home. And if they could gain access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden, their strength would, they thought, be equal to that of the holy angels, and even God himself could not expel them. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 13}

Satan held a consultation with his evil angels. They did not all readily unite to engage in this hazardous and terrible work. He told them that he could not intrust the work to any one of them; for he thought that he alone had wisdom sufficient to carry forward so important an enterprise. He wished them to consider the matter while he should leave them and seek retirement, to mature his plans. He sought to impress upon them that this was their last and only hope. If they failed here, all prospect of regaining and controlling Heaven, or any other part of God's creation, was hopeless. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 14}

Satan went alone to mature plans that would most surely secure the fall of Adam and Eve. He had fears that his purposes might be defeated. And again, even if he should be successful in leading Adam and Eve to disobey the commandment of God, and thus become transgressors of his law, and no good come to himself, his own case would not be improved; his guilt would only be increased. He shuddered at the thought of plunging the holy, happy pair into the misery and remorse which he was himself enduring. He seemed in a state of indecision; at one time firm and determined, then hesitating and wavering. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 15}

His angels were seeking him, their leader, to acquaint him with their decision. They will unite with him in his plans, and with him bear the responsibility, and share the consequences. Satan cast off his feelings of despair and weakness, and, as their leader, fortified himself to brave out the matter, and do all in his power to defy the authority of God and his Son. He acquainted them with his plans. If he should come boldly upon Adam and Eve and make complaints of God's own Son, they would not listen to him for a moment, but would be prepared for such an attack. Should he seek to intimidate them because of his power, so recently an angel in high authority, he could accomplish nothing. He decided that cunning and deceit would do what might or force could not. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 16}

God assembled the angelic host to take measures to avert the threatened evil. It was decided in Heaven's council for angels to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. Accordingly, two angels sped on their way to visit our first parents. The holy pair received them joyfully, expressing their gratitude to their Creator for surrounding them with such a profusion of his bounty. Everything lovely and attractive was theirs to enjoy, and everything seemed wisely adapted to their wants. Above all other blessings they prized the society of the Son of God and the heavenly angels; for at every visit they had much to relate to them, of their new discoveries of the beauties of nature in their Eden home; and they had questions to ask relative to many things which they could but imperfectly comprehend. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 17}

The angels graciously and lovingly gave them the desired information. They also gave them the sad history of Satan's rebellion and fall. They then distinctly informed them that the tree of knowledge was placed in the garden to be a pledge of their obedience and love to God; that the high and happy estate of the holy angels was to be retained upon condition of obedience; and that they were similarly situated--they could obey the law of God and be inexpressibly happy, or disobey, and lose their high estate, and be plunged into hopeless despair. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 18}

They told Adam and Eve that God would not compel them to obey--that he had not removed from them power to go contrary to his will; they were moral agents, free to obey or disobey. There was but one prohibition that God had as yet seen fit to lay upon them. If they should transgress the will of God, they would surely die. They told them also, that the most exalted angel, next in order to Christ, had refused obedience to the law of God which he had ordained to govern heavenly beings; that this rebellion had caused war in Heaven, and as the result the rebel leader and every angel who united with him in questioning the authority of the great Jehovah, had been driven out of Heaven; and that this fallen foe was now an enemy to all that concerned the interest of God and his dear Son. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 19}

They told them that Satan purposed to do them harm, and it was necessary for them to be guarded, for they might come in contact with the fallen foe; but he could not harm them while they yielded obedience to God's command; for, if necessary, every angel from Heaven would come to their help rather than that he should in any way do them harm. But if they disobeyed the command of God, then Satan would have power to ever annoy, perplex, and trouble them. If they remained steadfast against the first insinuations of Satan, they were as secure as the heavenly angels. But if they yielded to the tempter, He who spared not the exalted angels would not spare them. They must suffer the penalty of their transgression; for the law of God was as sacred as himself, and he required implicit obedience from all in Heaven and on earth. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 20}

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment; for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other, they would be in greater danger than if they were together. The angels charged them to follow closely the instructions which God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge; for in perfect obedience they were safe, and the foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 21}

Adam and Eve assured the angels that they would never transgress the express command of God; for it was their highest pleasure to do his will. The angels united with them in holy strains of harmonious music; and as their songs pealed forth from blissful Eden, Satan heard their joyful adoration of the Father and the Son. And as he heard it, his envy, hatred, and malignity increased, and he expressed to his followers his anxiety to incite Adam and Eve to disobedience, and at once bring down the wrath of God upon them, and change their songs of praise to hatred, and curses against their Maker. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 22}

Satan then assumed the form of a serpent, and entered Eden. The serpent was a beautiful creature, with wings; and while flying through the air, his appearance was bright, resembling burnished gold. He did not go upon the ground, but went from place to place through the air, and ate fruit like man. Satan entered into the serpent, who took his position in the tree of knowledge, and commenced leisurely eating of the fruit. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 23}

Eve, unconsciously at first, separated from her husband in her employment. When she became aware of the fact, she felt that there might be danger; but again she thought herself secure, even if she did not remain close by the side of her husband. She had wisdom and strength to know if evil came, and to meet it. This the angels had cautioned her not to do. Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. She saw it was very lovely, and was reasoning with herself why God had so decidedly prohibited their eating it. Now was Satan's opportunity. He addressed her as though he was able to divine her thoughts, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Thus, with soft and pleasant words, and with musical voice, he addressed the wondering Eve. She was startled to hear a serpent speak. He extolled her beauty and exceeding loveliness, which was not displeasing to Eve. But she was amazed, for she knew that to the serpent God had not given the power of speech. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 24}

Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium. It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. Eve was beguiled, flattered, infatuated. Had she met a commanding personage, possessing a form like the angels, and resembling them, she would have been upon her guard. But that strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she enters into a controversy with the serpent. She answers his question, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." The serpent answers, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 25}

Satan would convey the idea that by eating of the forbidden tree, they would receive a new and more noble kind of knowledge than they had hitherto attained. This has been his special work with great success ever since his fall, to lead men to pry into the secrets of the Almighty, and not to be satisfied with what God has revealed, and not careful to obey that which was commanded. He would lead them to disobey God's commands, and then make them believe that they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge. This is a miserable deception. They fail to understand what God has revealed, they disregard his explicit commandments, aspire after wisdom, independent of God, and seek to understand that which he has been pleased to withhold from mortals. They are elated with their ideas of progression, and charmed with their own vain philosophy; but they grope in midnight darkness relative to true knowledge. They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 26}

It was not the will of God that this sinless pair should have any knowledge of evil. He had freely given them the good, but withheld the evil. Eve thought the words of the serpent wise, and she received the broad assertion, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,"--making God a liar. Satan boldly insinuates that God had deceived them to keep them from being exalted in knowledge equal with himself. God said, If ye eat "ye shall surely die." The serpent said, If ye eat "ye shall not surely die." {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 27}

Satan assured Eve that as soon as she ate of the fruit she would receive a new and superior knowledge that would make her equal with God. He called her attention to himself. He ate freely of the tree and found it not only perfectly harmless, but delicious and exhilarating; and he told her that it was because of its wonderful properties to impart wisdom and power that God had prohibited them from tasting or even touching it; for he knew its wonderful qualities. The tempter stated that by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree he had attained the power of speech. He intimated that God would not carry out his word. It was merely a threat to intimidate them and keep them from great good. He further told them that they could not die. Had they not eaten of the tree of life which perpetuates immortality? He said that God was deceiving them to keep them from a higher state of felicity and more exalted happiness. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 28}

Satan plucked the fruit and passed it to Eve. She took it in her hand. Now, said the tempter, you were prohibited from even touching it lest ye die. He told her that she would realize no more sense of evil and death in eating than in touching or handling the fruit. Eve was emboldened because she felt not the immediate signs of God's displeasure. She thought the words of the tempter wise and correct. She ate, and was delighted with the fruit. It seemed delicious to her taste, and she imagined that she realized in herself the wonderful effects of the fruit. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 29}

She then plucked the fruit for herself and ate, and imagined she felt the quickening power of a new and elevated existence as the result of the exhilarating influence of the forbidden fruit. She was in a state of strange and unnatural excitement as she sought her husband, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit. She related to him the wise discourse of the serpent, and wished to conduct him at once to the tree of knowledge. She told him she had eaten of the fruit, and instead of feeling any sense of death, she realized a pleasing, exhilarating influence. As soon as Eve disobeyed, she became a powerful medium through which to occasion the fall of her husband. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 30}

A sadness came over the countenance of Adam. He appeared afraid and astonished. A struggle seemed to be going on in his mind. He told Eve that he was quite certain that this was the foe whom they had been warned against; and if so, she must die. She assured him she felt no ill effects, but rather a very pleasant influence, and entreated him to eat. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 31}

Adam quite well understood that his companion had transgressed the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. Eve reasoned that the serpent said they should not surely die, and his words must be true, for she felt no signs of God's displeasure, but a pleasant influence, as she imagined the angels felt. Adam regretted that Eve had left his side; but now the deed was done. He must be separated from her whose society he had loved so well. How could he have it thus? His love for Eve was strong, and in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He reasoned that Eve was a part of himself; and if she must die, he would die with her; for he could not bear the thought of separation from her. He did not think that God, who had created him a living, beautiful form out of the dust of the ground, and had given him Eve to be his companion, could supply her place. After all, might not the words of this wise serpent be correct? Eve was before him, just as lovely and beautiful, and apparently as innocent, as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater, higher love for him than before her disobedience, as the effect of the fruit she had eaten. He saw in her no signs of death. She had told him of the happy influence of the fruit, of her ardent love for him, and he decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it, and, like Eve, felt not immediately its ill effects. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 1}

Eve had thought herself capable of deciding between right and wrong. The flattering hope of entering a higher state of knowledge had led her to think that the serpent was her especial friend, possessing a great interest in her welfare. If she had sought her husband, and they had related to their Maker the words of the serpent, they would have been delivered at once from his artful temptation. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 2}

God instructed our first parents in regard to the tree of knowledge, and they were fully informed relative to the fall of Satan, and the danger of listening to his suggestions. God did not deprive them of the power of eating the forbidden fruit. He left them as free moral agents to believe his word, obey his commandments and live, or believe the tempter, disobey and perish. They both ate, and the great wisdom they obtained was the knowledge of sin, and a sense of guilt. The Lord would not have them investigate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for then they would be exposed to Satan masked. He knew that they would be perfectly safe if they touched not the fruit. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 3}

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent; yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit; while God had given them everything that was good for food, and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent, to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in their Creator, she basely distrusted his goodness, and cherished the words of Satan. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 4}

After Adam's transgression he at first imagined himself rising to a new and higher existence. But soon the thought of his transgression terrified him. The air, that had been of a mild and even temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. They had a sense of sin, and felt a dread of the future, a sense of want, a nakedness of soul. The sweet love and peace seemed removed from them, and in their place a want of something came over them that they had never experienced before. They then for the first turned their attention to the external. They had not been clothed, but were draped in light as were the heavenly angels. This light which had enshrouded them departed. To relieve the sense of nakedness which they realized, their attention was directed to seek a covering for their forms; for how could they meet the eye of God and angels unclothed. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 5}

Their crime is now before them in its true light. Their transgression of God's express command assumes a clearer character. Adam censured Eve's folly in leaving his side, and being deceived by the serpent; but they both flattered themselves that God, who had given them everything to make them happy, might yet excuse their disobedience, because of his great love to them, and that their punishment would not be so dreadful after all. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 6}

Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God, to question his wisdom, and to seek to penetrate his all-wise plans. And through her he had also caused the overthrow of Adam, who, in consequence of his love for Eve, disobeyed the command of God, and fell with her. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 7}

The news of man's fall spread through Heaven--every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All Heaven was in agitation. The angels were grieved at the base ingratitude of man, in return for the rich blessings which God had bestowed upon him. A council was held to see what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate a life of sin. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 8}

The Lord visited Adam and Eve, and made known to them the consequence of their disobedience. And as they hear God's majestic approach, they seek to hide themselves from inspection of him whom they delighted, while in their innocence and holiness, to meet. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" This question was asked by the Lord, not because he needed information, but for the conviction of the guilty pair. Adam acknowledged his transgression, not because he was penitent for his great disobedience, but to cast reflection upon God. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman was then addressed: "What is this that thou hast done?" Eve answered, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The Lord then addressed the serpent "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." As the serpent had been exalted above the beasts of the field, he should be degraded beneath them all, and be detested by man, inasmuch as he was the medium through which Satan acted. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground." {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 9}

God cursed the ground because of the sin of Adam and Eve in eating of the tree of knowledge, and declared, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." He had apportioned them the good, but withheld the evil. Now he declares that they shall eat of it, that is, they shall be acquainted with evil, all the days of their life. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 10}

The race from that time forward was to be afflicted by Satan's temptations. A life of perpetual toil and anxiety was appointed unto Adam, instead of the happy, cheerful labor which he had hitherto enjoyed. They should be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally come to dissolution. They were made of the dust of the earth, and unto dust should they return. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 11}

Adam and Eve were informed that they must lose their Eden home. They had yielded to Satan's deception, and believed that God would lie. By their transgression they had opened a way for Satan to gain access to them more readily, and it was not safe for them to remain in the garden of Eden, lest in their state of sin they gain access to the tree of life, and perpetuate a life of sin. They entreated to be permitted to remain, although they acknowledged that they had forfeited all right to blissful Eden. They promised that they would in the future yield implicit obedience to God. They were informed that in their fall from innocence to guilt, they had gained no strength, but great weakness. They had not preserved their integrity while they were in a state of holy, happy innocence, and they would have far less strength to remain true and loyal in a state of conscious guilt. At these words the unhappy pair were filled with keenest anguish and remorse. They now realized that the penalty of sin was death. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 12}

It was Satan's studied plan that Adam and Eve should disobey God, receive his frown, and then partake of the tree of life, that they might perpetuate a life of sin. But holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the way to the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light on every side, which had the appearance of glittering swords. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 13}

Many regard the punishment of Adam's transgression as too severe a penalty for so small a sin. The enemy of all righteousness has blinded the eyes of sinners, so that sin does not appear sinful. Their standard of what constitutes sin is vastly different from God's standard. Should those who regard Adam's sin as a matter of very small consequence look a little deeper, they would see the great mercy of God in giving Adam the smallest possible test. It could scarcely be called a self-denial on his part to refrain from partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for he already had everything necessary to supply his wants. A compassionate God gave no severe test, no strong temptation that would tax human endurance beyond the power to resist. The fruit itself was harmless. If God had not forbidden Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, their action in taking it would not have been sinful. Up to the moment of God's prohibition, Adam might have eaten of the fruit of that tree without realizing any harm. But after God had said, Thou shalt not eat, the act became a crime of great magnitude. Adam had disobeyed God. In this was his sin. The very fact that Adam's trial was small, made his sin exceeding great. God tested him in that which was least, to prove him; and with the prohibition he stated that the punishment consequent upon his disobedience would be death. If Adam could not bear this smallest of tests to prove his loyalty, he surely could not have endured a stronger trial had he been taken into closer relationship with God, to bear higher responsibilities. He evidenced that God could not trust him; should he be exposed to Satan's more determined attacks, he would signally fail. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 14}

God created man in his own image, after his likeness, free from sin, and with organs well developed. The earth was to be populated with intelligent beings who were only a little lower than the angels. But God would first prove the holy pair, and test their obedience; for he would not have a world filled with beings who would disregard his laws. Adam did the worst thing he could do under the circumstances. In doing that which God had expressly forbidden he set his will against the will of God, thus waging war with his requirements. The pen of inspiration has with accuracy traced the history of our first parents' sin and fall, that all generations may be warned not to follow Adam's example, in the slightest disregard of God's requirements. Had the test been in regard to larger matters, men might have excused the sin of disobedience in what they call smaller things. But God made the test with Adam upon things that are least, to show man that the slightest disobedience to his requirements is sin in every sense of the word. God, the Governor of the universe, has made all things subject to law; things apparently insignificant, and things of the greatest magnitude, are all governed by laws adapted to their natures. Nothing that God has made has been forgotten or left to blind chance. To man, as being endowed with reasoning powers and conscience, God's moral law is given to control his actions. Man is not compelled to obey. He may defy God's law, as did Adam, and take the fearful consequences; or by living in harmony with that law he may reap the rewards of obedience. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 15}

Ministers of our time give from their pulpits license to sin, in saying to the sinner, that the law of God is not binding upon man, and that it is impossible for him to keep it. It was then impossible for Adam to keep God's law, and why should the punishment of transgression have fallen upon him? The very fact that disobedience to God in one of the smallest requirements brought such woe to our world shows that any disregard of his law will surely be followed by the penalty, which is death. Ministers who make war upon the law of God, are gathering in their garments the blood of souls. They are working in harmony with the great rebel. {ST, January 23, 1879 par. 16}

Chapter Four.

The Plan of Salvation.

Sorrow filled Heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender; the whole family of Adam must die. The heart of the Son of God was touched with pity for the lost race. Upon his lovely countenance rested an expression of sympathy and sorrow. Soon he approached the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father, and he seemed to engage in close converse with him. The anxiety of the angels was intense while Jesus thus communed with his Father. Three times he was shut in by the cloud of glory; the third time he came forth his countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give his life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself, that through him man might find pardon; that through the merits of his blood, and obedience to the law of God, man could again have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 1}

At first the angels could not rejoice, for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. He told them that he would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man, that he would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive him as the Son of God. He would leave all his glory in Heaven, appear upon earth as a man, become acquainted by his own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset; and, finally, after his mission as a teacher should be accomplished, he would be delivered into the hands of men, and after enduring almost every cruelty and suffering, that Satan and his angels could inspire wicked men to inflict, he would die the cruellest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. And not merely would he suffer bodily pain, but mental agony. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon him. He told them also that after his death he would rise again the third day, and ascend to his Father to intercede for wayward, guilty man. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 2}

The angels prostrated themselves before their beloved Commander, and offered to give their lives. Jesus told them the transgression was so great that the life of an angel could not pay the debt; his life alone could be accepted by his Father as a ransom for man. But the work of the angels was assigned them, to descend with strengthening balm from glory to soothe the Son of God in his sufferings, and to minister unto him. Also, their work would be to guard the subjects of grace from the evil angels, and the darkness constantly thrown around them by Satan. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 3}

With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels, and informed them that hereafter those whom he should redeem would be with him, and ever dwell with him; and that by his death he should ransom many, and finally destroy him who had the power of death. And his Father would give him the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and he should possess it forever and ever. Satan and sinners should be destroyed, never more to disturb Heaven, or those who should inherit the new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father had accepted, and rejoice that fallen man could be exalted again, through his death, to obtain favor with God and enjoy Heaven. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 4}

Then joy inexpressible filled Heaven, and the heavenly host sung a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sung a note higher than they had done before, for the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up his dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Praise and adoration were poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus; that he would consent to leave the bosom of his Father, and choose a life of suffering and anguish, and die an ignominious death to redeem the fallen race. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 5}

The Father did not yield up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle, whether to let guilty man perish or to give his Son to die for the lost race. It was impossible for God to change his law, or give up the smallest part of its claims, in order to save man; therefore he suffered his Son to die for man's transgression. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 6}

When the plan of salvation was revealed, Satan rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man's fall, pull down the Son of God from his exalted position. He told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower him, and hinder the accomplishment of the plan. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 7}

In humility and inexpressible sadness, Adam and Eve left the lovely garden wherein they had been so happy until they disobeyed the command of God. The atmosphere was changed. It was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they were exposed. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 8}

Angels of God were commissioned to visit the fallen pair and inform them that, although they could no longer retain possession of their holy estate, their Eden home, because of their transgression of the law of God, their case was not altogether hopeless. The Son of God had been moved with pity as he viewed their hopeless condition, and had volunteered to take upon himself the punishment due to them, and die for them that they might yet live, through faith in the atonement which Christ proposed to make. A door of hope was opened, that man, notwithstanding his great sin, might not be under the absolute control of Satan. Probation would be granted him in which, through a life of repentance, and faith in the atonement of the Son of God, he might be redeemed from his transgression of the Father's law, and thus be elevated to a position where his efforts to keep that law could be accepted. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 9}

The angels related to them the grief that was felt in Heaven, as it was announced that they had transgressed the law of God, which had made it expedient for Christ to make the great sacrifice of his own precious life. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 10}

When Adam and Eve realized how exalted and sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly a sacrifice necessary to save them from utter ruin, they pleaded that they and their posterity might endure the penalty of their transgression, rather than that the beloved Son of God should make this great sacrifice. The anguish of Adam was increased. He saw that his sins were of so great magnitude as to involve fearful consequences. And must it be that Heaven's honored Commander, who had walked with him and talked with him while in his holy innocence, whom angels worshiped, must be brought down from his exalted position to die because of man's transgression. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 11}

Adam was informed that an angel's life could not pay the debt. The law of Jehovah, the foundation of his government in Heaven and upon earth, was as sacred as its divine Author; and for this reason the life of an angel could not be accepted of God as a sacrifice for its transgression. His law was of more importance in his sight than the holy angels around his throne. The Father could not change nor abolish one precept of his law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God, who had in unison with the Father created man, could make an atonement for man acceptable to God, by giving his life a sacrifice, and bearing the wrath of his Father. As Adam's transgression had brought death and wretchedness upon the race, life and immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a sacrifice of such infinite value as to make a man who should avail himself of it more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 12}

To Adam were revealed future, important events, from his expulsion from Eden, to the flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth. His love for Adam and his posterity would lead the Son of God to condescend to take human nature, and thus elevate, through his own humiliation, all who would believe on him. Such a sacrifice was of sufficient value to save the whole world; but only a few would avail themselves of the salvation thus brought to them. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 13}

The many would not comply with the conditions. They would prefer sin, transgression of the law of God, rather than repentance and obedience, relying by faith upon the merit of the sacrifice offered. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 14}

Adam was carried down through successive generations, and shown the increase of crime, of guilt and defilement, because man would yield to his naturally strong inclinations to transgress the holy law of God. He saw the curse of God resting more and more heavily upon the human race, upon the cattle, and upon the earth, because of man's continued transgression. He saw that iniquity and violence would steadily increase; yet amid all the tide of human misery and woe, there would ever be a few who would preserve the knowledge of God, and would remain unsullied amid the prevailing moral degeneracy. Adam was made to comprehend what sin is--the transgression of the law. He was shown that moral, mental, and physical degeneracy would result to the race, from transgression, until the world would be filled with human misery of every type. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 15}

The days of man have been shortened by his own course of sin in transgressing the righteous law of God. The race has so greatly depreciated as to become almost worthless. Because of the indulgence of the carnal mind, they are generally incapable of appreciating the mystery of Calvary, the grand and elevated facts of the atonement and the plan of salvation. Yet, notwithstanding the weakness, and enfeebled mental, moral, and physical powers to the human race, Christ, true to the purpose for which he left Heaven, continues his interest in the feeble, depreciated, degenerate specimens of humanity, and invites them to hide their weakness and great deficiencies in him. If they will come unto him, he will supply all their needs. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 16}

When Adam, according to God's special directions, made an offering for sin, it was to him a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which God alone could give. It was the first time he had witnessed death. As he looked upon the bleeding victim, writhing in the agonies of death, he was to look forward by faith to the Son of God, whom the victim prefigured, who was to die man's sacrifice. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 17}

This ceremonial offering, ordained of God, was to be to Adam a perpetual reminder of his guilt, and also a penitential acknowledgment of his sin. This act of taking life gave him a deeper and more perfect sense of his transgression, which nothing less than the death of God's dear Son could expiate. Adam marveled at the infinite goodness and matchless love which would give such a ransom to save the guilty. As he was slaying the innocent victim, it seemed to him that he was shedding the blood of the Son of God by his own hand. He knew that if he had remained steadfast to God, and true to his holy law, there would have been no death of beast nor of man. Yet in the sacrificial offerings, pointing to the great and perfect offering of God's dear Son, there appeared a star of hope to illuminate the dark and terrible future, and relieve it of its utter hopelessness and ruin. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 18}

In the beginning, the head of each family was considered ruler and priest of his own household. Afterward, as the race multiplied upon the earth, men of divine appointment performed this solemn worship of sacrifice for the people. The blood of beasts was to be associated in the minds of sinners with the blood of the Son of God. The death of the victim was to evidence to all that the penalty of sin was death. By the act of sacrifice, the sinner acknowledged his guilt, and manifested his faith, looking forward to the great and perfect sacrifice of the Son of God, which the offering of beasts prefigured. Without the atonement of the Son of God there could have been no communication of blessing or salvation from God to man. God was jealous for the honor of his law. The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels. {ST, January 30, 1879 par. 19}

Chapter Five.

Cain and Abel.

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Both acknowledged God, both professed to worship him; but while Abel loved and feared God, Cain cherished rebellious feelings, and murmured against him because of the sentence pronounced upon Adam, and because the ground was cursed for his sin. These brothers had been instructed in regard to the provision for the salvation of the human race. They were required to carry out a system of humble obedience, showing their reverence for God, and their entire dependence upon the promised Redeemer by slaying the firstlings of the flock, and in the most solemn manner presenting them, with the blood, as an offering to God. Thus they were ever to keep before their minds the consequences of transgression, and the promise of a Redeemer to come. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 1}

God had made known to Adam that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. But Cain was unwilling to follow strictly the plan of obedience, to procure a lamb and offer it with the fruit of the earth. He brought only an offering of the fruit, thus disregarding the requirement of God. And he was not even particular to bring the best of the fruits. Abel advised his brother not to come before the Lord without the blood of a sacrifice; but Cain, being the eldest, would not listen to him. He despised his counsel, and with murmuring and infidelity in his heart with regard to the promised Sacrifice, and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings, he presented his gift. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 2}

Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock, as God had commanded, and with full faith in the Messiah to come he presented the offering. God had respect unto this sacrifice, and fire came down from Heaven and consumed it. But Cain saw no manifestation that his offering was accepted. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 3}

Abel came in God's appointed way, while Cain followed the promptings of his own heart, in opposition to the command of God. "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." As Abel looked upon the expiring victim he was impressed with the painful fact that the wages of sin is death. He saw that it was transgression of God's law which had separated man from his Creator, and that the sacrifice of life alone could meet the claims of the broken law. Through the dying struggles and streaming blood of the victim, he saw by faith the Son of God dying for the guilty race. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 4}

An important lesson may be learned from the history of the offerings of Cain and Abel. The claims of infinite justice, and the demands of God's law, can be met only by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The most costly offering that man may bring to God, the fruit of his toil, his physical and intellectual acquirements, already belong to his Creator. Man has nothing which he has not received. Neither material wealth nor intellectual greatness will atone for the sin of the soul. Cain scorned the idea that it was necessary to come to God with an offering of blood. In the same spirit many in our day refuse to believe that the blood of Christ was shed as a sacrifice for the sins of men. Although Cain chose to disregard the command of God, he brought his offering with great confidence. He looked upon it as the fruit of his own labor, and hence as belonging to himself; and in presenting it to God he felt that he was placing his Creator under obligations to him. The popular religion of the day virtually teaches the same thing, that men may by their good works merit the blessing of God. Many feel that it is a condescension on their part to make a profession of religion; and that in so doing they are conferring a favor upon God. And there are multitudes who have no desire to come to God's terms, but who make terms for themselves, and expect God to accept them. Such a religion is of the same character as that of Cain. The great question should be, What can I do to meet the approval of God? not, How can I best please myself? {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 5}

Abel trusted wholly in the merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It was this faith that connected him with God. The promise of a Redeemer was dimly understood; but the sacrificial offerings cast light upon the promise. Cain had the same opportunity of learning and accepting these truths as had Abel. God did not accept one and reject the other without sufficient reason. Abel believed and obeyed; Cain doubted and rebelled. God is no respecter of persons, yet he will reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 6}

When Cain saw that his offering was not accepted, he was very angry with the Lord, and with his brother. But God, in his infinite mercy, condescended to send an angel to Cain, to converse with him. The angel inquired the reason of his anger, and informed him that if he would follow the directions which God had given he would respect his offering. But if he would not humbly submit to God's arrangements, and believe and obey him, his offering could not be accepted. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 7}

I here had been no injustice on the part of God, and no partiality shown to Abel; if he would do well he would be accepted of God, and his brother should listen to him, and he should take the lead, because he was the eldest. But even after being thus faithfully instructed, Cain did not repent. Instead of censuring and abhorring himself for his unbelief, he still complained of the injustice and partiality of God. And in his jealousy and hatred he contended with Abel, and reproached him. Abel meekly pointed out his brother's error, and endeavored to convince him that the wrong was in himself. But Cain hated his brother from the moment that God manifested to him the tokens of his acceptance. Abel sought to appease his wrath by pointing to the compassion of God in saving the lives of their parents, when he might have brought upon them immediate death. He told Cain that God loved them, or he would not have given his Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the wrath which man by his disobedience deserved to bear. While Abel justified the plan of God, Cain became enraged, and his anger increased and burned against Abel because he would not join him in his rebellion, until in his rage he slew him. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 8}

God inquired of Cain for his brother, and he attempted to conceal his guilt by uttering a falsehood: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" God informed Cain that he knew in regard to his sin,—that he was acquainted with his every act, and even the thoughts of his heart, and said to him, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." The curse at first pronounced upon the earth had been felt but lightly; but now a double curse rested upon it. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 9}

Cain and Abel represent the two classes, the righteous and the wicked, the believers and unbelievers, which should exist from the fall of man to the second coming of Christ. Cain slaying his brother Abel, represents the wicked who will be envious of the righteous, and will hate them because they are better than themselves. They will be jealous of the righteous, and will persecute and put them to death because their right-doing condemns their sinful course. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 10}

Adam's life was one of sorrow, humility, and continual repentance. As he taught his children and grand-children the fear of the Lord, he was often bitterly reproached for the sin which had resulted in so much misery to his posterity. When he left beautiful Eden, the thought that he must die thrilled him with horror. He looked upon death as a dreadful calamity. He was first made acquainted with the terrible reality of death in the human family by his own son Cain slaying his brother Abel. Filled with the bitterest remorse for his own transgression, deprived of his son Abel, and looking upon Cain as his murderer, and knowing the curse which God had pronounced upon him, Adam's heart was bowed down with grief. Most bitterly did he reproach himself for his first great transgression. He entreated pardon from God through the promised Sacrifice. Deeply had he felt the wrath of God for his crime committed in Paradise. He witnessed the general corruption which finally provoked God to destroy the inhabitants of the earth by a flood. Though the sentence of death pronounced upon him by his Maker at first appeared so terrible to him, yet after he had lived some hundreds of years, it looked just and merciful in God, thus to bring to an end a miserable life. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 11}

As Adam witnessed the first signs of decay in the falling leaf and in the drooping flowers, he mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead. The dying flowers were not so great a cause of grief, because they were more tender and delicate; but when the tall stately trees cast off their leaves to decay, it presented before him the general dissolution of beautiful nature, which God had created for the especial benefit of man. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 12}

To his children, and to their children, to the ninth generation, Adam delineated the perfections of his Eden home; and also his fall and its dreadful results, and the load of grief brought upon him on account of the rupture in his family, which ended in the death of Abel. He related to them the sufferings which God had brought him through to teach him the necessity of strictly adhering to his law. He declared to them that sin would be punished, in whatever form it existed; and he entreated them to obey God, who would deal mercifully with them if they should love and fear him. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 13}

Adam was commanded to teach his descendants the fear of the Lord, and, by his example of humble obedience, lead them to highly regard the offerings which typified a Saviour to come. Adam carefully treasured what God had revealed to him, and handed it down by word of mouth to his children and children's children. By this means the knowledge of God was preserved. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 14}

The Sabbath was instituted in Eden and observed by our first parents before the fall. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, and ate of the forbidden fruit, they were expelled from Eden; but they observed the Sabbath after their fall. They had experienced the bitter fruits of disobedience, and learned what every one who tramples upon God's commands will sooner or later learn, that God means just what he says, and that he will surely punish the transgressor. Those who venture to lightly esteem the day upon which Jehovah rested, the day which he sanctified and blessed, the day which he has commanded to be kept holy, will yet know that all the precepts of his law are alike sacred, and that death is the penalty of the transgression. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 15}

On account of the special honors which God had conferred upon the seventh day, he required his people to number by sevens, lest they should forget their Creator who made the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. The descendants of Cain were not careful to respect the day upon which God had rested. They chose their own time for labor and for rest, regardless of Jehovah's special command. There were two distinct classes upon the earth. One class were in open rebellion against God's law, while the other obeyed his commandments, and revered his Sabbath. {ST, February 6, 1879 par. 16}

Chapter Six.

Seth and Enoch.

Seth was a worthy character, and was to take the place of Abel in right-doing. Yet he was a son of Adam, like sinful Cain, and inherited from the nature of Adam no more natural goodness than did Cain. He was born in sin, but by the grace of God, in receiving the faithful instruction of his father Adam, he honored the Lord in doing his will. He separated himself from the corrupt descendants of Cain, and labored, as Abel would have done had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey God. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 1}

Enoch learned from the lips of Adam the painful story of the fall, and the precious story of God's condescending grace in the gift of his Son as the world's Redeemer. He believed and relied upon the promise given. Enoch was a holy man. He served God with singleness of heart. He realized the corruptions of the human family, and separated himself from the descendants of Cain, and reprovved them for their great wickedness. There were those upon the earth who acknowledged God, who feared and worshiped him. Yet righteous Enoch was so distressed with the increasing wickedness of the ungodly that he would not daily associate with them, fearing that he should be affected by their infidelity, and that he might not ever regard God with that holy reverence which was due his exalted character. His soul was vexed as he daily beheld them trampling upon the authority of God. He chose to be separate from them, and spent much of his time in solitude, giving himself to reflection and prayer. He waited before God, and prayed to know his will more perfectly, that he might perform it. God communed with Enoch through his angels, and gave him divine instruction. He made known to him that he would not always bear with man in his rebellion--that it was his purpose to destroy the sinful race by bringing a flood of waters upon the earth. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 2}

The beautiful garden of Eden, from which our first parents had been driven, remained until God determined to destroy the earth by a flood. The Lord had planted that garden, and especially blessed it; and in his wonderful providence he withdrew it from the earth, and will return it again, more gloriously adorned than before it was removed. God purposed to preserve a specimen of his perfect work of creation free from the curse which sin had brought upon the earth. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 3}

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. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 4}

Enoch was troubled in regard to the dead. It seemed to him that the righteous and the wicked would go to the dust together, and that would be their end. He could not see the life of the just beyond the grave. In prophetic vision he was instructed in regard to the Son of God, who was to die man's sacrifice, and was shown the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, attended by the angelic host, to give life to the righteous dead, and ransom them from their graves. He also saw the corrupt state of the world at the time when Christ should appear the second time--that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation arrayed in rebellion against the law of God, denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, trampling upon his blood, and despising his atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor, while the wicked were separated from the presence of the Lord, and consumed with fire. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 5}

Enoch faithfully rehearsed to the people all that had been revealed to him by the spirit of prophecy. Some believed his words, and turned from their wickedness to fear and worship God. Such often sought Enoch in his places of retreat, and he instructed them, and prayed for them that God would give them a knowledge of his will. He finally chose certain periods for retirement, and would not suffer the people to find him, for they interrupted his holy meditations and communion with God. He did not exclude himself at all times from the society of those who loved him and listened to his words of wisdom; neither did he separate himself wholly from the corrupt. He met with the righteous and the wicked at stated times, and labored to turn the ungodly from their evil course, and instruct them in the fear of God, while he taught those who had the knowledge of God to serve him more perfectly. He would remain with them as long as he could benefit them by his godly conversation and holy example, and then would withdraw himself for a season from all society--from the just, the scoffing and idolatrous, to remain in solitude, hungering and thirsting for communion with God, and that divine knowledge which he alone could give him. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 6}

Enoch continued to grow more heavenly while communing with God. His face was radiant with a holy light which would remain upon his countenance while instructing those who would hear his words of wisdom. His dignified appearance struck the people with awe. The Lord loved Enoch, because he steadfastly followed him, and abhorred iniquity, and earnestly sought a more perfect knowledge of his will, that he might perform it. He yearned to unite himself still more closely to God, whom he feared, revered, and adored. The Lord would not permit Enoch to die like other men, but sent his angels to take him to Heaven without seeing death. In the presence of the righteous and the wicked, Enoch was removed from them. Those who loved him thought that God might have left him in some of his places of retirement; but after seeking diligently, and being unable to find him, they reported that he was not, for God took him. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 7}

By the blessings and honors which he bestowed upon Enoch, the Lord teaches a lesson of the greatest importance, that all will be rewarded, who by faith rely upon the promised Sacrifice, and faithfully obey God's commandments. Here, again, two classes are represented which were to exist until the second coming of Christ--the righteous and the wicked, the loyal and the rebellious. God will remember the righteous, who fear him. On account of his dear Son, he will respect and honor them, and give them everlasting life. But the wicked, who trample upon his authority, he will destroy from the earth, and they will be as though they had not been. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 8}

After Adam's fall from a state of perfect happiness to a condition of sin and misery, there was danger that man would become discouraged, and inquire, "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord," since a heavy curse is resting upon the human race, and death is the portion of us all? But the instructions which God gave to Adam, and which were repeated by Seth, and fully exemplified by Enoch, cleared away the gloom and darkness, and gave hope to man, that as through Adam came death, through Jesus, the promised Redeemer, would come life and immortality. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 9}

In the case of Enoch, the desponding faithful were taught that, while living among a corrupt and sinful people, who were in open and daring rebellion against their Creator, if they would obey him, and have faith in the promised Redeemer, they would work righteousness like the faithful Enoch, be accepted of God, and finally exalted to his heavenly throne. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 10}

Enoch, separating himself from the world, and spending much of his time in prayer and in communion with God, represents God's loyal people in the last days, who will be separate from the world. Unrighteousness will prevail to a dreadful extent upon the earth. Men will give themselves up to follow every imagination of their corrupt hearts, and carry out their deceptive philosophy, and rebel against the authority of high Heaven. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 11}

God's people will separate themselves from the unrighteous practices of those around them, and will seek for purity of thought, and holy conformity to his will, until his divine image will be reflected in them. Like Enoch, they will be fitting for translation to Heaven. While they endeavor to instruct and warn the world, they will not conform to the spirit and customs of unbelievers, but will condemn them by their holy conversation and godly example. Enoch's translation to Heaven just before the destruction of the world by a flood, represents the translation of all the living righteous from the earth previous to its destruction by fire. The saints will be glorified in the presence of those who have hated them for their loyal obedience to God's righteous commandments. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 12}

Enoch instructed his family in regard to the flood. Methuselah, the son of Enoch, listened to the preaching of his grandson Noah, who faithfully warned the inhabitants of the old world that a flood of waters was coming upon the earth. Methuselah and his sons and his grandsons lived in the time of the building of the ark. They, with some others, received instruction from Noah, and assisted him in his work. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 13}

Seth was one of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more than did any of his other sons. The descendants of Seth separated themselves from the wicked descendants of Cain. They cherished the knowledge of God's will, while the ungodly race of Cain had no respect for God and his sacred commandments. But when men multiplied upon the earth, the children of Seth saw that the daughters of the descendants of Cain were very beautiful, and they departed from God and displeased him by taking wives as they chose of the idolatrous race of Cain. {ST, February 20, 1879 par. 14}

Chapter Seven.

The Flood.

Those who honored and feared to offend God, at first felt the curse but lightly, while those who turned from him and despised his authority felt its effects more heavily, especially in stature and nobleness of form. The descendants of Seth were called the sons of God; the descendants of Cain, the sons of men. As the sons of God mingled with the sons of men, they became corrupt, and by intermarriage with them lost, through the influence of their wives, their peculiar, holy character, and united with the sons of Cain in their idolatry. Many cast off the fear of God, and trampled upon his commandments. But there were a few who did righteousness, who feared and honored their Creator. Noah and his family were among the righteous few. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 1}

Sin was spreading abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy. The world was but in its infancy in the days of Noah, yet iniquity had become so deep and wide-spread, that God repented that he had made man. Goodness and purity seemed to be almost extinct; while hatred of the law of God, emulation, envy, sedition, strife, and the most cruel oppression and violence, were corrupting the earth under its inhabitants. The thoughts and imaginations of man's heart were evil continually. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 2}

A heavy, double curse was resting upon the earth in consequence, first, of Adam's transgression, and, secondly, because of the murder committed by Cain; yet this did not at once change the face of nature. It was still rich and beautiful in the bounties of God's providence. The quiet valleys and spreading plains, robed with verdure and adorned with shrubs and bright hued flowers colored by the Divine Artist, the lovely birds whose glad songs filled the groves with music, the graceful hills and winding streams, the trailing vines and stately trees, charming the eye with their beauty and supporting life with their fruit,—all seemed little less fair than Eden. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 3}

Gold and silver existed in abundance. The race of men then living was of very great stature, and possessed wonderful strength. The trees were vastly larger, and far surpassed in beauty and perfect proportions anything which mortals can now look upon. The wood of these trees was of fine grain and hard substance—in this respect more like stone. It required much more time and labor, even of that powerful race, to prepare the timber for building, than it requires in this degenerate age to prepare trees that are now growing upon the earth, even with the weaker strength which men now possess. These trees were of great durability, and would know nothing of decay for very many years. But notwithstanding the richness and beauty of the earth, when compared with its state before the curse was pronounced upon it, there was manifest evidence of certain decay. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 4}

The people used the gold, silver, precious stones, and choice wood, in building houses for themselves, each striving to excel the other. They beautified and adorned their houses and lands with the most ingenious works, and provoked God by their wicked deeds. They formed images to worship, and taught their children to regard these pieces of workmanship made with their own hands, as gods, and to worship them. They did not choose to think of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and rendered no grateful thanks to Him who had bestowed upon them all which they possessed. They even denied the existence of the God of Heaven, and gloried in, and worshiped, the works of their own hands. They corrupted themselves with those things which God had placed upon the earth for man's benefit. They prepared beautiful walks, overhung with fruit trees of every description, and under these majestic and lovely trees, with their wide-spread branches, which were green from the commencement of the year to its close, they placed their idols. Whole groves, because of the shelter of their branches, were dedicated to these idol gods, and made attractive as a resort for the people in their idolatrous worship. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 5}

The groves of Eden were God's first temples, from which ascended purest worship to the Creator. The sorrowing exiles from Paradise could never forget that happy home. The waving trees and sheltering groves had for them a peculiar charm; for they reminded them of Eden and the joyful converse which they had once enjoyed with God and angels. And as they listened to the murmur of the wind among the leaves it almost seemed that they could again distinguish the sound of that voice that was heard in the garden in the cool of the day. The oak and the palm-tree, the drooping willow and the fragrant cedar, the olive and the cypress, were sacred to our first parents. Their verdant branches, spreading abroad and reaching upward to heaven, seemed to them to be praising their Creator. To Adam there was something almost human and companionable in the trees, carrying him back to many pleasing incidents of his life in Eden. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 6}

If the hearts of God's people were softened as they should be by his grace, they would become acquainted with him, as they discern his wisdom and power in the things of his creation. Every green leaf, with its delicate veins, every opening bud and blooming flower, every lofty tree stretching upward to heaven, the earth clothed with its carpet of living green, is an expression of the love of God to man, not to lead us to worship nature, but to attract our hearts through nature up to nature's God. The forest trees swaying in the wind, break forth into singing and praise to God, and rebuke the silence and indifference of man. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 7}

Adam had described Eden to his children and children's children. Again and again the story was repeated, and his love for trees and flowers and groves was transmitted to his descendants. But instead of bowing down in the solemn groves to acknowledge the love of God and to worship him, they desecrated these groves by their idols. It was an abuse of the tender and sacred memories which Adam cherished—the association of the groves with the worship of the true and living God—that led the idolatrous children of Cain to build their altars and set up their images in the groves and under every green tree. And as they put God out of their hearts, their course of conduct was in accordance with their sacrilegious sacrifices and worship. The characters of men became more and more debased. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 8}

Instead of doing justice to their neighbors, they carried out their own unlawful wishes. They had a plurality of wives, which was contrary to God's wise arrangement at the beginning. God gave to Adam one wife—showing to all who should live upon the earth, his order and law in that respect. The transgression and fall of Adam and Eve brought sin and wretchedness upon the human race, and man followed his own carnal desires, and changed God's order. The more men multiplied wives to themselves, the more they increased in crime and unhappiness. If any one chose to take the wives, or cattle, or anything belonging to his neighbor, he did not regard justice or right, but if he could prevail over his neighbor by reason of strength, or by putting him to death, he did so, and exulted in his deeds of violence. Men loved to destroy the lives of animals. They used the flesh for food, and this increased their ferocity and violence, and caused them to look upon the blood of human beings with astonishing indifference. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 9}

God proposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long lived race that had corrupted their ways before him. He would not suffer them to live out the days of their natural life, which would have been hundreds of years. It was only a few generations since Adam had access to that tree which was to prolong life. After his disobedience he was not suffered to eat of the tree of life and perpetuate an existence in sin. In order for man to possess an endless life he must continue to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his life would gradually wear out. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 10}

More than one hundred years before the flood, the Lord sent an angel to Noah, to make known unto him his purpose in regard to the sinful race, that his Spirit would not always strive with man, but that he would send a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy man and beast. He would not leave the race ignorant of his design; but would, through Noah, warn the world of its coming destruction, that the inhabitants might be left without excuse. Noah was to preach to the people, and also to prepare an ark as God should direct him for the saving of himself and family. Not only was he to preach, but his example in building the ark was to be a continual testimony of warning to the world, showing that he believed what he preached. His simple, childlike faith, and his implicit obedience, notwithstanding the opposition he received, was an evidence to the world of his sincerity. He was firm as a rock to duty, directing the work of that singular building, under the guidance of the Divine Architect. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 11}

This period was the testing time for Noah. He knew that he was the object of popular contempt and scorn with that corrupt generation. He met with unbelief and mockery everywhere. But the greater the iniquity surrounding him, the more earnest and firm and persevering was he in his obedience, showing that there was one man in the world who would be true to God. He was a faithful and unbending witness for God, kind and courteous to all, resenting no insult. He was as one who heard not the reviling and blasphemy that greeted him on every side. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 12}

Noah was bearing to the inhabitants of the earth an important message of warning, the reception or rejection of which would decide the destiny of their souls. He believed God, he believed that he had the truth, and he moved straight forward in the path of faith and obedience, gaining strength from God daily, by communion with him. Noah was a man of prayer; and in this close connection with God he found all his courage and firmness. He preached, and warned, and entreated the people; but they would not change their course. They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married and were given in marriage, they indulged in feasting and gluttony, and debased their souls, showing contempt for the message of Noah. Their speeches and actions became more vile and corrupt as the period of their probation was closing. The whole world seemed to be against Noah; but he had the testimony from God, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 13}

As far as human wisdom could see, the event predicted by Noah was not likely to occur. Rain had never fallen; a mist or dew had watered the earth. The brooks and rivers had safely flowed along their channels, emptying into the sea. The bodies of water had been kept in their place by God's decree, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Men then talked about the fixed laws of nature, that could not be set aside to bring about any such event as Noah had foretold. They wished to believe, and to have all others believe, that God could not change the order of the natural world; thus they sought to prescribe the limits of his power, making him a slave to his own laws. The people in Noah's day possessed sharp intellects, and they sought to show, on scientific grounds, that it was impossible for his prophecy to be fulfilled. Noah was laughed to scorn because of his warnings; he was regarded as a fanatic. Noah's implicit trust in God annoyed while it condemned them; but they could not move this faithful reprove from his position. The Lord had given the warning, and that was enough for Noah. The arguments of the philosophers were nothing to him, when the message of God was sounding in his ears, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 14}

Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. He had that fear which should characterize the life of every Christian. The perfect faith of Noah intensified his fear. The threatened wrath of God, which was to fall upon man and beast, and upon the earth, led him to prepare the ark. His faith, and his fear of God's anger, produced obedience. Noah did not hesitate to obey God. He urged no excuse, that the labor of building that ark was great and expensive. He believed God, and invested in the ark all that he possessed, while the wicked world scoffed and made themselves merry at the deluded old man. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 15}

They had more opportunity for their unbelief and mockery, because God did not at once carry out his purpose. But the lapse of time did not cause the faith of Noah to waver; his trust in God was unailing, and he accepted without a murmur the hardships and sacrifice involved. Noah's faith, combined with action, condemned the world; for he was a faithful preacher of righteousness, rebuking, warning, and exhorting the wicked. Their reproach and abuse was sometimes almost unendurable; yet the patriarch stayed his soul on God, and called upon him for help in his great need. Through derision, insult, and mockery, he went to and fro as a man with a great mission to fulfill. Privileges had been neglected, precious souls degraded, and God insulted; and the day of retributive justice came slowly on; man's unbelief did not hinder the event. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 16}

God gave Noah the exact dimensions of the ark, and explicit directions in regard to its construction in every particular. It was three stories high, but there were no windows in the sides, all the light being received from one in the top. The different apartments were so arranged that the window in the top gave light to all. The door was in the side. The ark was made of the cypress, or gopher wood, which would know nothing of decay for hundreds of years. It was a building of great durability, which no wisdom of man could invent. God was the designer and Noah his master-builder. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 17}

The work of completing the building was a slow process. Every piece of timber was closely fitted, and every seam covered with pitch. All that men could do was done to make the work perfect; yet, after all, it was impossible that it could of itself withstand the violence of the storm which the Lord in his fierce anger was to bring upon the earth. God alone by his miraculous power, could preserve the building upon the angry, heaving billows. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 18}

A multitude at first apparently received the warning of Noah, yet they did not fully turn to God with true repentance. There was some time given them before the flood was to come, in which they were placed upon probation-- to be proved and tried. They failed to endure the trial. The prevailing degeneracy overcame them, and they finally joined others who were corrupt, in deriding and scoffing at faithful Noah. They would not leave off their sins, but continued in polygamy, and in the indulgence of their base passions. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 19}

With heart filled with sorrow that his warnings had been slighted and neglected, Noah makes, with quivering lips and trembling voice, his last appeal to the people. And while their voices are raised, in jest and scoffing, suddenly they see the beasts, the most ferocious as well as the most gentle, of their own accord coming, from mountain and forest, and marching quietly into the ark. A noise like a rushing wind is heard; and lo, birds of every description come from all directions, clouding the heavens with their numbers, and file, in perfect order, into that ark. Philosophers were appealed to in vain to explain from natural laws the singular phenomenon. Here was a mystery beyond their depth. The world looked on with wonder--some with fear, but they had become so hardened by rebellion that this most signal manifestation of God's power had but a momentary effect upon them. For seven days these animals were coming into the ark, and Noah was arranging them in the places prepared for them. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 20}

And as the doomed race beheld the sun shining in its glory, and the earth clad in almost Eden beauty, they drove away their rising fears by boisterous merriment; and by their deeds of violence seemed to be encouraging upon themselves the visitation of the already awakened wrath of God. {ST, February 27, 1879 par. 21}

Everything was now ready for the closing of the ark, which could not be done by Noah from within. The scoffing multitude behold an angel descending from heaven, clothed with brightness like the lightning. He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to heaven again. Seven days were the family of Noah in the ark before the rain began to descend. During this time they were arranging for their long stay while the waters should be upon the earth. And these were days of blasphemous merriment by the unbelieving masses. Because the prophecy of Noah was not fulfilled immediately after he entered the ark, they thought that he was deceived, and that it was impossible for the world to be destroyed by a flood. Notwithstanding the solemn scenes which they had witnessed, the beasts leaving the mountains and forests and going into the ark, and the angel of God, clothed with brightness and terrible in majesty, descending from Heaven and closing the door, they hardened their hearts and continued to revel and sport over the signal manifestations of divine power. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 1}

But the same power that called the world into existence, and that created man, has shut Noah into his temporary refuge. The last golden opportunity is past. All have heard the warning, God's forbearance with that vile race is exhausted, and the swift bolts of his wrath are to be hurled upon the impenitent. Upon the eighth day the heavens gathered blackness. The muttering thunders and vivid lightning flashes began to terrify man and beast. The rain descended from the clouds above them. This was something they had never witnessed, and their hearts were faint with fear. The beasts were roving about in the wildest terror, and their discordant voices seemed to moan out their own destiny and the fate of man. The storm increased in violence until water appeared to come from heaven in mighty cataracts. The boundaries of rivers broke away, and the waters rushed to the valleys. The foundations of the great deep also were broken up. Jets of water would burst up from the earth with indescribable force, throwing massive rocks hundreds of feet into the air, and these, in falling, would bury themselves deep in the ground. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 2}

The people first beheld the destruction of the works of their own hands. Their splendid buildings, the beautifully arranged gardens and groves where they had placed their idols, were destroyed by lightning from heaven. The ruins were scattered everywhere. They had erected and consecrated to their idols altars whereon they offered human sacrifices. These which God detested were torn down in his wrath before them, and they were made to tremble at the power of the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and to know that it was their abominations and horrible, idolatrous sacrifices, which had called for their destruction. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 3}

The violence of the storm increased, and there were mingled with the warring of the elements, the wailings of the people who had despised the authority of God. Trees, buildings, rocks, and earth were hurled in every direction. The terror of man and beast was beyond description. And even Satan himself, who was compelled to be amid the warring elements, feared for his own existence. He had delighted to control so powerful a race, and wished them to live to practice their abominations, and increase their rebellion against the God of Heaven. He now uttered imprecations against God, charging him with injustice and cruelty. Many of the people, like Satan, blasphemed God, and if they could have carried out their rebellion, would have torn him from the throne of justice. Others were frantic with fear, stretching their hands toward the ark, and pleading for admittance. But this was impossible. God had closed the door, the only entrance, and shut Noah in, and the ungodly out. He alone could open the door. Their fear and repentance came too late. Conscience was at last awake to know that there was a God who ruled in the heavens. They called upon him earnestly, but his ear was not open to their cry. Some in their desperation sought to break into the ark, but that firm-made structure resisted all their efforts. Some clung to the ark until they were borne away with the furious surging of the waters, or their hold was broken off by rocks and trees that were swept here and there by the angry billows. The ark was severely rocked and tossed about. With the noise of the tempest was mingled the roaring of the terrified beasts; yet amid all the warring of the elements, the ark rode safely. Angels that excel in strength guided and preserved it from harm. Every moment during that frightful storm of forty days and forty nights the preservation of the ark was a miracle of almighty power. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 4}

The animals exposed to the tempest rushed toward man, choosing the society of human beings, as though expecting help from them. Some of the people bound their children and themselves upon powerful beasts, knowing that they would be tenacious of life, and would climb the highest points to escape the rising water. The storm does not abate its fury--the waters increase faster than at first. Some fasten themselves to lofty trees, but these trees are torn up by the roots, and carried with violence through the air, and angrily hurled, with stones and earth, into the foaming billows. As the black, seething waters rise higher and higher, the wicked flee for safety to the loftiest mountains. The solemn denunciations of Noah did not then seem to be so laughable a matter. One spot after another that promised safety was abandoned for one still higher. Men looked abroad upon a shoreless ocean. How they longed then for the opportunities, which they had slighted. How they pleaded for one hour's probation, one more privilege of mercy, one more call from the lips of Noah. But mercy's sweet voice was no more to be heard by them. She had stepped down from her golden throne, and stern, imperative justice had taken her place. The pitiless waves finally sweep over the last retreat, and man and beast alike perish in the black depths. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 5}

Fifteen cubits above the highest mountains did the waters prevail; but Noah and his family were safe in the ark, under the protecting care of God. The Lord had shut out all his foes, and he was never more to hear their taunts and sneers. Often it seemed to this family of God's providence that they must go to destruction as their boat was swept hither and thither. It was a trying ordeal; but Noah believed God. He had the assurance that God was caring for them. A Divine Hand was upon the helm. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 6}

As the waters began to abate, the Lord caused the ark to rest upon the top of a cluster of mountains which had been preserved by his power and made to stand fast all through that violent storm. These mountains were but a little distance apart, and the ark moved about and rested upon one, then another, and was no more driven upon the boundless ocean. This gave great relief to all within the ark. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 7}

Anxiously did Noah and his family watch the decrease of the waters. He wished to go forth upon the earth again, and sent out a raven which flew back and forth, to and from the ark. Not receiving the information he desired, he sent forth a dove, which finding no rest, returned to the ark. After seven days the dove was again sent forth, and when the olive leaf was seen in its mouth, there was great rejoicing by this family which had so long been shut up in the ark. Again an angel descends from Heaven and opens the door of the ark. Noah could remove the top, but he could not open the door which God had shut. God spoke to Noah through the angel and bade him go forth with his family out of the ark, and bring forth with them every living thing. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 8}

Noah did not forget Him who had so graciously preserved them, but immediately erected an altar and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, thus showing his faith in Christ the great sacrifice, and manifesting his gratitude to God for their wonderful preservation. Noah's offering came up before God like a sweet savor. He accepted the sacrifice, and blessed the patriarch and his family. Here a lesson is taught all who should live upon the earth, that for every manifestation of God's mercy and love toward them, the first act should be to render to him grateful thanks and humble worship. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 9}

Lest man should be terrified with gathering clouds and falling rains, and should be in continual dread, fearing another flood, God graciously encourages the family of Noah by a promise. "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 10}

What a condescension on the part of God! What compassion for erring man, to place the beautiful, variegated rainbow in the clouds, a token of the covenant of the great God with man! This rainbow was to evidence to all generations the fact that God destroyed the inhabitants of the earth by a flood, because of their great wickedness. It was his design that as the children of after generations should see the bow in the cloud, and should inquire the reason of this glorious arch that spanned the heavens, their parents should explain to them the destruction of the old world by a flood, because the people gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness, and that the hands of the Most High had bended the bow, and placed it in the clouds, as a token that he would never bring again a flood of waters on the earth. This symbol in the clouds was to confirm the belief of all, and establish their confidence in God; for it was a token of divine mercy and goodness to man. Although God had been provoked to destroy the earth by the flood, yet his mercy still encompasseth the earth. God says when he looks upon the bow in the cloud, he will remember. He would not have us understand that he would ever forget; but he speaks to us in our own language, that we may better understand him. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 11}

A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a symbol of God's mercy encompassing the earth. When man, by his great wickedness, provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man's intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God's great compassion for erring man; also to the rainbow above the throne and upon his head, emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 12}

After Noah had come forth from the ark, he looked around upon the powerful and ferocious beasts which he brought out with him and then upon his family, numbering only eight, and was greatly afraid that they would be destroyed by the beasts. But the Lord sent his angel to say to Noah, "The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 13}

Previous to this time God had given man no permission to eat animal food. But every living substance upon the face of the earth upon which man could subsist had been destroyed; therefore God gave Noah permission to eat of the clean beasts which he had taken with him into the ark. God said to Noah, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." God had formerly given them the herb of the ground and the fruit of the field, but now, in the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, he permitted them to eat animal food. {ST, March 6, 1879 par. 14}

The entire surface of the earth was changed at the flood. A third dreadful curse now rested upon it in consequence of man's transgression. The beautiful trees and flowering shrubbery were destroyed, but Noah preserved seed and took it with him into the ark, and God by his miraculous power preserved a few of the different kinds of trees and shrubs alive for future generations. Soon after the flood, trees and plants seemed to spring out of the very rocks. In God's providence, seeds had been scattered and driven into the crevices of the rocks, and there securely hidden for the future use of man. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 1}

As the waters abated from the earth, the mountains and hills appeared in a broken, rough condition, and all around them was a sea of rolled water or soft mud. In the time of the flood, the people, and the beasts also, gathered to the highest points of land, and as the waters disappeared, dead bodies were left upon the mountains and hills, as well as on the plains. The surface of the earth was strewn with the bodies of men and beasts. But God would not have these remain to decompose and pollute the atmosphere, therefore he made of the earth a vast burying ground. He caused a powerful wind to pass over it for the purpose of drying up the waters, which moved them with great force, in some instances carrying away the tops of the mountains like mighty avalanches, forming hills and mountains where there were none to be seen before, and burying the dead bodies with trees, stones, and earth. The precious wood, stone, silver, and gold, that had made rich and adorned the world before the flood, and which the inhabitants had idolized, were sunk beneath the surface of the earth. The waters which had broken forth with such great power, had moved earth and rocks, and heaped them upon these treasures, and in many instances formed mountains above them to hide them from the sight and search of men. God saw that the more he enriched and prospered sinful man, the more he corrupted his way before him. The treasures which should have led man to glorify the bountiful giver, had been worshiped instead of God, while the giver had been rejected. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 2}

The beautiful, regular-shaped mountains had disappeared. Stones, ledges, and ragged rocks appeared upon some parts of the earth which were before out of sight. Where had been hills and mountains, no traces of them were visible. Where had been beautiful plains covered with verdure and lovely plants, hills and mountains were formed of stones, trees, and earth, above the bodies of men and beasts. The whole surface of the earth presented an appearance of disorder. Some portions were more disfigured than others. Where once had been earth's richest treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones, were seen the heaviest marks of the curse. And upon countries which were not inhabited, and those where there had been the least crime, the curse rested more lightly. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 3}

At the time of the flood, immense forests were torn up or broken down and buried in the earth. These have since petrified and become coal, which accounts for the large coal beds that are now found. This coal has produced oil. Large quantities of coal and oil frequently ignite and burn. Rocks are intensely heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. Water and fire under the surface of the earth meet. The action of water upon the limestone adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues. The action of fire and water upon the ledges of rocks and ore causes loud explosions which sound like muffled thunder. These wonderful exhibitions will be more numerous and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 4}

Coal and oil are generally to be found where there are no burning mountains or fiery issues. When fire and water under the surface of the earth meet, the fiery issues cannot give sufficient vent to the heated elements beneath. The earth is convulsed, the ground heaves, and rises into swells or waves, and there are heavy sounds like thunder under ground. The air is heated and suffocating. The earth quickly opens, and villages, cities, and burning mountains are carried down together into the earth. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 5}

God controls all these elements; they are his instruments to do his will; he calls them into action to serve his purpose. These fiery issues have been, and will be, his agents to blot out from the earth very wicked cities. Like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, they go down alive into the pit. These are evidences of God's power. Those who have beheld these burning mountains pouring forth fire and flame, and a vast amount of melted ore, drying up rivers and causing them to disappear, have been struck with terror at the grandeur of the scene. They have been filled with awe, as they beheld the infinite power of God. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 6}

These manifestations bear the special marks of God's power, and are designed to cause the people of the earth to tremble before him, and to silence those who, like Pharaoh, would proudly say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Isaiah refers to these exhibitions of God's power where he exclaims, "Oh! that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence." Isaiah 64:1-3. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 7}

"The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers. Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." Nahum 1:3-6. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 8}

"Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them." Psalms 144:5, 6. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 9}

Greater wonders than have yet been seen will be witnessed by these upon the earth a short time previous to the coming of Christ. "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke." "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 10}

The bowels of the earth were the Lord's arsenal, from which he drew forth the weapons he employed in the destruction of the old world. Waters in the earth gushed forth, and united with the waters from heaven, to accomplish the work of destruction. Since the flood, God has used both water and fire in the earth as his agents to destroy wicked cities. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 11}

In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, God will send lightnings from heaven in his wrath, which will unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud, into the rivers, will cause them to boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks, and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. God will plague the wicked inhabitants until they are destroyed from off the earth. But the saints will be preserved in the midst of these dreadful commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark at the time of the flood. {ST, March 13, 1879 par. 12}

Chapter Eight.

Disguised Infidelity.

The first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week. The great God, in his days of creation and day of rest, measured off the first cycle as a sample for successive weeks till the close of time. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." God gives us the result of his work on each of the days of creation. Each day was accounted of him a generation, because every day he generated, or produced, some new portion of his work. On the seventh day of the first week God rested from his labor, and then blessed the day of his rest, and set it apart for the use of man. The weekly cycle of seven literal days, six for labor and the seventh for rest, which has been preserved and brought down through Bible history, originated in the great facts of the first seven days. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 1}

When God spoke his law with an audible voice from Sinai, he introduced the Sabbath by saying, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." He then declares definitely what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh. He next gives the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing us back to his example on the first seven days of time. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the record of creation to mean literal days. The first six days of each week are given to man in which to labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. The seventh day God has reserved as a day of rest, in commemoration of his rest during the same period of time after he had performed the work of creation in six days. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 2}

But the infidel supposition, that the events of the first week required seven vast, indefinite periods for their accomplishment, strikes directly at the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It makes indefinite and obscure that which God has made very plain. It is the worst kind of infidelity; for with many who profess to believe the record of creation, it is infidelity in disguise. It charges God with commanding men to observe the week of seven literal days in commemoration of seven indefinite periods, which is unlike his dealings with mortals, and is an impeachment of his wisdom. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 3}

Infidel geologists claim that the world is very much older than the Bible record makes it. They reject the testimony of God's word because of those things which are to them evidences from the earth itself that it has existed tens of thousands of years. And many who profess to believe the Bible are at a loss to account for wonderful things which are found in the earth, with the view that creation week was only seven literal days, and that the world is now only about six thousand years old. These, to free themselves from difficulties thrown in their way by infidel geologists, adopt the view that the six days of creation were six vast, indefinite periods, and the day of God's rest was another indefinite period; making senseless the fourth commandment of God's holy law. Some eagerly receive this position; for it destroys the force of the fourth commandment, and they feel a freedom from its claims upon them. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 4}

Bones of men and animals are found in the earth, in mountains and in valleys, showing that much larger men and beasts once existed. Instruments of warfare are sometimes found; also petrified wood. Because the bones found are so much larger than those of men and animals now living, or that have existed for many generations past, some conclude that the earth was populated long before the record of creation, by a race of beings vastly superior in size to men now living. Those who reason in this manner have limited ideas of the size of men, animals, and trees, before the flood, and of the great changes which then took place in the earth. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 5}

Without Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of a state of things differing in many respects from the present. But the time of their existence can be learned only from the inspired record. It may be innocent to conjecture beyond this, if our suppositions do not contradict the facts found in the sacred Scriptures. But when men leave the word of God, and seek to account for His creative works upon natural principles, they are upon a boundless ocean of uncertainty. Just how God accomplished the work of creation in six literal days, he has never revealed to mortals. His creative works are as incomprehensible as his existence. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 6}

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 7}

"Which doeth great things, past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 8}

"Which doeth great things, and unsearchable; marvelous things without number." {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 9}

"God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we can not comprehend." {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 10}

"Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?" {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 11}

The word of God is given as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. Those who cast his word behind them, and seek by their own blind philosophy to penetrate the mysteries of Jehovah, will stumble in darkness. A guide has been given to mortals whereby they may trace his works as far as will be for their good. Inspiration, in giving us the history of the flood, has explained wonderful mysteries that geology alone could never fathom. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 12}

It has been the special work of Satan to lead fallen man to rebel against God's government, and he has succeeded too well in his efforts. He has tried to obscure the law of God, which in itself is very plain. He has manifested a special hatred against the fourth precept of the decalogue, because it defines the living God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. Yielding to his devices, men have turned from the plainest precepts of Jehovah to receive infidel fables. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 13}

Man will be left without excuse. God has given sufficient evidence upon which to base faith, if he wishes to believe. In the last days, the earth will be almost destitute of true faith. Upon the merest pretense, the word of God will be considered unreliable, while human reasoning will be received, though it be in opposition to plain Scripture facts. Men will endeavor to explain from natural causes the work of creation. But just how God wrought in the work of creation he has never revealed to men. Human science cannot search out the secrets of the God of Heaven. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 14}

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Men professing to be ministers of God, raise their voices against the investigation of prophecy, and tell the people that the prophecies, especially of Daniel and John, are obscure, and that we cannot understand them. Yet some of these very men eagerly receive the suppositions of geologists, which dispute the Mosaic record. But if God's revealed will is so difficult to be understood, certainly men should not rest their faith upon mere suppositions in regard to that which he has not revealed. God's ways are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. In his providence men, beasts, and trees, many times larger than those now upon the earth, were buried at the time of the flood, and thus preserved to prove to man that the inhabitants of the old world perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things in the earth should establish faith in inspired history. But men, with their vain reasoning, make a wrong use of these things which God designed should lead them to exalt him. They fall into the same error as did the people before the flood--those things which God gave them as a benefit, they turned into a curse, by making a wrong use of them. {ST, March 20, 1879 par. 15}

Chapter Ten.

Abraham.

The Lord selected Abraham to carry out his will. He was directed to leave his idolatrous nation, and separate from his kindred. The Lord had revealed himself to Abraham in his youth, and given him understanding, and preserved him from idolatry. He designed to make him an example of faith and true devotion, for his people who should afterward live upon the earth. His character was marked for integrity, generosity, and hospitality. He commanded respect as a mighty prince among the people. His reverence and love for God, and his strict obedience in performing his will, gained for him the respect of his servants and neighbors. His godly example and righteous course, united with his faithful instructions to his servants and all his household, led them also to fear, love, and reverence the God of Abraham. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and promised him that his seed should be like the stars of heaven for number. He also made known to him, through the figure of the horror of great darkness which came upon him, the long, servile bondage of his descendants in Egypt. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 1}

In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife, thus showing his order. He never designed that man should have a plurality of wives. Lamech was the first who departed in this respect from God's wise arrangement. He had two wives, which created discord in his family. The envy and jealousy of both made Lamech unhappy. When men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, they took them wives of all whom they chose. This was one of the great sins of the inhabitants of the old world, which brought the wrath of God upon them. This custom was practiced after the flood, and became so common that even righteous men fell into the practice, and had a plurality of wives. Yet it was no less sin because they became corrupted, and departed in this thing from God's order. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 2}

The Lord said of Noah who, with his family, was saved in the ark, "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Noah had but one wife; and their united family discipline was blessed of God. Because Noah's sons were righteous, they were preserved in the ark with their father. God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It was contrary to his will. He knew that the happiness of man would be destroyed by it. Abraham's peace was greatly marred by his unhappy marriage with Hagar. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 3}

After Abraham's separation from Lot, the Lord said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir." {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 4}

As Abraham had no son, he at first thought that his trusty servant, Eliezer, should become his son by adoption, and his heir. But God informed Abraham that his servant should not be his son and his heir, but that he should really have a son. "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell me the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 5}

If Abraham and Sarah had waited in confiding faith for the fulfillment of the promise that they should have a son, much unhappiness would have been avoided. They believed that it would be just as God had promised, but could not believe that Sarah, in her old age, would have a son. Sarah suggested a plan whereby she thought the promise of God could be fulfilled. She entreated Abraham to take Hagar as his wife. In this they both lacked faith, and a perfect trust in the power of God. By yielding to the advice of Sarah, and taking Hagar as his wife, Abraham failed to endure the test of his faith in God's unlimited power, and brought upon himself, and upon Sarah, much unhappiness. The Lord intended to prove the faith of Abraham and his reliance upon the promises which he had made him. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 6}

Hagar was proud and boastful, and carried herself haughtily before Sarah. She flattered herself that she was to be the mother of the great nation which God had promised to make of Abraham. And Abraham was compelled to listen to the complaints from Sarah in regard to the conduct of Hagar, charging him with wrong in the matter. Abraham is grieved, and tells Sarah that Hagar is her servant, and that she can have the control of her, but he refuses to send her away, for she is to be the mother of his child through whom he thinks the promise is to be fulfilled. He informs Sarah that he would not have taken Hagar for his wife if it had not been her special request. Abraham was also compelled to listen to Hagar's complaints of abuse from Sarah. Abraham is in perplexity. If he seeks to redress the wrongs of Hagar, he increases the jealousy and unhappiness of Sarah, his first and much-loved wife. Hagar fled from the face of Sarah. An angel of God meets her, and comforts her, and also reproves her for her haughty conduct, in bidding her return to her mistress, and submit herself under her hands. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 7}

After the birth of Ishmael, the Lord again manifested himself to Abraham, and said unto him, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant." Again the Lord repeated by his angel his promise to give Sarah a son, and that she should be a mother of many nations. Abraham did not yet understand the promise of God. His mind immediately rests upon Ishmael, as though through him would come the many nations promised, and he exclaims, in his affection for his son, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 8}

Again the promise is more definitely repeated to Abraham: "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Angels are sent to Abraham on their way to destroy Sodom, and they more distinctly repeat the promise that Sarah shall have a son. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 9}

After the birth of Isaac, the great joy manifested by Abraham and Sarah caused Hagar to be very jealous. Ishmael had been instructed by his mother that he was to be especially blessed of God, as the son of Abraham, and to be heir to that which was promised to his father. Ishmael partook of his mother's feelings, and was angry because of the joy manifested at the birth of Isaac. He despised Isaac, because he thought that he was preferred before himself. Sarah saw the disposition manifested by Ishmael against her son Isaac, and she was greatly moved. She related to Abraham the disrespectful conduct of Ishmael to her, and to her son, and said to him, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 10}

Abraham is greatly distressed. Ishmael is his son, beloved by him. How can he send him away! He prays to God in his perplexity, for he knows not what course to take. The Lord, through his angels, directs Abraham to listen to the voice of Sarah his wife, and not to let his affection for his son, or for Hagar, prevent his compliance with her wishes. For this was the only course he could pursue to restore harmony and happiness again to his family. Abraham had the consoling promise from the angel, that Ishmael, although separated from his father's house, should not die, nor be forsaken of God; he should be preserved because he was the son of Abraham. God also promised to make of Ishmael a great nation. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 11}

Abraham was of a noble, benevolent disposition, as was manifested in his pleading so earnestly for the people of Sodom. His strong spirit suffered much. He was bowed with grief, and his paternal feelings were deeply moved as he sent away Hagar and his son Ishmael to wander as strangers in a strange land. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 12}

If God had sanctioned polygamy, he would not have thus directed Abraham to send away Hagar and her son. He would teach all a lesson in this, that the rights and happiness of the marriage relation are ever to be respected and guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Sarah was the first and only true wife of Abraham. As a wife and mother, she was entitled to rights which no other in the family could have. She revered her husband, calling him lord; but she was jealous lest his affections should be divided with Hagar. God did not rebuke Sarah for the course which she pursued. Abraham was reproved by the angels for distrusting God's power, which had led him to take Hagar as his wife, and to think that through her the promise would be fulfilled. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 13}

Again the Lord saw fit to test the faith of Abraham by a most fearful trial. If he had patiently waited for the promise of God to be fulfilled in his own time and manner, and had not sought to make a providence himself, he would not have been subjected to the closest test that was ever required of man. The Lord directed his faithful servant to go into the land of Moriah, and there offer up Isaac, the son of promise, as a burnt-offering. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 14}

Abraham was one hundred and twenty years old when this terrible and startling command came to him, in a vision of the night. He was to travel three days' journey, and would have ample time for reflection. Fifty years previous, at the divine command, he had left father and mother, relatives and friends, and had become a pilgrim and a stranger in a land not his own. He had obeyed the direction of God to send away his son Ishmael to wander in the wilderness. His soul was bowed down with grief at this separation, and his faith was sorely tried, yet he submitted because God required it. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 15}

But now a trial was before him which caused all his other afflictions to appear insignificant. The words of the command were calculated to stir his soul to the depths: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Over and over again did the grief-stricken father exclaim, Oh! my son, my son, would to God my life could be accepted in the place of thine; then should my light not go out in darkness. Abraham arose before day, and as he looked up to the starry heavens, he called to mind the promise which God had made to him fifty years before: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." And now the same voice had commanded him to slay his only son, through whom the promise was to be fulfilled. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 16}

Abraham was tempted to believe that after all this might be a delusion. Stricken with grief, he bowed before God, and prayed as never before for a confirmation of this strange command, for greater light if he must perform this terrible duty. He remembered the angels sent to tell him of God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and those who bore to him the promise that he should have this same son Isaac. He walked forth where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again and receive some special direction from them; but he gained no light, darkness seemed to close about him, day was approaching, and he must be on his journey before light. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 17}

He first passed to the couch upon which Isaac slept in peaceful innocence; he was the joy of his heart, the comfort of his old age. Abraham's lips quivered, he turned quickly away, and looked upon Sarah who was also quietly sleeping. He knew that Isaac was her pride, that her heart was entwined with his. Should he awake her, that she might look upon her son for the last time? Should he tell her the requirement of God? He knew that he himself had strength of faith, and confidence in God; he did not know the strength of Sarah's faith; but he did know the strength of her love for Isaac. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 18}

He passed from one sleeper to the other, undecided in regard to the wisest course to pursue. He finally awakened Isaac, and informed him that he was commanded of God to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain, and that he must accompany him. He called his servants, and made every necessary preparation for his long journey. If he could have unburdened his mind to Sarah, and they together have borne the suffering and responsibility, it might have brought him some relief; but he decided that this would not do; for her heart was bound up in her son, and she might hinder him. Abraham went forth on his journey, with Satan by his side to suggest unbelief and impossibility. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 19}

While walking by the side of Isaac, the patriarch could not engage in conversation as usual, for a deep sorrow was concealed in his own breast. The night approaches, the longest day Abraham ever experienced has come to a close. He saw his loved son Isaac and the servants locked in slumber, but he could not sleep. He spent the night in prayer, still hoping that some heavenly messenger would appear to tell him that it is enough, that he may return to Sarah, with Isaac unharmed. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 20}

No new light dawned upon the tortured soul of Abraham. A heavy pressure was upon him, but he staggered not at the promise. He reasoned not that his posterity, which was to be as the stars, must now come through Ishmael, for God had plainly stated that through Isaac should the promise be fulfilled. Then again was that voice ringing in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That terrible command which would leave him childless can scarcely be realized. He rises early to continue his toilsome journey. Satan whispers doubts, but Abraham resists his suggestions. {ST, March 27, 1879 par. 21}

All day he cherished the hope of meeting an angel coming to bless and comfort him, or perhaps to revoke the command of God, but no messenger of mercy appeared. Satan suggested that he must be deceived, for God had said, "Thou shalt not kill," and it was not like God to require what he had once forbidden. The second long day comes to a close, another sleepless night is spent in humiliation and prayer, and the journey of the third day is commenced. Abraham lifts his eyes to the mountains, and upon one he beholds the promised sign, a bright cloud hovering over the top of Mount Moriah. Now he knows it is all a terrible certainty, and no delusion. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 1}

He was yet a great distance from the mountain, but he bade his servants remain behind while he placed the wood upon the shoulders of his son, and himself took the knife and fire. Abraham braced himself for the sad work which he must perform. He did not murmur against God. Isaac had been given to him unexpectedly; he had received him with gratitude and great joy, and though he was the son of his old age, the son of his love, he yet believed that the same power that gave him Isaac, could raise him again even from the ashes of the burnt sacrifice. He strengthens his soul by the evidences he has had of the goodness and faithfulness of God. Had not He, who had graciously given Isaac to him, perfect right to recall the gift? {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 2}

Isaac had been a comfort, a sunbeam, a blessing to Abraham in his old age, and although this gift of God seemed so precious, so dear to him, he was now commanded to return it to the Giver. The words of God's command showed that he fully realized the pain which Abraham must feel in obeying his requirement, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Abraham wanted no witnesses. It was enough that God could look on and not only see the full consecration of his darling son Isaac, but read the heart and fully understand how severely he felt the test. He wished no one but God to witness this parting scene between father and son. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 3}

Abraham knew not how Isaac would receive the command of God. As they drew near the mountain, "Isaac spake to Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" These endearing words, "My father," pierced the affectionate heart of Abraham, and again he thought, Oh, that I, in my old age, might die instead of Isaac! Still reluctant to open before his son the true purpose of his errand, Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 4}

Isaac assisted his father in building the altar. Together they placed on the wood, and the last work preparatory to the sacrifice is done. With quivering lips and trembling voice, Abraham reveals to his son the message that God had sent him. In obedience to the divine command, he had taken the journey. Everything was ready. Isaac was the victim, the lamb to be slain. Had Isaac chosen to resist his father's command, he could have done so, for he was grown to manhood; but he had been so thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of God that he had perfect faith in his promises and requirements. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 5}

The patriarch assured Isaac that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would gladly give his own life to save that of his son. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. Abraham told his son that the Lord had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured him that the divine promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 6}

Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. But he considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but God had appointed him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God had conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as an offering; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that the Lord loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 7}

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were spoken by father and son, the last affectionate, parental, and filial tears were shed, the last embrace was given, and the father had pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, when suddenly his arm is stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of Heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 8}

As evidence of God's approval of the faith of Abraham, he gave him the name of "Father of the faithful." The example of Abraham is recorded in sacred history for the benefit of his believing children. This great act of faith teaches the lesson of implicit confidence in God, perfect obedience to his requirements, and a complete surrender to the divine will. In the example of Abraham we are taught that nothing we possess is too precious to give to God. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 9}

How many now who profess to be Christians would follow the example of Abraham in yielding up to God his beloved Isaac? Yet our dearest treasure belongs to God. A solemn duty rests upon Christian parents to so educate and mould the minds of their children that they will ever have a high respect and exalted reverence for God and for everything sacred and holy. Such will feel that God's claims must first be regarded, that nothing is too precious to sacrifice for him. Such will, like Abraham, exemplify their faith by their works. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 10}

How many now who profess to believe God, and pass for Christians, refuse to obey his voice when he calls upon them to deny self, and yield to him their darling treasures. They will hesitate, and cling to earthly things. Their affections are upon the world and the things of the world; yet some of these very ones will have the most to say about how much they have sacrificed to obey the truth. Isaac felt that it was a privilege to yield his life as an offering to God. If the Lord could accept him, he felt that he was honored. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 11}

Human judgment may look upon the command given to Abraham as severe, too great for human strength to bear. Abraham's strength was from God. He looked not at the things which are seen with mortal vision, but at the things which are eternal. God required no more of Abraham than he had, in divine compassion and infinite love, given to man. He gave his only begotten Son to die, that guilty man might live. Abraham's offering of Isaac was especially designed of God to prefigure the sacrifice of his Son. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 12}

Every step that Abraham advanced toward Mount Moriah, the Lord went with him. All the grief and agony that Abraham endured during the three days of his dark and fearful trial, were imposed upon him to give us a lesson in perfect faith and obedience, and that we might better comprehend how real was the great self-denial and infinite sacrifice of the Father in giving his only Son to die a shameful death for the guilty race. No other trial, no other suffering or test, which could have been brought to bear upon Abraham, would have caused such mental anguish, such torture of soul, as that of obeying God in offering up his son. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 13}

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 14}

The meager conception that many have of the worth of the soul, and the sacrifice of God's dear Son for sinful man, is shown by their works. Should God speak to them, as he did to Abraham, Sacrifice your possessions, the temporal benefits that I have lent you to advance my cause, they would look in astonishment, thinking God did not mean just what he said. Their riches are as dear to them as their children; their worldly treasure is their Isaac. To honor God with their substance, they think, is a requirement altogether too great, and they cannot believe that God means it. What have this class sacrificed for God? {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 15}

Men will show all the faith they have. If God should speak to them and command them to offer one of their beloved children, they would think him a hard master. Yet he has done more than this for them. No such command will come to test and prove them. God knew to whom he spake, when he gave the command to faithful Abraham. The patriarch knew that it was God who had commanded, and that his promises were infallible. Had the Lord directed him to offer his gold, his silver, his flocks, or even his own life, he would have done so cheerfully. He would have felt that he was but yielding back to God that which belonged to him. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 16}

But there are many who know not what self-denial, or sacrifice, or devotion to God, is. They never can have extended and elevated views of the infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God to save a ruined world, until they surrender all to him. If he should speak to them in a command, as he did to Abraham, they would not be enough acquainted with his voice to understand that he did really require something of them, to show their love, and the genuineness of their faith. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 17}

The claims of God upon our love, affection, and possessions, our talents, and ourselves, are correspondingly great as was the infinite sacrifice made in giving his Son to die for sinful man. Those who really appreciate the work of the atonement, those who have a high sense of the sacrifice which Christ has made to exalt them to his throne, will count it a special honor to be partakers with him in his self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering, that they may be co-workers with him in saving souls. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 18}

There are many who profess the truth, who do not love God half so well as they love the world. God is testing and proving them. Their love of the world and of riches darkens their minds, perverts their judgment, and hardens their hearts. God has, to some of them at least, revealed his will, and called for a surrender of their Isaac to him. But they refuse to obey, and let golden opportunities pass. Precious time is bearing into eternity a record of duties unfulfilled, and of positive neglect. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 19}

Nothing we have is of true value until it is surrendered to God. The talent of means devoted to the cause and work of God, is of tenfold more value than if selfishly retained for the gratification of our own pleasure. The faith of the devoted martyrs was like that of Abraham, it was genuine. They valued the precious truth, and in their turn, although despised of men, hunted from place to place, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented, they were valued of God. There was no place for them upon the earth, but of them, says the apostle, the world was not worthy. Those who clung to the truth in face of prison, torture, and death, had faith that few now living possess. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 20}

Many have chosen a life of ease. They have exalted their earthly interests above the spiritual and eternal. They neglect to learn the hard lesson of self-denial, and of surrendering all to God. They do not count anything interesting, save that which is learned without much effort, and without involving any sacrifice of temporal enjoyment; and it is forgotten as soon as learned, because it cost them nothing. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 21}

The deepest poverty, with God's blessing, is better than houses and lands, and any amount of earthly treasure, without it. God's blessing places value on everything we possess; but if we have the whole world without his blessing we are indeed as poor as the beggar, for we can take nothing with us into the next world. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 22}

Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour, should have Abrahamic faith; a faith that is valued because it has cost them something; a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that he is not to be trifled with. He means what he says, and he requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will he let his light shine around about us, and we shall be all light in the Lord. {ST, April 3, 1879 par. 23}

Chapter Eleven.

Isaac.

The Canaanites were idolaters, and the Lord had commanded that his people should not intermarry with them, lest they should be led into idolatry. Abraham was old, and he expected soon to die. Isaac was yet unmarried. Abraham was afraid of the corrupting influence surrounding his son, and was anxious to have a wife selected for him who would not lead him from God. He committed this matter to his faithful, experienced servant who ruled over all that he had. Abraham required his servant to make a solemn oath to him before the Lord, that he would not take a wife for Isaac of the Canaanites, but that he would go to Abraham's kindred, who believed in the true God, and select a wife for the young man. He charged him not to take Isaac to the country from which he came; for they were nearly all affected with idolatry. If he could not find a wife for Isaac who would leave her kindred and come where he was, then he should be clear of the oath which he had made. This important matter was not left with Isaac, for him to select for himself, independent of his father. Abraham tells his servant that God will send his angel before him to direct him in his choice. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 1}

The servant, taking with him ten camels and numerous presents for the intended wife and her relatives, started on his long journey up toward Damascus, and then on to the fertile plains that border on the great river of the East. Bethuel, the nephew of Abraham, was the owner of large flocks, but he dwelt in a town or city, to the wells outside of which the women were in the habit of resorting for water, and to which the servant of Abraham now drew near. It was an anxious time with the man; the happiness of the whole family in Canaan depended on the choice which he made, and how was he to choose wisely among those who were entire strangers to him? He remembered his master's words, that God would send his angel with him; and he prayed earnestly that certain evidence might be given him, that he might not err in the matter. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 2}

His prayer was answered. Among the maidens gathered at the well he particularly noticed the engaging manners and courteous conduct of Rebekah, and he received the desired evidence that she was the one whom God had been pleased to select to become Isaac's wife. Full of joy the man inquired of her parentage, and on learning that she was the daughter of Bethuel, he "bowed down his head, and worshiped the Lord." The maiden immediately informed her brother Laban of what had occurred, and they hastened to invite to their home the servant, with his attendants and the camels. Before he would partake of food, the servant told his errand, his prayer at the well, and the answer, with all the circumstances attending it. Then he said, "And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." The answer was, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 3}

After all had been arranged, and the consent of the family had been obtained, Rebekah herself was consulted as to whether she would go with the servant of Abraham a great distance from her father's house, to become the wife of Isaac. She believed, from the circumstances that had taken place, that God's hand had selected her to be Isaac's wife, and she said, "I will go." {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 4}

The servant, knowing that his master would rejoice at the success of his mission, was impatient to be gone; and they immediately set out on the homeward journey. Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, and Isaac, who had been attending to the flocks in the adjoining country, had returned to his father's tent to await the arrival of the messenger from Haran. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this, that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a vail and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 5}

In ancient times marriage contracts were generally made by the parents, yet no compulsion was used to make persons marry those whom they could not love. But the children had confidence in the judgment of their parents, and followed their counsel, and bestowed their affections upon those whom their God-fearing, experienced parents chose for them. It was considered a crime to follow a course contrary to this. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 6}

What a contrast to the course now pursued by many children! Instead of showing reverence and due honor for their parents, by consulting them, and having the advantages of their experienced judgment in choosing for them, they move hastily in the matter, and are controlled by fancy and impulse rather than by the judgment of their parents and the fear of God. It is often the case that they contract marriage without even the knowledge of their parents. And, in many instances, the lives of parents are embittered by the hasty marriages of their children, because the son-in-law or the daughter-in-law feels under no obligation to make them happy. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 7}

Abraham saw and realized the influence which an idolatrous wife would exert upon her husband. He would not have Isaac imperil his moral and religious character by connecting with a woman who was unacquainted with God. His eldest son had contracted an unhappy marriage. Ishmael's home was made miserable, his children were undisciplined, and their characters were uncourteous and disrespectful. They were not taught the knowledge of God. Abraham was unwilling that Isaac should run the risk of taking a wife of the heathen nations. He had marked the unhappy course of others, and the result of connecting with companions who knew not and feared not God, from the days of Cain to his own time. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 8}

However pure and correct the principles of the God-fearing, the society of an irreligious companion has an influence to lead away from God. Therefore, Abraham was determined on this point, that Isaac should marry one of his own nation. The women of other nations were, many of them, attractive because of their beauty; but they lacked beauty of character. Abraham knew that true dignity, true elevation is to be found only in those who love and fear God. There is a debasement upon the entire character of the godless, who follow the imagination of their own hearts, and are filled with their own devices. But those who make God their trust, who are elevated by his grace, obedient to his requirements, seeking his glory, fearing his displeasure, will receive his blessing. They will have that hope and courage, that dignity, calmness, and self-possession, which only those can have who are connected with God. Abraham had maintained an habitual trust in God. The impress of such character is reproduced in their children. Yet Abraham saw that in Isaac there was a disposition to be yielding. He was a firm believer in God, but if connected with one of opposite character he would be in danger of losing his adherence to right, to avoid disagreeable consequences. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 9}

Evil associates include more than the immoral and profane. Connection with one who is known to be irreligious is contrary to God's order, and cannot fail to draw the soul away from Him. Those who have not the fear of God before them, who are not seeking to live in obedience to him, although they may be moral, intellectual, apparently refined, fashionable, wealthy, are not the ones for Christians to form a marriage alliance with. However agreeable their society may be, however entertaining their conversation, the word of God is plain upon the point; the Christian should not connect with them. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 10}

Those who enter the marriage relation while unconverted should not after conversion leave their unbelieving companions. Whatever their religious character may be, they must remain faithful, kind, and true toward them; yet they should acknowledge the claims of God above any earthly relationship, serving him with fidelity, even though inconvenience, trials, and persecutions may arise for the sake of Christ and the truth. This persevering fidelity to truth and duty may be a sanctifying influence upon the unbelieving companion. But marriages formed understandingly with unbelievers are forbidden by the word of God. The suit may be urged by the unbeliever, and inclination may plead that it be accepted; and inclination frequently triumphs; but Satan has the victory; temptation has not been resisted, and in nine cases out of ten both parties are lost to Christ. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 11}

There is a willing blindness in regard to the result of human action, the consequence of which reaches far into the future of man's existence. A life of bitterness and woe is before those who venture to disregard God's commands; but they pass heedlessly on, rashly taking solemn vows upon them, the believer binding up his life interest with an unbeliever. Domestic life and domestic relation are to be shared by those two, one professedly obeying God, and the other living in disregard of his requirements. How can two walk together, except they be agreed? If a woman respects not the claims of God, pays no heed to the bonds which bind her to religion, how can she be expected to be faithful to the law which binds her to her husband? {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 12}

Young men and women sometimes manifest great independence upon the subject of marriage, as though the Lord had nothing to do with them, or they with the Lord, in that matter. They seem to think that it is purely a matter of their own, which neither God nor their parents should in any wise control, that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted. Such make a serious mistake; and a few years of marriage experience generally teaches them that it is a miserable mistake. This is the great reason of so many unhappy marriages, in which there is so little true, generous love, and so little exercise of noble forbearance, toward each other. These often behave in their own homes more like pettish children, than the dignified, affectionate husband and wife. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 13}

Isaac had been trained in the fear of God to a life of obedience. And when he was forty years old, he submitted to have the God-fearing, experienced servant of his father choose for him. He believed that God would direct in regard to his obtaining a wife. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 14}

Children now from fifteen to twenty years of age generally consider themselves competent to make their own choice, without the consent of their parents. And they would look with astonishment, if it should be proposed to them to move in the fear of God, and make the matter a subject of prayer. Isaac's case is left on record, as an example for children in after generations, especially those who profess to fear God. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 15}

The course which Abraham pursued in the education of Isaac, that caused him to love a life of noble obedience, is recorded for the benefit of parents, and should lead them to command their households after them. They should instruct their children to yield to, and respect their authority. And they should feel that a responsibility rests upon them to guide the affections of their children, that they may be placed upon persons who in their judgment would be suitable companions for their sons and their daughters. It is a sad fact that Satan controls the affections of the young to a great extent. And some parents feel that the affections should not be guided or restrained. The course pursued by Abraham is a rebuke to all such. {ST, April 10, 1879 par. 16}

Chapter Twelve.

Jacob and Esau.

God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew, before the birth of Jacob and Esau, just what characters they would both develop. He knew that Esau would not have a heart to obey him. When he answered the troubled prayer of Rebekah, informing her that she would have two children, he presented before her the future history of her two sons, that they would become two nations, the one greater than the other, and the elder would serve the younger. The first-born was entitled to peculiar advantages and special privileges; he possessed honor and authority, in the family and the tribe, next to that of the parents; he was regarded as especially consecrated to God, and was selected to fill the office of priest; and he received a double portion of the father's goods. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 1}

The two brothers were very unlike in character. Isaac was pleased with the bold, courageous spirit manifested by Esau, who delighted in the chase, bringing home game to his father, with stirring accounts of his adventures. Jacob was the favorite son of his mother, because his disposition was mild, and better calculated to make her happy. He had learned from his mother what God had taught her, that the elder should serve the younger, and his youthful reasoning led him to conclude that this promise could not be fulfilled while his brother had the privileges which were conferred on the first-born. And when the latter came in from the field, faint with hunger, Jacob improved the opportunity to turn Esau's necessity to his own advantage, and proposed to feed him with pottage, if he would renounce all claim to the birthright; and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 2}

Esau had taken two wives of the idolatrous Canaanites. This was a source of deep sorrow to Isaac and Rebekah, for they well knew that God had commanded their fathers not to intermarry with idolaters, and they had fully understood the care and anxiety of Abraham that Isaac should marry a wife of his own nation and faith. Isaac was now more than one hundred years old, the infirmities of age were upon him, and his sight had grown dim. Esau was still his favorite son, and notwithstanding Isaac had been made acquainted with the purpose of God, he determined to bestow the benediction upon his first-born. He called Esau, and, as he supposed, privately made known his wish that he should prepare him venison before the bestowal of the blessing, in accordance with the custom of making a feast upon such occasions. Rebekah had been divinely instructed that Jacob was to be in the direct line through which the promise would be fulfilled in the birth of the Redeemer. She was confident that her husband was going contrary to the will of God, and that no reasoning could change his purpose, and without due reflection she determined not to allow the father's partiality for his eldest son to avert the purpose of God; by stratagem she would obtain the blessing for Jacob. As soon as Esau had departed on his errand she called her youngest son, and related to him the words of Isaac, and the necessity of action on their part to prevent the accomplishment of his designs to bestow a blessing, finally and irrevocably, upon Esau. If Jacob would follow her directions he might obtain the blessing, as God had promised. As Jacob listened to his mother's plan he was at first greatly distressed, and assured her that in thus deceiving his father he would receive a curse instead of the desired blessing. But his scruples were overcome, and he proceeded to carry out his mother's suggestions. The plan was successful; he obtained by fraud that which, had he shown the proper trust in God, he would have received as his right. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 3}

It was not his intention to utter a direct falsehood, but once in the presence of his father he thought he had gone too far to retreat. From that moment he felt poor in heart, he was weighed down with self-condemnation. In grossly deceiving his blind, aged father, he had lost his nobility and truth. In one short hour he had made work for a life-long repentance. This scene was vivid before him in after years, when the wicked course of his own sons oppressed his soul. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 4}

The unrighteous course of Jacob and Rebekah produced no good results; it brought only distrust, jealousy, and revenge. Mother and son should have waited for the Lord to accomplish his own purpose in his own way, and in his own time, instead of trying to bring about the foretold events by the aid of deception. If Esau had received the blessing which was bestowed upon the firstborn, his prosperity could have come from God alone; and he would have granted him prosperity, or brought upon him adversity, according to his course of action. If he should love and reverence God, like righteous Abel, he would be accepted and blessed. If, like wicked Cain, he had no respect for God, nor for his commandments, he would be rejected of him, as was Cain. If Jacob's course should be righteous, the prospering hand of God would be with him, even if he did not obtain the blessings and privileges generally bestowed upon the firstborn. Rebekah repented in bitterness for the wrong counsel which she had given to Jacob, for it was the means of separating him from her forever. He was compelled to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau, and his mother never saw his face again. Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced by the course of his two sons, that the blessing rightly belongs to Jacob. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 5}

In the providence of God the unerring pen of inspiration withheld not the mistakes and sins of good men. The sin is unsparingly brought to light, and also the just judgment of God. Because of his transgression, Jacob became a fugitive from his home, compelled to serve a hard master for twenty years. A cruel fraud was practiced upon him in his marriage with Leah, his ten sons deceived him as he had deceived his father, and for many years he mourned over the supposed death of Joseph. All these years Jacob was a recipient of God's favor, yet he had sown a crop that he must reap; neither time nor repentance could change into golden grain the vile weed sown. This view of the matter makes it of the highest consequence that in words and actions we move in conscious integrity, for "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 6}

As Jacob pursued his journey, a stranger in a strange land, he sadly pondered the events which had transpired as the result of his own transgression. At night he lay down to sleep with the canopy of heaven as a covering, the earth his bed, and a stone his pillow. A compassionate God, who ever pitieth the woes of men, saw the lonely fugitive, troubled and perplexed, fearing that God had forsaken him because of his injustice, deception, and falsehood. In a vision of the night, the Lord manifested himself to Jacob. He saw a ladder, the base resting upon the earth, the top round reaching into the highest heaven even to the throne of God. The Lord himself, enshrouded in light, stood above the top of the ladder, and angels were ascending and descending upon it. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 7}

As Jacob gazed with wonder upon the scene, the voice of God was heard, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob awakened from his dream, and exclaimed in solemn awe, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." He looked about as if to again catch a glimpse of the heavenly messengers, but above him was only the blue, star-gemmed firmament, his head was still resting upon the rocky pillow. The ladder was gone, and the angels were no longer to be seen; but the voice of God was still echoing in his ears, with the promise now to him so precious. He felt indeed that angels of God, although unseen, peopled the place; that God was looking down upon him with compassion and love. Filled with holy awe and amazement, he involuntarily exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this the gate of Heaven." {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 8}

The meaning of this ladder is explained to us in the words of Christ to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." The atonement of Christ links earth to Heaven, and finite man to the infinite God; for through Christ, the communication that was broken off because of transgression, is resumed with man. Sinners may find pardon and be visited by mercy and grace. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 9}

When the morning light appeared, Jacob arose, and taking the stone upon which his head had rested, he poured oil upon it, in accordance with the custom of those who would preserve a memorial of God's mercy, that whenever he should pass that way, he might tarry at this sacred spot to worship the Lord. And he called the place Bethel, or the house of God. With the deepest gratitude and love he repeated again and again the gracious promise that God's help and presence would be with him; and then, in the fullness of his soul, he made the solemn vow, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 10}

God's presence is not confined to the splendid edifice. Jacob's humble resting-place had been consecrated by a manifestation of divine glory. God has often made sacred the hillside, the caves of the earth, the forest, the humble barn, the cotton tent. Each has become a tabernacle where he meets and blesses his servants, who are humbly seeking after truth, and peace, and righteousness. But the grandest cathedral, the marvel of architecture, if it encloses pride, dead forms, and hollow hypocrisy, is repulsive in the sight of God, who seeketh such to worship him as worship in spirit and in truth. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 11}

With a heart overflowing with love to God, and making melody in harmony with the happy songsters, Jacob went forward on his journey. He felt indeed that the presence of the Unseen was with him, and that angels were his companions. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 12}

Jacob felt that God had claims upon him which he must acknowledge, and that the special tokens of divine favor granted to him demanded a corresponding return. In like manner, every blessing bestowed upon us calls for a response. The Author of all our mercies should receive, not only gratitude, but tangible returns. Our time, our talents, our property, should be, and will be by every true Christian, sacredly devoted to the service of Him who has given these blessings to us in trust. When special deliverance has been wrought for us, when new and unexpected favors have been bestowed upon us, we should not accept them with indifference and with careless, thankless hearts.--God would have us follow the example of Jacob, pledge to the Lord in return for all his mercies. {ST, April 17, 1879 par. 13}

One reason why God does not bestow more and larger blessings upon his people is that they would not appreciate them and render to God the things that are God's. Every Christian should often review his past life, and never should he forget the precious deliverances which God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, consoling him in affliction, opening ways for him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint under discouragements. And in view of all these innumerable blessings, he should be melted and subdued, grateful and humble. He may well exclaim, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The rendering to God will not be merely in words of thankfulness, but in tithes and offerings. The Christian will practice self-denial and self-sacrifice to make returns to God. {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 1}

The conduct of Esau in selling his birthright represents the course of the unrighteous, who consider the redemption purchased for them by Christ of little value, and sacrifice their heirship to Heaven for perishable treasures. Many are controlled by inclination, and rather than deny an unhealthy appetite, they will sacrifice high and valuable considerations. If one must be yielded, the gratification of a depraved appetite, or the high and heavenly blessings which God promises only to the self-denying and God-fearing, the clamors of appetite, as in the case of Esau, will generally prevail, and for self-gratification, God and Heaven will be virtually despised. Even professed Christians will use tea, coffee, snuff, tobacco, and spirits, all of which benumb the finer sensibilities of the soul. If you tell them they cannot have Heaven and these hurtful indulgences, and that they should cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, they are offended, and conclude that if the way is so straight that they cannot indulge their gross appetites, they will no longer walk therein. {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 2}

Especially will the corrupt passions control the mind of those who consider Heaven of so little worth. Health will be sacrificed, the mental faculties enfeebled, and Heaven will be sold for these pleasures, as Esau sold his birthright. This case is left on record as a warning to others. Esau was a reckless person. He made a solemn oath that Jacob should have his birthright. Yet when he learned that his brother had obtained the blessing which would have belonged to him, had he not rashly sold it, he was greatly distressed. He had repented of his rash act, when it was too late to remedy the matter. Thus it will be in the day of God with sinners, who have bartered away their heirship to Heaven for selfish gratifications and hurtful lusts. They will then find no place for repentance, although, like Esau, they may seek it carefully and with tears. {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 3}

Jacob was not happy in his marriage relation, although his wives were sisters. He formed the contract with Laban for his daughter Rachel, whom he loved, but after he had served seven years for her, Laban, wishing to retain his faithful services a greater length of time, deceived him, and gave him Leah. When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love her, and he reprov'd his father-in-law for thus trifling with his affections. Laban entreated him not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family. Jacob was placed in a most trying position; but he decided still to retain Leah, and also to marry her sister. Yet Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel. {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 4}

Laban was selfish in his dealings with Jacob, and thought only of advantaging himself by his faithful labors. Jacob would have left the artful Laban long before, but he was afraid of encountering Esau. He heard the complaint of Laban's sons, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before." {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 5}

Jacob was greatly distressed. He knew not which way to turn. He carries his case to God, and intercedes for direction from him, and the Lord mercifully answers his prayer. "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." Jacob now called his two wives to the field, where there could be a secret consultation without danger of being overhead, and said, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me." Jacob then related to them the dream given him of God, to leave Laban and go unto his kindred. Rachel and Leah replied, expressing their dissatisfaction with their father's proceedings, "Is there yet any portion of inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him as strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do." {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 6}

Anciently it was customary for the bridegroom to pay a sum of money, according to his circumstances, to the father of his wife. If he had no money, nor anything of value, his labor was accepted for a stated length of time before he could obtain the daughter as his wife. This custom was deemed a safeguard to the marriage contract. Fathers did not consider it safe to trust the happiness of their daughters to men who had not made sufficient provision to take care of a family. If they had not ability to manage business, to acquire cattle or lands, it was feared that their lives would be worthless. But that the truly worthy might not become discouraged, a provision was made to test the worth of those who had nothing of value to pay for a wife. They were permitted to labor for the father whose daughter they loved. Their labors were engaged for a certain length of time, regulated by the value of the dowry required for the daughter. In doing this, marriage was not hasty, as there was opportunity to test the depth of affections of the suitor. If he was faithful in his services, and was otherwise considered worthy, the daughter was given him as his wife. And, generally, all the dowry the father had received was given to his daughter at her marriage. {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 7}

What a contrast to the course now pursued by parents and children! There are many unhappy marriages because of so much haste. Two unite their interests at the marriage altar, by most solemn vows before God, without previously weighing the matter, and devoting time to sober reflection and earnest prayer. Many move from impulse. They have no thorough acquaintance with the dispositions of each other. They do not realize that the happiness of their life is at stake. If they move wrong in this matter, and their married life proves unhappy, it cannot be taken back. If they find they are not calculated to make each other happy, they must endure it as best they can. In some instances the husband proves to be too indolent to provide for a family, and his wife and children suffer. If the ability of such had been proved, as was the custom anciently, before marriage, much misery would have been saved. In the case of Rachel and Leah, Laban selfishly kept the dowry which should have been given to them. They have reference to this when they say, "He hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money." {ST, April 24, 1879 par. 8}

In the absence of Laban, Jacob took his family and all that he had, and departed. After he had pursued his journey three days, Laban learned that he had left him, and he was very angry, and pursued after him, determined to bring him back by force. But the Lord had pity upon his servant, and as Laban was about to overtake him, gave him a dream not to speak good or bad to Jacob. That is, he should not force him to return, or urge him by flattering inducements. When Laban met his son-in-law, he inquired why he had stolen away unawares, and carried away his daughters as captives taken with the sword. Laban tells him, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight," and he mentioned how he had been warned by the dream. Jacob then rehearsed to Laban the ungenerous course he had pursued toward him, that he had studied only his own advantage. He appeals to his father-in-law as to the uprightness of his conduct while with him: "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 1}

A shepherd's life was one of diligence. He was obliged to watch his flocks day and night. Wild beasts were common, and often bold, and would do great injury to sheep and cattle that were not guarded by a faithful shepherd. Although Jacob had a number of servants to aid him in tending the flocks owned by himself and Laban, the responsibility of the whole matter rested upon him. And during some portions of the year he was obliged to be with the flocks himself, day and night, to care for them in the dry season, that they might not perish with thirst; in the coldest part of the year to save them from becoming chilled with the heavy night frosts. Their flocks were also in danger of being stolen by unprincipled shepherds. {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 2}

A shepherd's life was one of constant care. He was not qualified for his position unless he was merciful, and possessed courage and perseverance. Jacob was chief shepherd, and had shepherds under him who were termed servants. The chief shepherd called these servants, to whom he intrusted the care of the flock, to a strict account if they were not found in a flourishing condition. If any of the cattle were missing, the chief shepherd suffered the loss. {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 3}

Christ, in his relation to his people, is compared to a shepherd. He saw, after the fall, his sheep in a pitiable condition, exposed to sure destruction. He left the honors and glories of his father's house to become a shepherd, to save the miserable, wandering sheep, who were ready to perish. His winning voice was heard calling them to his fold, a safe and sure retreat from the hand of robbers; also a shelter from the scorching heat, and a protection from the chilling blasts. His care was continually exercised for the good of his sheep. He strengthened the weak, nourished the suffering, and gathered the lambs of the flocks in his arms, and carried them in his bosom. His sheep love him. He goeth before them, and they hear his voice, and follow him. "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." Christ says, "I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 4}

Christ is the chief shepherd. He has intrusted the care of his flock to under-shepherds. He requires these shepherds to have the same interest for his sheep that he has ever manifested, to ever feel the responsibility of the charge he has intrusted to them. Ministers, who are called of God to labor in word and doctrine, are Christ's shepherds. He has appointed them under himself to oversee and tend his flock. He has solemnly commanded these to be faithful shepherds, to feed the flock with diligence, to follow his example, to strengthen the weak, nourish the fainting, and shield them from devouring beasts. He points them to his example of love for his sheep. To secure their deliverance, he laid down his own life. If they imitate his self-denying example, the flock will prosper under their care. They will manifest a deeper interest than did Jacob, who was a faithful shepherd over the sheep and cattle of Laban. They will be constantly laboring for the welfare of the flock. They will not be mere hirelings, of whom Jesus speaks, who possess no particular interest in the sheep; who, in time of danger of trial, flee and leave the flock. A shepherd who labors merely for the wages he obtains, cares only for himself, and is continually studying his own interests and ease, instead of the welfare of his flock. {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 5}

Says Peter, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Says Paul, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 6}

All those professing to be shepherds, who feel that to minister in word and doctrine, and bear the burdens and have the care which every faithful shepherd should have, is a disagreeable task, are reproved by the apostle: "Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." All such unfaithful shepherds, the chief Shepherd would willingly release. The church of God is purchased with the blood of Christ, and every shepherd should realize that the sheep under his care cost a priceless sum. He should be diligent in his labor, and persevering in his efforts to keep the flock in a healthy, flourishing condition. He should consider the sheep intrusted to his care of the highest value, and realize that he will be called to render a strict account of his ministry. And if he is found faithful, he will receive a rich reward. "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 7}

Jacob continued, plainly presenting before Laban the injustice of his course: "Thus have I been twenty years in thy house. I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 8}

Laban then assured Jacob that he had an interest for his daughters and their children, and he could not harm them. "Now, therefore," he said. "come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee." To this, Jacob consented, and a pile of stones was thrown up as a visible token of the compact. {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 9}

And Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters; no man is with us, see, God is witness between me and thee." Laban understood the wrong of polygamy, although it was through his artifice alone that Jacob had taken two wives. He well knew that it was the jealousy of Leah and Rachel that led them to give their maids to Jacob, which confused the family relation, and increased the unhappiness of his daughters. And now as they are journeying to a distant country, and their interest is to be entirely separate from his own, he would guard their happiness as far as possible. {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 10}

Jacob made a solemn covenant before the Lord, that he should not take other wives. "And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the Fear of his father Isaac." {ST, May 1, 1879 par. 11}

Chapter Thirteen.

Jacob and the Angel.

The sinful course which Jacob had pursued in deceiving his father was ever before him. He knew that his long exile was the result of his own deviation from strict integrity, the law of right. He pondered over these things day and night, his conscience accusing him, and making his journey very sad. How he longed to again go over the ground where he had stumbled and brought the stain of sin upon his soul. Before his transgression he had a sense of God's approval which made him brave under difficulties, and cheerful amid trouble and gloom. To this deep, abiding peace, he had long been a stranger. Yet he remembered with gratitude the favor which God had shown him, the vision of the shining ladder, and the promises of help and guidance. In solemn review of the mistakes and errors of his life, and the dealings of God with him, he humbly acknowledged his own unworthiness, the great mercy of God, and the prosperity which had crowned his labors. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 1}

As the hills of his native land appeared before him in the distance, the heart of the patriarch was deeply stirred. He had proved his God, and found his promises unfailing; he believed that God would be with him; yet as he drew near to Edom he had many fears of Esau, who was now able to do his younger brother great injury if so disposed. Again the Lord encouraged the heart of his servant with a token of divine care and protection. Directly before him, as if leading the way, he beheld two armies of heavenly angels marching as a guide and guard; and when he saw them he broke forth in language of praise, and exclaimed, "This is God's host." And he called the name of the place Mahanaim, which signifies two hosts, or camps. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 2}

Although Jacob had so great evidence that God would protect him, he felt that he himself had something to do for his own safety. He therefore sent his servants with a conciliatory message to Esau, who dwelt at Mount Seir, in the country of Edom. He did not claim the precedence for himself, but courteously addressed his brother as a superior, hoping thus to appease the anger which his former course had excited. Esau was informed of his younger brother's safe return with abundant possessions of cattle and servants, and that he would be most happy to meet him with fraternal feelings. The messengers returned to their master with the tidings that Esau was advancing to meet him attended by four hundred men; and no response was sent to the friendly message. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 3}

It appeared certain that Esau was coming in anger to seek revenge. A feeling of terror pervaded the entire camp. Jacob was in distress. He could not go back, and he feared to advance. His company was few in numbers, and wholly unprepared for an encounter. He accordingly divided them into two bands, that if one should be attacked, the other might have an opportunity to escape. He would not fail to do all in his power to preserve his own life and the life of those dependent upon him, and then he pleaded with God for his presence and protecting care. He did not rely upon his feelings, nor upon any goodness which he possessed, but on the sure promise of God: "Thou saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 4}

Jacob halted in his journey to mature plans for appeasing the wrath of his brother. He would not rush recklessly into danger, but sent large presents to Esau by the hands of his servants, with a message well calculated to make a favorable impression. He sent his wives and children, with all his substance forward on the journey, while he himself remained behind. He thought the sight of that helpless little company would touch the feelings of Esau, who, though bold and revengeful, was yet pitiful and tender toward the weak and unprotected. If his eye rested first upon Jacob, his rage might be excited, and they would all perish. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 5}

Jacob wished to be alone with his God. It was midnight. All that made life dear to him was at a distance, exposed to danger and death. The bitterest drop in his cup of anguish was the thought that his own sin had brought this great peril upon his wives and children, who were innocent of the sin of which he was guilty. He had decided to spend the night in humiliation and prayer. God could soften the heart of his brother. God was his only refuge and strength. In a desolate place, infested by robbers and murderers, he bowed in deep distress upon the earth; his soul was rent with anguish, and with earnest cries mingled with tears he made his prayer before God. Strong hands were suddenly laid upon his shoulders. He immediately grapples his assailant, for he feels that this attack is a design upon his life; that he is in the hands of a robber or murderer. The contest is severe; neither utters a word; but Jacob puts forth all his strength, and does not relax his efforts for a moment. Thus 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 discerns the character of his antagonist. He knows that he has been in bodily conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this is why his almost superhuman efforts did not gain for him the victory. He is now disabled and suffering keenest pain, but he will not loosen his hold. He falls, a conquered foe, all penitent and broken, upon the neck of the angel. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 6}

In the inspired history of this event, the one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man; Hosea calls him the angel; while Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face." He is also said to have had power with God. It was the Majesty of Heaven, the Angel of the covenant, that came, in the form and appearance of a man, to Jacob. The divine messenger uses some force to release himself from the grasp of Jacob; he pleads with him, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob had been pleading the promises of God; he had been trusting his pledged word, which is as sure and unfailing as his throne; and now, through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal, can make terms with Jesus Christ: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." What boldness is here manifested! What lofty faith, what perseverance and holy trust! Was this presumption and undue familiarity on the part of Jacob? Had it been of this character he would not have lived through the scene. His was not a self-exalted, boastful, presumptuous claim, but the assurance of one who realizes his weakness and unworthiness and the ability of God to fulfill his promise. The mistake which had led to Jacob's sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now opened before him. He had not trusted God and his promises as he should have done. He had sought by his own works and power to bring about that which God was abundantly able to perform in his own time and way. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 7}

"And when he saw that he prevailed not against him"--the Majesty of Heaven prevailed not against a man of dust, a sinful mortal! The reason is, that man has fastened the trembling hand of faith upon the promise of God, and the divine messenger cannot leave him who is hanging repentant, weeping, helpless upon his neck. His great heart of love cannot turn away from the suppliant without granting his request. Christ did not wish to leave him unblest when his soul was shrouded with despair; for he is more willing to give good things to them that ask him than are parents to give to their children. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 8}

The angel inquired of Jacob, "What is thy name?" and on being informed he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, [the supplanter] but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob had received the blessing for which his soul had longed; his sin as a supplanter and deceiver was pardoned. The crisis in his life had passed. God shows, in his dealing with Jacob, that he will not sanction the least wrong in any of his children; neither will he cast off and leave to despair and destruction those who are deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin. Doubt, perplexity, and remorse had embittered Jacob's life; but now all was changed, and how sweet was the rest and peace in God, in the assurance of his restored favor. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 9}

"Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial." What a morning of light and joy dawned upon Jacob. The dark, despairing shadows brooding over him the previous night had disappeared. The brightness of the sun, shining in its glory, fitly represented the heavenly light that filled his soul. He was crippled in body, but his spirit was strong in God. He bore some marks of the battle, but the victory was his. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 10}

In this instance we see of what value is man in the sight of the infinite God. When a teacher of men upon the earth, the One who appeared to Jacob said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." The promises of God are so sure to those who trust in him that he will suffer the heavens and the earth to pass away, rather than fail to fulfill the desire of them that fear him. The great lessons of peace, humility, and trust, are to be learned by all the followers of Christ. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 11}

While Jacob was wrestling with the angel on that eventful night, another angel, one of the host which the patriarch had seen guarding him in the way, was sent to move upon the heart of Esau in his sleeping hours. In his dream he saw his brother an exile from his father's house for twenty years through fear of his anger; he witnessed his sorrow to find his mother dead; and he beheld him encompassed with the hosts of God. Esau related this dream to his four hundred armed men, and charged them not to injure Jacob, for the God of his father was with him. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 12}

The two companies at last approach each other; the sturdy chieftain with his soldiers on one side, and on the other, Jacob, pale from his recent conflict, and halting at every step, yet with a benignity and peaceful light reflected upon his countenance; in the rear an unarmed company of men, women, and children, followed by the flocks and herds. Supported by his staff the patriarch went forward to meet that band of warriors, bowing himself repeatedly to the ground as a token of respect, while his little retinue awaited the issue with the deepest anxiety. They saw the arms of Esau thrown about the neck of Jacob, pressing to his bosom him whom he had so long threatened with direst vengeance. Revenge is now changed to tender affection, and he who once thirsted for his brother's blood shed tears of joy, his heart melted with the softest endearments of love and tenderness. The soldiers in Esau's army saw the result of that night of weeping and of prayer; but they knew nothing of the conflict and the victory. They understood the feelings of the patriarch, the husband and father, for his family and his possessions; but they could not see the connection that he had with God, which had gained the heart of Esau from Him who has all hearts in his hand. Thus it has ever been with worldlings; the secret of the Christian's strength is not discerned by them. His inner life they cannot understand. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 13}

Esau looked with pleasure upon his brother's possessions. He acknowledged the presents tendered to him by Jacob, but declined to accept them, as he already possessed abundance. But Jacob urged the matter. He was a prince with God, yet as subdued and humble as a little child. "And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it." {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 14}

Esau invited Jacob to his home in Seir, and offered to accompany him on the journey. But Jacob had no disposition to accept the offer. He knew that Esau was now under the direct influence of the Spirit of God; when another spirit should come upon him he might greatly change in feelings. Jacob did not refuse the offer, but presented the true condition of his party, his flocks and herds; that they could not travel with the expedition which would be agreeable to Esau and his band. He urged him to return to his own place, while the party would follow on slowly. Esau desired to leave with his brother soldiers to guard him and his company; but Jacob had evidence that they were guarded by a mighty host of heavenly angels, and he courteously declined the favor. The brothers parted with tender feelings. {ST, November 20, 1879 par. 15}

Jacob and Esau represent two classes. Jacob, the righteous; and Esau, the wicked. Jacob's night of wrestling and anguish represents the time of trouble through which the people of God must pass just prior to the second coming of Christ. Jeremiah refers to this time: "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Daniel, in prophetic vision looking down to this point, says: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Isaiah speaks of the same time: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy door about thee, hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 1}

In his distress, Jacob laid hold of the angel, and held him and wrestled with him all night. So also will the righteous, in the time of their trouble wrestle with God in prayer. Jacob prayed all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau. The righteous in their mental anguish will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the hands of the wicked who surround them. Jacob confessed his unworthiness: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." The righteous will have a deep sense of their shortcomings, and with many tears will acknowledge their utter unworthiness, and, like Jacob, will plead the promises of God through Christ, made to just such dependent, helpless, repenting sinners. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 2}

Jacob took firm hold of the angel and would not let him go. As he made supplication with tears, the angel reminded him of his past wrongs, and endeavored to escape from him, to test and prove him. So will the righteous in the day of their anguish, be tested, proved, and tried, to manifest their strength of faith, their perseverance, and unshaken confidence in the power of God to deliver them. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 3}

Jacob would not be turned away. He knew that God was merciful, and he appealed to his mercy. He pointed back to his past sorrow for, and repentance of, his wrongs, and urged his petition for deliverance from the hand of Esau. Thus his importuning continued all night. As he reviewed his past wrongs, he was driven almost to despair. But he knew that he must have help from God or perish. He held the angel fast, and urged his petition with agonizing, earnest cries, until he prevailed. Thus will it be with the righteous. As they review the events of their past lives, their hopes will almost sink. But as they realize that it is a case of life or death, they will earnestly cry unto God, and appeal to him in regard to their past sorrow for, and humble repentance of, their many sins, and then will refer to his promise: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Thus will their earnest petitions be offered to God day and night. God would not have heard the prayer of Jacob, and mercifully saved his life, if he had not previously repented of his wrongs in obtaining the blessing by fraud. Every effort was put forward by Satan and his host to discourage Jacob and break his hold upon God by forcing upon him a sense of the sin of his falsehood and deception. But Jacob was not left alone; the Captain of the Lord's host, attended by an army of angels, was close beside the depressed, fear-stricken man, that he might not perish. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 4}

The righteous, like Jacob, will manifest unyielding faith and earnest determination, which will take no denial. They will feel their unworthiness, but will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. If they had sins, unconfessed and unrepented of, to appear then before them, while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed. Despair would cut off their earnest faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God thus earnestly for deliverance, their precious moments would be spent in confessing hidden sins, and bewailing their hopeless condition. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 5}

In these days of peril those who have been unfaithful in their duties in life, and whose mistakes and sins of neglect are registered against them in the book in Heaven, unrepented of and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. Every one is to be tested and severely tried. Satan will exert all his energies, and call to his aid his evil host, who will exercise all their experience, artifice, and cunning, to deceive souls and wrest them from the hands of Jesus Christ. He makes them believe they may be unfaithful in the minor duties of life, and God will not see, God will not notice; but that Being who numbers the hairs of our head, and marks the fall of the little sparrow, notices every deviation from truth, every departure from honor and integrity in both secular and religious things. These errors and sins corrupt the man, and disqualify him for the society of heavenly angels. By his defiled character he has placed himself under the flag of Satan. The arch deceiver has power over this class. The more exalted their profession, the more honorable the position they have held, the more grievous their course in the sight of God, the more sure the triumph of Satan. These will have no shelter in the time of Jacob's trouble. Their sins will then appear of such magnitude that they will have no confidence to pray, no heart to wrestle as did Jacob. On the other hand, those who have been of like passion, erring and sinful in their lives, but who have repented of their sins, and in genuine sorrow confessed them, will have pardon written against their names in the heavenly records. They will be hid 'in the day of the Lord's anger. Satan will attack this class, but like Jacob they have taken hold of the strength of God, and true to his character he is at peace with them, and sends angels to comfort and bless and sustain them in their time of peril. The time of Jacob's trouble will test every one, and distinguish the genuine Christian from the one who is so only in name. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 6}

Those professed believers who come up to the time of trouble unprepared, will, in their despair, confess their sins before the world in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. The case of all such is hopeless. When Christ stands up, and leaves the most holy place, the time of trouble commences, the case of every soul is decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin and pollution. As Jesus leaves the most holy, he speaks in tones of decision and kingly authority: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 7}

Those who have delayed a preparation for the day of God, cannot obtain it in the time of trouble, or at any future period. The righteous will not cease their earnest, agonizing cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sins; but in their whole life they can see little good. Their sins have gone before hand to judgment, and pardon has been written. Their sins have been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they can not bring them to remembrance. Certain destruction threatens them, and, like Jacob, they will not suffer their faith to grow weak because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the pangs of hunger, they will not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the angel; and the language of their soul is, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 8}

That season of distress and anguish will require an effort of earnestness and determined faith that can endure delay and hunger, and will not fail under weakness, though severely tried. The period of probation is the time granted to all to prepare for the day of God. If any neglect the preparation, and heed not the faithful warnings given, they will be without excuse. Jacob's course in wrestling with the angel, should be an example for Christians. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. All who desire the blessing of God, as did Jacob, and who will lay hold of the promises as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. The reason there is so little exercise of true faith, and so little of the weight of truth resting upon many professed believers, is they are indolent in spiritual things. They are unwilling to make exertions, to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for the blessing, and therefore they do not obtain it. That faith which will live through the time of trouble must be developed now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith, will be unable to stand in the day of trouble. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 9}

At the transfiguration, Jesus was glorified by his Father. From his lips came these words: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Before his betrayal and crucifixion he was strengthened for his last dreadful sufferings. As the members of Christ's body approach the period of their final conflict they will grow up into him, and will possess symmetrical characters. As the message of the third angel swells to a loud cry, great power and glory will attend the closing work. It is the latter rain, which revives and strengthens the people of God to pass through the time of Jacob's trouble referred to by the prophets. The glory of that light which attends the third angel will be reflected upon them. God will preserve his people through that time of peril. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 10}

By self-surrender and confiding faith Jacob gained what he had failed to gain by conflict in his own strength. God would here fully make known to his servant that it was divine power and grace alone that could give him the life and peace he so much craved. This lesson is for all time. Those who live in the last days must pass through an experience similar to that of Jacob. Foes will be all around them, ready to condemn and destroy. Alarm and despair will seize them, for it appears to them as to Jacob in his distress, that God himself has become an avenging enemy. It is the design of God to arouse the dormant energies of his people to look out of and away from self to One who can bring help and salvation, that the promises given for just such a time may be seen in their preciousness, and relied upon with unwavering trust. Here faith is proved. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 11}

Deep anguish of soul will be felt by the people of God, yet their sufferings cannot be compared with the agony endured by our adorable Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane. He was bearing the weight of our sins; we endure anguish on our own account. Wrestling with God -- how few know what it is! To wrestle with God is to have the soul drawn out with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch, while waves of despair that no language can express sweep over the soul; and yet the suppliant will not yield, but clings with deathlike tenacity to the promise. {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 12} Jacob specified no particular thing for the Lord to bestow upon him; he sought only a blessing; he knew that the Lord would give him a blessing appropriate to meet the necessities of the case at that time. God blessed him then and there; and on the field of conflict he was made a prince among men. Thus will it be with the agonized ones who prevail with God in the time of Jacob's trouble. Dangers thicken on every side, and it is difficult to fix the eye of faith upon the promises amidst the certain evidences of immediate destruction. But in the midst of revelry and violence, there falls upon the ear peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness and are only illuminated with the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven. God utters his voice from his holy habitation. The captivity of his people is turned. With sweet and subdued voices they say to one another, God is our friend. We shall be safe from the power of wicked men. In solemn awe they listen to the words proceeding from the throne of God. Those surrounding the righteous are then in their time of distress and inexpressible fear. The horror of despair seizes them, and these poor infatuated ones seem now to understand themselves. Those who have been deceived by the fables preached to them by their ministers now charge upon them the loss of their souls: You have preached to us falsehoods. We have believed a lie, and are lost, forever lost. {ST November 27 1879 par 13}

This is the time referred to by Malachi: "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." {ST, November 27, 1879 par. 14}

Chapter Fourteen.

Jacob's Second Visit to Bethel.

Jacob made his home in Shechem, and having purchased a piece of land he erected his tent, and close beside it his altar, and dedicated them to God. The sons of Jacob were not all governed by religious principle. Their inhuman treatment of the Shechemites was offensive to God. Their father was kept in ignorance of their purpose until the work of cruelty was accomplished; and when he learned what had been done he severely rebuked them for their treacherous, revengeful course. Simeon and Levi attempted to defend themselves by urging that they had thus avenged the wrong done to their sister. But Jacob assured them that nothing could justify their conduct; for the sin of one man they had caused the innocent inhabitants of a whole city to suffer. These people had placed confidence in them, and thus had been shamefully betrayed. The God of Israel had been dishonored. Jacob felt deeply humiliated; he knew that deception and cruelty had been practiced, and he felt that he would now be hated and despised by the inhabitants of the country around them. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 1}

He saw, too, that treachery and cruelty was growing upon his sons, and that they were forgetting God, and allowing infidelity to come into their hearts. He knew that there was cause for self-condemnation in this matter, and he began to reflect upon his own conduct in allowing his beloved Rachel to conceal her father's gods which she had stolen, when he should have destroyed at once everything which would lead to infidelity. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 2}

There were false gods in the camp of Israel, and he had not used prompt means to destroy them; and idolatrous worship was more or less practiced by his household. He knew that should God deal with them, in the present instance, according to their crime, he would permit the surrounding nations to take vengeance upon them. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 3}

While Jacob was thus bowed down with trouble, the Lord had compassion upon him, and directed him to leave his place and move southward to Bethel. At the mention of this name the patriarch is reminded not only of his vision of the angels, ascending and descending, and of God above them speaking to him words of comfort, but also of the vow which he had made there, that if God would keep and bless him, the Lord should be his God. And he reflects thus: Have I been as faithful to my promise as God has been to me? He saw and felt the necessity of being more thorough and decided in his family, to put away everything that savored of idolatry. He determined to cleanse the camp, that his company might go to this sacred spot free from defilement. He therefore stands up and addresses them: "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 4} He then, with trembling voice and quivering lip, related to them his perplexity; when but a youth he left his father's tent, a lonely traveler, afraid of his life, with no earthly friend to comfort or encourage. Passing Hebron and Moriah, he came, in the evening of the second day, to Bethel, the spot made sacred by the sacrifices and prayers of Abraham. He felt heart-sick and friendless in his solitude, and lay down to sleep. It was here that God gave him that encouraging dream of the heavenly ladder which reached from earth to Heaven. Angels of God were ascending and descending upon this ladder of shining brightness, and the Lord himself stood above it, and spoke to him these encouraging words: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land." {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 5}

On awaking from this dream, Jacob felt that the spot was peopled with angels, and that God was looking with tender love and compassion upon him, and he there set up a memorial signifying that he would ever remember the loving-kindness of God. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 6}

As Jacob thus reviewed the goodness and mercy of God to him, his own heart was subdued and humbled; and he had taken the most effectual way to reach the hearts of his children, and lead them to reverence the God of Heaven when they arrived at Bethel. Not in the least did any of his family hesitate to obey his commands. All that were with him delivered up their idols, and also their earrings, and he buried them under an oak near Shechem. The patriarch felt that humiliation before God was more in keeping with their position than was the wearing of gold and silver ornaments. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 7}

Jacob had now done his duty in cleansing his household from idolatry, and he set out with them on his journey to Bethel. For the sake of his servant Jacob, who had no part in the cruelty practiced on the Shechemites, the Lord caused fear to fall upon the inhabitants of the land, that they did not arise to avenge the deed done to Shechem. The travelers moved on their way unmolested, and came to Bethel. Here Jacob, in obedience to the divine command, immediately erected an altar, upon which he performed the vow made when on his journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia. Of all the substance that had been placed with him in trust, he rendered an offering to God, although it took from him quite a large share of his possessions. The self-denial and beneficence here manifested, rebukes the self-indulgence of many professed Christians, and the meager offerings which they bring to God. Many put into the Lord's treasury a sum less than the price of their cigars, and far less than the cost of the ornaments that adorn their persons and their houses, and the hurtful luxuries upon their tables. Eternity will reveal the narrowness and selfishness of these minds. What will be their feelings when Christ shall reveal to them the value of souls, and the infinite importance of their salvation? {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 8}

The Lord accepted the offering of Jacob, and met with and blessed him, and renewed his covenant with him. As a lasting memorial of this additional token of divine favor, Jacob again erected a pillar of stone, which he consecrated in the usual manner. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 9}

Jacob's heart yearned to visit his early home once more, and look again upon his aged father's face. With his family, he journeyed toward Hebron. Before they had proceeded far on the way, Rachel gave birth to Benjamin. She had only a moment's space of life in which to name him, when she died, calling him Benoni, the son of my sorrow. But Jacob named him Benjamin, the son of my right hand, and my strength. Rachel was buried where she died, and above her grave was placed a stone monument to perpetuate her memory. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 10}

Rebekah, his mother, was dead; and while they were at Bethel, Deborah, his mother's nurse, also died, and was there buried with expressions of great sorrow, for she had been an honored member of his father's family. The meeting of Jacob with his father was a joyful one to both father and son. Isaac was very old, blind, and dependent; but he lived some years after the return of his son. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 11}

At the death-bed of their father, the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, met and united their grief. Once Esau had looked forward to this event as a time when he would be revenged upon Jacob for stealing from him his father's blessing; but his feelings had greatly changed. Jacob was now wealthy, and he returned to Esau the blessing of possession so recklessly sold for a mess of pottage. Therefore the two brothers, no longer separated by enmity, jealousy, and hatred, parted from each other because of their possessions. Jacob also knew that their religious faith was so unlike it would be better for them to live apart. Jacob's character was greatly modified and refined by the blessing received from the angel in that night of terrible conflict, and ever after he was revered by all who knew him. His trials had not been in vain. {ST, December 4, 1879 par. 12}

Chapter Fifteen.

Jacob and Joseph.

Of the twelve sons of Jacob, the one for whom he had special love was Joseph; for he was the son of his beloved wife Rachel, and one of the children of his old age. He was a son of remarkable beauty. His oldest sons had arrived at manhood, and had developed unhappy traits of character. There was continual strife among the eleven; they were neither just nor benevolent toward each other. The envy and jealousy which were cherished by the several mothers making the family relation very unhappy, were instilled by word and example into the minds and hearts of the children, who grew up revengeful, jealous, and uncontrollable. They would not endure provocation, for they had too long cherished hatred and revenge. These evils will ever be found to be the result of polygamy. Each of the mothers is envious and jealous lest her own children shall not receive due attention from the father; and again they experience bitterness and discontent whenever they are made to feel that another is preferred before them. Children who grow up together surrounded by such elements are most likely to indulge in resentment for every supposed slight, and revenge for any imaginary wrongs. There is that in polygamy which dries up human affection, and tempts to the loosening of ties which should be held sacred. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 1}

Jacob's life was made very bitter by the conduct of his sons. Joseph had another spirit; he was cheerful and happy, and possessed great love for his father whose heart was bound up in his child. This preference for Joseph was unwisely manifested, and called out the revengeful disposition of his other sons. When Joseph saw the wicked course pursued by his brethren he remonstrated with them; but they hated him for his entreaties, and for daring to reprove them who were so much older than he, and accused him of being a spy upon their actions. As Joseph saw that his words and entreaties only excited wrath against himself, he laid the plans and evil purposes of his brethren before his father, which gave him knowledge of many things he otherwise would not have known. The fathers of children among the Hebrews were made responsible in a great degree for the sins of their children, when they were left without the exercise of authority and restraint. When the father's solicitude was expressed to his sons in a voice tremulous with grief, and he implored them to have respect for his gray hairs and not make his name a reproach, and to be despised because of their course, the sons felt sorry and ashamed before their father, because their wickedness was known, but felt envious and jealous of Joseph because he had informed his father of their course of sin. Jacob flattered himself that his sons repented of their wickedness, and he trusted they would reform. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 2}

Jacob unwisely gave expression to his love for Joseph in making him a present of a coat of beautiful colors. This only increased the hatred of his brothers against him; for they thought Joseph had stolen their father's affections from them, and they considered themselves ill treated and deprived of their father's confidence and love. They did not see that their own wicked course was a continual shame and disgrace to his gray hairs, and that his affections centered upon Joseph because of his purity and true excellence of character. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 3}

The Lord gave Joseph a dream which he related; Jacob would have been alarmed had he suspected the hatred and malicious feelings this dream aroused in the hearts of his sons against his beloved child. Joseph dreamed that while they were all engaged binding sheaves of grain, his sheaf arose and stood upright, and the sheaves of all the rest stood round about and bowed before his sheaf. No sooner was his dream related than they all understood its significance. His brothers exclaimed with indignation, "Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" Their hatred toward him burned deeper in their hearts than before. Soon the Lord gave Joseph another dream of the same import, but more strikingly significant. This dream he also related to his father and his brethren. He said, "Behold I have dreamed a dream more, and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." The interpretation of this dream was quite as quickly discerned as was that of the first. "And his father rebuked him, and said unto him, what is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying." {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 4}

Like a youthful prophet Joseph stood before them in the simplicity of virtuous innocence, his beautiful countenance lighted up with the spirit of inspiration. His brethren could but admire his purity and goodness; but they did not choose to leave their wicked course and become virtuous and noble like him. The spirit that actuated Cain was fastening upon them. Like him they hated their brother because he was innocent and righteous and beloved of his father, while they were wicked and a source of grief to their father as Cain was to his father. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 5}

Joseph's father had confidence that the Lord was revealing the future to his son; but his words of apparent severity did not satisfy his elder sons, for the voice of tremulous affection betrayed his true feelings. He called to mind the promise of God to Abraham, to Isaac, and to himself. His heart had been grieved and disappointed in his older sons, but as he saw the qualities of mind possessed by Joseph, his hopes centered in him. He hoped that God would wonderfully bless him, the eldest son of his beloved Rachel. The favor with which Jacob regarded Joseph could not be concealed, and the gorgeous colored coat which he had given him was a clear evidence to his sons of his partiality. This they thought gave them sufficient reason for harboring jealousy, hatred, and revenge in their hearts. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 6}

These brothers were obliged to move from place to place in order to secure better pasturage for their flocks, and sometimes they did not see their father for months. At one time Jacob directed them to go to Shechem, a place which he had purchased. After they had been gone some time, and he had received no word from them he feared that evil might have befallen them, knowing that they were near where their cruelty had been practiced upon the Shechemites. So he sent Joseph to Shechem to find his brethren, and bring him word of their condition. Had Jacob known the true feelings of his sons toward Joseph, he would not have trusted him alone with them; but they had concealed their wicked purposes from him. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 7}

When Joseph arrived at the place where his father supposed his brethren were, he did not find them. As he was traveling from field to field in search of them, a stranger learned his errand and told him they had gone to Dothan. He had already traveled fifty miles, and a distance of fifteen more lay before him. This was a long journey for the youth; but he performed it cheerfully, desiring to relieve the anxiety of his beloved father, and longing to see his brethren who were enshrined in his affections. But he was illy repaid for his love and obedience. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 8}

At length he saw his brethren in the distance and hastened to greet them. They also saw him coming, his gay colored coat making him easily recognized; but as they beheld it, their feelings of envy, jealousy, and hatred, were aroused. They did not consider the long journey he had made on foot to meet them; they did not think of his weariness and hunger, and that as their brother he had claims upon their hospitality, their tender consideration and brotherly love. The sight of that coat which signalized him in the distance filled them with a Satanic frenzy. "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh." {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 9}

There seemed to be a common feeling of deadly hatred in their hearts. They had engaged in carnage and destruction until their feelings had become calloused. The indulgence of one known sin deadens the conscience so that it is more easily overcome with the next temptation. Thus step by step the course of sin and transgression is pursued until there is a harvest of crime through the indulgence of the first sin. These men regardless of the consequences, had passed on from stage, to stage hardening their hearts in the indulgence of sin until they had to all intents and purposes the spirit of Cain. They were enraged that Joseph had heretofore informed against them, and they looked upon him as a spy. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 10}

They had ere this decided that if a favorable opportunity offered they would slay him; the proposition was made, "Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 11}

This terrible purpose would have been carried out had not Reuben shrunk from participating in the murder of his brother. He plead for Joseph, showing with clear arguments what guilt would ever rest upon them, and, that the curse of God would come upon them for such a crime. He proposed to have him cast alive into a pit, and left there to perish, meaning to take him out privately and return him to his father. He left their company, fearing that his feelings would betray his design. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 12}

Joseph came on, glad and joyful that the object of his long search was accomplished. But, instead of a pleasant greeting, he met only scorn, abuse, and fierceness of looks which terrified him. He was immediately seized, and the coat which had created so much hatred, was stripped from him with the most taunting remarks. He had never before received such treatment and he expected his brethren would immediately kill him. His mind runs back to his home, his father, and the blessing he had received as he parted from him, and then he anticipated the sorrow he would feel at his death and the guilt of his murderers. He entreated them to spare his life, but all to no avail; he was helpless in the hands of infuriated men whose hearts were insensible to pity, and whose ears were deaf to the cry of anguish. But the eye of God was upon him, and Joseph's cries of distress reached his throne. His brethren thrust him into a dark pit and then sat down to enjoy their customary meal. But while they were eating, they saw a company of Ishmaelites approaching, and Judah, who was beginning to regret what had been done, suggested that here was an opportunity to sell their brother and obtain money, which would be better than leaving him to perish in the pit; for said he, is he not our own flesh? Then, too, Judah thought that he could be disposed of by being removed entirely from them. All agreed to the proposition of Judah; Joseph was drawn up out of the pit, and heartlessly sold as a slave.. {ST, December 18, 1879 par. 13}

Chapter Sixteen.

Joseph in Egypt

The Lord was with Joseph in his new home. He was in exile, not for any wrong that he had done, but through the injustice of his brothers. Yet he did not cherish a gloomy, sullen spirit, he did not yield to despondency, as many would have felt excused in doing. He was not in a position of his own choosing, and he would not make his condition worse by useless repining. With cheerful alacrity he performed the duties which were assigned him, laboring for the best interest of those to whom he then belonged. In contributing to the happiness of others he was happy. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 1}

The marked prosperity which attended everything placed under Joseph's care was not the result of a direct miracle. With the divine blessing, his persevering industry, his diligence, his thoughtful care-taking were crowned with success, and won for him the highest regard of his master. This success could never have been gained, and Joseph himself could not have become what he was, without steadfast, well-directed effort. The exercise of the physical and mental powers is necessary to their full and perfect development. Without bodily exercise the laboring man's arm would lose its strength, and unless the mental powers are taxed they will become weak. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 2}

Although surrounded with idolatry, which was most repulsive to his principles, Joseph preserved his simplicity, his purity, and his God-fearing fidelity. The discordant notes of vice and revelry often fell upon his ear, but he would not allow his thoughts to linger for a moment upon forbidden subjects. Had Joseph sacrificed principle to please the Egyptians, he would have been overcome by temptation. But he was not ashamed of the religion of his fathers, and he made no effort to conceal the fact that he loved and feared God. The Lord designed that the light and power of heavenly grace should shine forth amid the darkness of heathen superstition and idolatry; that the purity, the faithfulness, and steadfast integrity of the true believer in God should appear in contrast with the darkened characters of those who served idols. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 3}

Joseph gave the credit of his prosperity to the Lord, and his master believed that the Lord was with him, and that he caused all that he did to prosper. Thus God was glorified by the faithfulness of his servant. The confidence which Potiphar reposed in Joseph daily increased, until he promoted him to be his steward, placing him in charge of all his affairs. But fiery trials were to test still more severely the faith and integrity of Joseph. The morals of the Egyptians were very low. His master's wife was a licentious woman, and now a temptation to deviate from the path of right, to transgress the law of God, is presented before the youthful exile. His future welfare depends upon the decision of the moment. Will Satan triumph? Will principle now garrison Joseph's heart? Will he now have the fear of God before him? Will he be loyal and true to the divine law? Angels were regarding this servant of God with intense interest. The elevating power of religious principle was evidenced in his answer to his master's wife. After speaking of the great confidence which his master had reposed in him by trusting him with all he had, he exclaims, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 4}

Many will take liberties under the inspecting eyes of holy angels and of God that they would not be guilty of before their fellow men. This class are an abomination in the sight of God. Joseph's first thought was of God; Thou "God seest me," was the great truth controlling the thoughts of his mind, influencing the motives of his actions. He looked upon God, not as a tyrant watching his actions to condemn and punish him, but as a tender, loving friend, guarding his interests. He would not be persuaded by inducements or threats to deviate from the path of strictest integrity. He would not violate God's law. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 5}

Joseph's firm adherence to right brought him into a trying position. He lost his situation, his reputation, and his liberty. Crime and falsehood for a time seemed to triumph, while innocence and virtue suffered. Had Potiphar fully believed the charges of his wife, Joseph would have lost his life. But his past conduct, his modesty and firm integrity, were convincing proof of his innocence; and yet, to save the reputation of his master's house, Joseph was sacrificed, while the sinful wife was exalted in the estimation of her friends as if a model of virtue. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 6}

When the base crime was laid to the charge of Joseph, and he was covered with reproach, he stood in nobility of soul, in conscious innocence. He knew that the eye of God was upon him, and he could confide his case to his care who had hitherto supported him. He was condemned as a criminal to a gloomy prison, yet he did not become morose and look upon the discouraging features of his case. He kept his patience and his hope and faith. He did not close his heart against suffering humanity, he did not turn his attention to himself, but entered into the troubles of his fellow-prisoners, giving them his kindly sympathy. He found work to do, even in the prison. He was indeed a servant of servants. God was fitting him, in the school of affliction, for greater usefulness. He was learning to govern himself. From a position of honor and trust he had been suddenly abased to one of apparent degradation; but integrity, innocence, and virtue can never be degraded. God's will had been his ruling motive in prosperity, and he shows the same high regard for that will now that he is inclosed in prison walls. He carried his religion with him wherever he went, and in whatever situation he was placed. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 7}

Those who love God will have an all-pervading influence shedding a grateful fragrance. If man will discharge his duties faithfully wherever he may be, he will become a power for good. God gave Joseph favor with the keeper of the prison, and to faithful Joseph was committed the charge of all the prisoners. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 8}

Here is an example to all generations who should live upon the earth. Although they may be exposed to evil influences, they should ever realize that there is a defense at hand, and it will be their own fault if they are not preserved. God will be a present help, and his Spirit a shield. Although surrounded with the severest temptations, there is a source of strength to which they can apply, and obtain grace to resist them. How fierce was the assault upon Joseph's morals. It came from one of influence, the most likely to lead astray. Yet how promptly and firmly was it resisted. He suffered for his integrity; for she who would lead him astray, revenged herself upon the virtue she could not subvert, and by her influence caused him to be cast into prison, by charging him with a foul wrong. But Joseph had placed his reputation and interests in the hands of God. And although he was suffered to be afflicted for a time, the Lord safely guarded that reputation that was blackened by a wicked accuser, and afterward, in his own good time, caused it to shine. God made even the prison the way to his elevation. Virtue will in time bring its own reward. The shield which covered Joseph's heart was the fear of God, which caused him to be faithful and just to his master, and true to God. He despised that ingratitude which would lead him to abuse the confidence of his master, although he might never learn the fact. The grace of God he called to his aid, and then fought with the tempter. He nobly says, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He came off conqueror. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 9}

Amid the snares to which all are exposed, they need strong and trustworthy defenses on which to rely. Many, in this corrupt age, have so small a supply of the grace of God, that in many instances their defense is broken down by the first assault, and fierce temptations take them captive. The shield of grace can preserve all unconquered by the temptations of the enemy, though surrounded by the most corrupting influences. By firm principle and unwavering trust in God, their virtue and nobleness of character may shine; and, although surrounded with evil, no taint need be left upon them. And if, like Joseph, they suffer calumny and false accusations, Providence will overrule all the enemy's devices for good, and in his own time, exalt them as much higher, as for a while they were debased by wicked revenge. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 10}

The part which Joseph acted in connection with the scenes of the gloomy prison, was that which raised him finally to prosperity and honor. God designed that he should obtain an experience by temptations, adversity, and hardships, to prepare him to fill an exalted position. {ST, January 8, 1880 par. 11}

While Joseph was still confined in prison, an event occurred which formed a turning-point in his life. Pharaoh became offended with two of his officers, the chief baker and the chief butler, and they were cast into prison, and, as it appears, were placed under Joseph's especial care. One morning he observed that they were looking very sad. He kindly inquired, "Wherefore look ye so sadly today? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you." Then the butler related to Joseph his dream, which he interpreted, that after three days the butler would be restored to the king's favor, and deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand as he had formerly done. {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 1}

The chief butler was filled with gratitude to Joseph because of the interest he had manifested for him, and the kind treatment he had received at his hands; and, above all, for relieving his distress of mind, by interpreting the dream. Then Joseph, in a very touching manner, alluded to his own captivity, and entreated him, "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into a dungeon." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 2}

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he was encouraged to make known his dream. As soon as he had related it, Joseph looked sad. He understood its terrible meaning. Joseph possessed a kind, sympathizing heart, yet his high sense of duty led him to give the truthful interpretation. He told the chief baker that the three baskets upon his head meant three days; and that, as in his dream, the birds ate the baked meats out of the upper basket, so they would eat his flesh as he hung upon a tree. {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 3}

"And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." The butler was guilty of the sin of ingratitude. After he had obtained relief from his anxiety by Joseph's cheering interpretation, he thought that he should, if restored to his position, certainly remember the captive Joseph, and speak in his favor to the king. He had seen the interpretation of the dream exactly fulfilled, yet in his prosperity he forgot Joseph in his affliction and confinement. Ingratitude is regarded by the Lord as among the most aggravating sins. But although abhorred by God and man, it is of daily occurrence. {ST, January 15 1880 par 4}

Two years longer Joseph remained in his gloomy prison. The Lord then gave Pharaoh remarkable dreams. The king was troubled because he could not understand them. He called for the magicians and wise men of Egypt, and related his dreams to them, but was greatly disappointed to find that with all their magic and boasted wisdom, they could not explain them. The perplexity and distress of the king increased. As the chief butler saw his anxiety, the thought of Joseph came to his mind, and at the same time a conviction of his forgetfulness and ingratitude. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day." He then related to the king the dreams which he and the chief baker had, which troubled them as the dreams now troubled the king, and said, "And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 5}

It was humiliating to Pharaoh to turn away from the magicians and wise men of his kingdom to a Hebrew servant. But his learned and wise men have failed him, and he will now condescend to accept the humble services of a slave, if his troubled mind can obtain relief. {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 6}

"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 7}

Joseph's answer to the king shows his strong faith and humble trust in God. He modestly disclaims all honor of possessing in himself superior wisdom to interpret. He tells the king that his knowledge is not greater than that of those whom he has consulted. "It is not in me." God alone can explain these mysteries. "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; and behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and they fed in a meadow; and behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and the ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 8}

"And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good; and behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears; and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 9}

"And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one. God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 10}

Joseph told the king that there would be seven years of great plenty. Everything would grow in abundance. Fields and gardens would yield more plentifully than ever before. And these seven years of abundance were to be followed by seven years of famine. The years of plenty would be given that he might prepare for the coming dearth. "And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 11}

The king believed all that Joseph had said. He felt assured that God was with him, and was impressed with the fact that he was the most suitable man to be placed at the head of affairs. He did not despise him because he was a Hebrew slave, for he saw that he possessed an excellent spirit. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath sheweth thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." {ST, January 15, 1880 par. 12}

Although Joseph was exalted as a ruler over all the land, he did not forget God. The thought that he was a stranger in a strange land, separated from his father and his brethren, often caused him sadness, but he fully believed that God's hand had overruled his course, to place him in an important position. And depending on God continually, he performed all the duties of his office, as ruler over the land of Egypt, with faithfulness. "And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities, the food of the field which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number." {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 1}

Joseph traveled throughout all the land of Egypt, giving command to build immense storehouses, and using his clear head and excellent judgment to aid in the preparations to secure food necessary for the long years of famine. At length the seven years of plenty were ended. "And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said; and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt." {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 2}

The famine was severe in the land of Canaan also. Jacob and his sons were troubled. Their supply of food was nearly exhausted, and they looked forward to the future with perplexity. Starvation stared them in the face. At length Jacob heard of the wonderful provisions which the King of Egypt had made, and that the people of all the surrounding countries journeyed to Egypt to buy corn. And he said to his sons, "Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him." {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 3}

Jacob's sons came with the crowd of buyers to purchase corn of Joseph; and they "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." He knew them at once, but they failed to recognize him. There was, indeed, little semblance between the mighty governor of Egypt, and the stripling whom, twenty-two years previous, they had sold to the Ishmaelites. As he saw his brethren stooping and making their obeisance, his dreams came back to his memory, and the scenes of the past rose up vividly before him. His keen eye again surveyed the group before him, and he saw that Benjamin was missing. Had he also fallen a victim to the treacherous cruelty of those savage men? He determined to know the truth. "Ye are spies," he said, "to see the nakedness of the land, ye are come." {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 4}

They answered, "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies." He wished to learn if they possessed the same haughty spirit as when he was with them, and also to lead them to make some disclosures in regard to their home, yet he well knew how deceitful their answers might be. He repeated the charge, and they replied, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is still with our father, and one is not." They felt humbled in their adversity, and manifested grief rather than anger at the suspicions of Joseph. He professed to doubt the truthfulness of their story, and told them that he would prove them, and that they should not go forth from Egypt until their youngest brother come hither. He proposed to keep them in confinement until one should go and bring their brother, to prove their words, whether there was any truth in them. If they would not consent to this, he would regard them as spies. {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 5}

The sons of Jacob felt unwilling to consent to this arrangement. It would require some time for one to go to their father for Benjamin, and meanwhile their families would suffer for food. And who among them would undertake the journey alone, leaving his brethren in prison? How could that one meet his father? They had seen his distress at the supposed death of Joseph, and now he would feel that he was deprived of all his sons. They said, further, It may be that we shall lose our lives, or be made slaves. And if one go back to our father for Benjamin, and bring him here, he may be made a slave also, and our father will surely die. They decided that they would all remain, and suffer together, rather than to bring greater sorrow upon their father by the loss of his much-loved Benjamin. {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 6}

The three days of confinement were days of bitter sorrow with Jacob's sons. They reflected upon their past wrong course, especially their cruelty to Joseph. They knew that if they were convicted of being spies, and could bring no evidence to clear themselves, they must all die, or become slaves. They doubted whether any effort which any one of them might make would induce their father to consent that Benjamin should go from him, after the cruel death, which he supposed, that Joseph had suffered. They had sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them also to become slaves. {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 7}

Joseph considers that his father and the families of his brethren may be suffering for food, and he is convinced that his brethren have repented of their cruel treatment of him, and that they would in no case treat Benjamin as they have treated him. On the third day he said to them, "This do, and live; for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." They agreed to accept this proposition, but expressed to one another little hope that their father will let Benjamin return with them. They accuse themselves, and one another, in regard to their treatment of Joseph: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben, who had formed the plan for delivering him at Dothan, now added, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Joseph had been conversing with them through an interpreter, and they had no suspicion that he understood them. Their words opened the long-closed fountains of his heart, and he could scarcely restrain his feelings before the company. He went out and wept. On returning, he took Simeon and had him bound before them. In the cruel treatment of their brother, Simeon had been the instigator and principal actor, and it was for this reason that the choice fell upon him. {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 8}

Before dismissing his brethren for their homes, Joseph directed his steward to fill every man's sack with grain, and to place at the mouth of each the silver that had been brought in payment. Provender for the beasts on the homeward journey was also supplied. On the way one of the brothers, opening his sack for such supply, was surprised to find his money there. On his hastening to make known the fact to the others, they were alarmed and perplexed, and said one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us? Shall we consider this as a token of good from the Lord, or has he suffered it to occur to punish us for our sins, and plunge us still deeper in affliction? They acknowledged that God had seen their sins, and that he was now visiting them for their transgressions. {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 9}

Jacob was anxiously awaiting the return of his sons, and on their arrival the whole encampment gathered eagerly around them as they related to their father all that had transpired. Alarm and apprehension filled every heart. One of their number was imprisoned in a strange land as a pledge for the appearance there of the youngest and now the favorite son of the grief-stricken patriarch. There was something mysterious in the conduct of the governor of Egypt, and this mystery was increased in their minds when, as they emptied their sacks, each was found to contain the owner's bag of money at its mouth. In his distress the aged father exclaimed, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." Reuben answered, "Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand and I will bring him to thee again." This rash speech did not relieve the mind of Jacob. His answer was, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." {ST, January 22, 1880 par. 10}

The drouth still continued in the land of Canaan; and, as time passed on, the grain that had been brought from Egypt was consumed. The sons of Jacob well knew how useless and even dangerous it would be to present themselves, without Benjamin, before the prime minister of Egypt; they knew, too, how desperate must be any effort to change their father's resolution, and they awaited the issue in silence. The aged man saw the faces of all in the encampment grow pale and thin with hunger; he heard the cries of the children for bread; and at last he said, "Go again, buy us a little food." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 1}

Judah answered, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you." Seeing that the resolution of his father was giving way, he added, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones; and he offered to be surety for his brother, and to take upon himself the father's blame forever if he did not restore Benjamin to him. {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 2}

Jacob could no longer withhold his consent, and he bade his sons prepare for the journey. They were to take to the ruler a present of such things as the destitute country afforded, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds, also "double money" in their sacks, -that formerly returned, and some for the present purchase. "Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 3}

As his sons were about to start on their doubtful journey, the aged father arose, and, standing in their midst, raised his hands to Heaven and pronounced on them a gracious benediction: "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 4}

So they went down again into Egypt, and presented themselves before Joseph. As his eye fell upon Benjamin, from whom he had been so long separated, he was deeply moved. He gave no token of recognition, however, but ordered the ruler of his house to take them to his princely residence, and there prepare for an entertainment. They were greatly alarmed at this, fearing that it was for the purpose of calling them to account for the money found in their sacks. They thought that it might have been intentionally placed there, to furnish occasion to make them slaves, and that they were brought into the governor's palace better to accomplish this object. They sought the steward of the house, and related to him the circumstances, and in proof of their innocence informed him that they had brought back the money found in their sacks, also other money to buy food; and they added, "We cannot tell who put the money in our sacks." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 5}

The man replied, "Peace be to you; fear not; your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money." These words relieved their anxiety, and when Simeon, who had been released from prison, joined them, they felt that God was indeed gracious unto them, as their father had entreated that he would be. {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 6}

When the governor came home, they offered him their presents, making before him the customary obeisance. Again his dreams came into his mind. There had been one including his father; and now, after the usual salutations to his guests, he hastened to ask, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" "Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive," was the answer with another obeisance. Then his eye rested upon Benjamin, his own mother's son, and as if to make the matter sure he asked, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? God be gracious unto thee, my son;"--but, overpowered by feelings of tenderness, he could say no more without betraying his emotion. He hastened to his own private chamber, and there found relief in tears. {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 7}

Having recovered his self-possession and removed all traces of tears, he returned, and ordered the feast to be prepared. Among the Egyptians, caste was very strict, and they never ate with the people of another nation. Separate tables were therefore set for them, another for Joseph's brethren and still another for the governor of the kingdom. When seated at the table his brethren were surprised to see that they were arranged in exact order, the eldest being placed first, and the youngest last, as was customary when their ages were known. Joseph sent a portion of food to each, Benjamin's five times as large as any of the others. He did this, not only to show his particular regard for Benjamin, but to prove his brethren, to see if they regarded their youngest brother with the same feelings of envy and hatred which they had manifested toward himself. Still supposing that Joseph did not understand their language, they freely conversed with one another in his presence, therefore he had a good opportunity to learn the true state of their feelings. {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 8}

Still he desired further proof. There could be no excuse for detaining them longer; and, after directing his steward to conceal his drinking-cup of silver in the sack of the youngest, he let them go. {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 9}

Joyfully they set out on the homeward journey. Simeon was with them, their sacks were filled with grain, and they felt that they had escaped safely from the perils that had seemed to surround them. But they had only reached the outskirts of the city when they were overtaken by the governor's steward, who uttered the scathing inquiry, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby, indeed, he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing." Kings and rulers had a cup from which they drank, which was considered a sure detective if any poisonous substance was placed in their drink. To the accusation of the steward the travelers answered, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 10}

The steward said, "Now also will it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my servant and ye shall be blameless." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 11}

The search began immediately. The sacks were placed on the ground, and the steward examined them all, beginning with Reuben's and going down to the sack of the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack! {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 12}

At this discovery all were speechless. To express their utter wretchedness they rent their garments, as was the custom when in deep affliction. As they sadly returned to the city they felt that the hand of God was against them for their past wickedness. The fears of their father, they thought, would now be fully realized. By their own promise, Benjamin was doomed to a life of slavery." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 13}

They followed the steward to the palace, and, finding the prime minister still there, they fell before him on the ground. "What deed is this that ye have done?" he said. "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? Joseph asked this question to draw forth from his brethren an acknowledgment of their past wrong course, that their true feelings might be more fully revealed. He did not claim any power of divination, but was willing his brethren should believe that he could read the secret acts of their lives. Judah answered, "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." The reply was, God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 14}

In his intense distress, Judah now drew near to the ruler, and exclaimed, "O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my Lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh;" and he related to him the reluctance of his father to let Benjamin come with them to Egypt, the father's deep grief at the loss of Joseph, and that Benjamin was all that was left of the mother whom Jacob loved. "Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life), it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest per- adventure I see the evil that come on my father." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 15}

Joseph was satisfied. He had proved his brethren and had seen in them the fruits of true repentance for their sins. He was so deeply affected that he could no longer conceal his feelings, and he gave orders that all but these men should leave the hall; then he wept aloud, and cried out, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" His brethren could not answer him, for surprise and terror. They could not realize that the ruler of Egypt was their brother Joseph, whom they had envied and would have murdered, but were finally content to sell as a slave. All their ill-treatment of him passed before them. They remembered how they had despised his dreams; and had labored to prevent their fulfillment. Yet they had acted their part in fulfilling these dreams; and now they stood before him condemned and amazed. As Joseph saw the confusion he said to them, "Come near to me, I pray you;" they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." He nobly sought to make this occasion as easy for his brethren as possible. He had no desire to increase their embarrassment by censuring them. He felt that they had suffered enough for their cruelty to him, and he endeavored to comfort them. He went on, "For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him " {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 16}

They humbly confessed the wrongs which they had committed against Joseph, and entreated his forgiveness. They were greatly rejoiced to find that he was alive; for they had suffered the keenest anxiety and remorse since their cruelty toward him. Joseph gladly forgave his brethren, and sent them away abundantly supplied with provisions, and carriages, and everything necessary for the removal of all their families and attendants to Egypt. On Benjamin he bestowed more valuable presents than upon his other brethren. Then, fearing that disputes and divisions would rise among them on the homeward journey, he gave them, as they were about leaving him the significant charge, "See that ye fall not out by the way." {ST, January 29, 1880 par. 17}

The sons of Jacob returned to their father with the joyful tidings, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." At first the old man was overwhelmed; he could not believe what he heard, yet their words brought a faintness to his heart. But when he saw the carriages and the long line of loaded animals, and when Benjamin was at his side once more, he felt reassured, and, in the fullness of his joy, exclaimed. "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die." The brothers then made their humiliating confession to their father, and entreated his forgiveness, for their wicked treatment of Joseph. Jacob had not suspected them of such cruelty, but he saw that God had overruled it all for good, and he forgave and blessed his erring children. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 1}

Jacob and his sons, with their families and numerous attendants, were soon on their way to Egypt. With gladness of heart they pursued their journey, and when they came to Beersheba the aged patriarch offered grateful sacrifices, and entreated the Lord to grant them an assurance that he would go with them. In a vision of the night the divine words came to Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 2}

The meeting of Joseph and his father was very affective. Joseph left his chariot, and ran to meet his father on foot, and embraced him, and they wept over each other. "And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 3}

Joseph took five of his brethren to present to Pharaoh, and receive from him a grant of land for their future home. He did not wish them to be exposed to the temptations which must surround them if engaged in the king's special service, amid the corrupting, idolatrous influences at court; therefore he counseled them, when the king should ask them of their occupation, to tell him frankly that they were shepherds. The monarch, on learning this fact, would not seek to exalt them to some honorable position for Joseph's sake; for the occupation of a shepherd was regarded in Egypt as degrading. When taken before Pharaoh they followed the wise counsel of their God-fearing brother; and the king gave Joseph permission to settle his father and his brethren in the best part of the land of Egypt. He selected Goshen, a well-watered, fertile country, affording good pasture for their flocks. Here, also, they could worship God, undisturbed by the ceremonies attending the idolatrous service of the Egyptians. The country round about Goshen was inhabited by the Israelites, until with power and mighty signs and wonders, God brought his people out of Egypt. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 4}

Not long after their arrival in Egypt, Joseph brought his father also to be presented to Pharaoh. The patriarch was unawed by the pomp of royalty, and the magnificence surrounding him. Amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh. The king struck by his venerable appearance, inquired, "How old art thou?" Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Jacob had seen much trouble and suffered much perplexity. The jealousy of his wives had brought a long train of evils, and the sinful course of some of his children had made the father's life very bitter. But his last years were more peaceful. His sons had turned from their evil ways, Joseph had been restored to him, and, surrounded by every comfort which the prime minister of Egypt could bestow, and in the society of his children, he passed down gently and calmly toward the grave. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 5}

A short time before his death, his children gathered about him to receive his blessing, and to listen to his last words of counsel. As he addressed them for the last time the Spirit of God rested upon him and he laid open before them their past lives, and also uttered prophecies which reached far into the future. Beginning with the eldest, he mentioned his sons by name, presenting before those who had followed a sinful course the light in which God regarded their deeds of violence, and that he would visit them for their sins. Reuben had taken no part in selling Joseph, but previous to that transaction he had grievously sinned. Concerning him, Jacob uttered the following prophecy: "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power; unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 6}

He then prophesied in regard to Simeon and Levi, who had practiced deception to the Shechemites, and then, in a most cruel, revengeful manner, destroyed them. These brothers were also the most guilty in the case of Joseph. "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 7}

In regard to Judah, the fathers words of inspiration were more joyful. His prophetic eye looked hundreds of years into the future, to the birth of Christ, and he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 8}

Jacob predicted a cheerful future for most of his sons. Especially for Joseph he uttered words of eloquence of a happy character: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)" "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 9}

Jacob was an affectionate father. He had no resentful feelings toward his sorrowing children. He had forgiven them. He loved them to the last. But God, by the spirit of prophecy, elevated the mind of Jacob above his natural feelings. In his last hours, angels were all around him, and the power of God rested upon him. His paternal feelings would have led him to utter, in his dying testimony, only expressions of love and tenderness. But under the influence of inspiration he uttered truth, although painful. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 10}

After the death of Jacob, Joseph's brethren were filled with gloom and distress. They thought that Joseph had concealed his resentment, out of respect for their father; and now that he was dead, he would be revenged for the ill treatment he had suffered at their hands. They dared not appear before him, but sent a messenger, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." This message affected Joseph to tears, and, encouraged by this, his brethren came and fell down before him, with the words, "Behold, we be thy servants." He met them with the comforting and assuring reply, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. Joseph loved his brethren, and he could not bear the thought that they regarded him as harboring a spirit of revenge toward them. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 11}

The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ, Joseph's brethren purposed to kill him, but were finally content to sell him as a slave, to prevent his becoming greater than themselves. They thought they had placed him where they would be no more troubled with his dreams, and where there would not be a possibility of their fulfillment. But the very course which they pursued, God overruled to bring about that which they designed never should take place--that he should have dominion over them. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 12}

The chief priests and elders were jealous of Christ, fearing that he would draw the attention of the people away from themselves. They knew that he was doing greater works than they ever had done, or ever could perform; and they knew that if he was suffered to continue his teachings, he would become higher in authority than they, and might become king of the Jews. They agreed together to prevent this by privately taking him, and hiring witnesses to testify falsely against him, that they might condemn him and put him to death. They would not accept him as their king, but cried out, Crucify him! crucify him! But by murdering the Son of God, they were bringing about the very thing they sought to prevent. Joseph, by being sold by his brethren into Egypt, became a saviour to his father's family. Yet this fact did not lessen the guilt of his brethren. The crucifixion of Christ by his enemies made him the Redeemer of mankind, the Saviour of the fallen race, and ruler over the whole world. But the crime of his enemies was just as heinous as though God's providential hand had not controlled events for his own glory and the good of man. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 13}

Joseph walked with God. And when he was imprisoned, and suffered because of his innocence, he meekly bore it without murmuring. His self-control, his patience in adversity, and his unwavering fidelity, are left on record for the benefit of all who should afterward live on the earth. When Joseph's brethren acknowledged their sin before him, he freely forgave them, and showed by his acts of benevolence and love that he harbored no resentful feelings for their former cruel conduct toward him. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 14}

The life of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was a pattern of benevolence, goodness, and holiness. Yet he was despised and insulted, mocked and derided, for no other reason than because his righteous life was a constant rebuke to sin. His enemies would not be satisfied until he was given into their hands, that they might put him to a shameful death. He died for the guilty race; and, while suffering the most cruel torture, meekly forgave his murderers. He rose from the dead, ascended up to his Father, and received all power and authority, and returned to the earth again to impart it to his disciples. He gave gifts unto men. And all who have ever come to him repentant, confessing their sins, he has received into his favor, and freely pardoned. And if they remain true to him, he will exalt them to his throne, and make them his heirs to the inheritance which he has purchased with his own blood. {ST, February 5, 1880 par. 15}