

Signs That Point the Way

Sabbath afternoon, September 28

As one who understands his subject, John ascribes all power to Christ, and speaks of His greatness and majesty. He flashes forth divine rays of precious truth, as light from the sun. He presents Christ as the only Mediator between God and humanity.

The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations." It is the great and profound mystery of godliness. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Christ took upon Himself human nature, a nature inferior to His heavenly nature. Nothing so shows the wonderful condescension of God as this. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." John presents this wonderful subject with such simplicity that all may grasp the ideas set forth, and be enlightened. —*The Review and Herald, April 5, 1906.*

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God.

As legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; His commands and decisions were supported by the sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that he who had seen the Son had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God. . . . He says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:11; Matthew 11:27; 14:9) — *That I May Know Him, p. 38.*

Every miracle that Christ performed was a sign of His divinity. He was doing the very work that had been foretold of the Messiah; but to the Pharisees these works of mercy were a positive offense. The Jewish leaders looked with heartless indifference on human suffering. In many cases their selfishness and oppression had caused the affliction that Christ relieved. Thus His miracles were to them a reproach.

That which led the Jews to reject the Saviour's work was the highest evidence of His divine character. The greatest significance of His miracles is seen in the fact that they were for the blessing of humanity. The highest evidence that He came from God is that His life revealed the character of God. He did the works and spoke the words of God. Such a life is the greatest of all miracles. —*The Desire of Ages, p. 406.*

Sunday, September 29

The Wedding at Cana

Jesus did not begin His ministry by some great work before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. At a household gathering in a little Galilean village His power was put forth to add to the joy of a wedding feast. Thus He showed His sympathy with men, and His desire to minister to their happiness. In the wilderness of temptation He Himself had drunk the cup of woe. He came forth to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life. . . .

It was to honor Mary's trust, and to strengthen the faith of His disciples, that the first miracle was performed. The disciples were to encounter many and great temptations to unbelief. To them the prophecies had made it clear beyond all controversy that Jesus was the Messiah. They looked for the religious leaders to receive Him with confidence even greater than their own. They declared among the people the wonderful works of Christ and their own confidence in His mission, but they were amazed and bitterly disappointed by the unbelief, the deep-seated prejudice, and the enmity to Jesus, displayed by the priests and rabbis. The Saviour's early miracles strengthened the disciples to stand against this opposition. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 144, 147.

When the time had fully come, the miracle wrought by Christ was recognized. As soon as the ruler of the feast put the goblet to his lips and tasted the wine, he looked up with glad surprise. The wine was superior to any he had ever before drunk. And it was unfermented wine. He said to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (verse 10).

Christ did not approach the jars, or touch the water; He simply looked upon the water, and it became the pure juice of the grape, clarified and refined. What effect did this miracle have?—"His disciples believed on him" (verse 11). . . . By this miracle Christ also gave evidence of His mercy and compassion. He showed that He had regard for the necessities of those who followed Him to hear His words of knowledge and wisdom. —*This Day with God*, p. 366.

The Lord has promised to give light to those who seek him with the whole heart. If we will but wait patiently and prayerfully upon God, and not follow our own impetuous plans, he will guide our decisions, and open many doors of hope and labor. The great General of armies will lead in every battle for the advancement of his cause. He will be the guide of his people in the perilous conflicts in which they have to engage, if [they] . . . will do their appointed work, and listen to the voice which says, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" "They that follow me shall not walk in darkness." What a great comfort this promise should be to us! We may walk in the light as he is in the light. . . . Men may follow many kinds of lights, but there is only one Light that it will be safe for them to follow. Be sure that you are following Jesus whithersoever he goeth. —*Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*, no. 3, p. 44.

Monday, September 30

The Second Sign in Galilee

In Capernaum the tidings [of Christ's return to Cana] attracted the attention of a Jewish nobleman who was an officer in the king's service. A son of the officer was suffering from what seemed to be an incurable disease. Physicians had given him up to die; but when the father heard of Jesus, he determined to seek help from Him. . . .

On reaching Cana he found a throng surrounding Jesus. With an anxious heart he pressed through to the Saviour's presence. His faith faltered when he saw only a plainly dressed man, dusty and worn with travel. He doubted that this Person could do what he had come to ask of Him; yet, . . . his sorrow was known to Jesus. Before the officer had left his home, the Saviour had beheld his affliction.

But He knew also that the father had, in his own mind, made conditions concerning his belief in Jesus. Unless his petition should be granted, he would not receive Him as the Messiah. While the officer waited in an agony of suspense, Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." .

The Saviour contrasted this questioning unbelief with the simple faith of the Samaritans, who asked for no miracle or sign. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 196–198.

The nobleman had a degree of faith; for he had come to ask what seemed to him the most precious of all blessings. Jesus had a greater gift to bestow. He desired, not only to heal the child, but to make the officer and his household sharers in the blessings of salvation, and to kindle a light in Capernaum, which was so soon to be the field of His own labors. But the nobleman must realize his need before he would desire the grace of Christ. .

Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. In an agony of supplication he cried, "Sir, come down ere my child die." His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Genesis 32:26.

Like Jacob he prevailed. The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. "Go thy way," He said; "thy son liveth." The nobleman left the Saviour's presence with a peace and joy he had never known before. Not only did he believe that his son would be restored, but with strong confidence he trusted in Christ as the Redeemer. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

Tuesday, October 1

The Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda

The [paralytic] was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The sick man might have said, "Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word." But, no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he willed to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.

In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise,—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it.

Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, "I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 50, 51.

Christ asked [the paralytic], "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6). What a question! That was what he was there for, but Christ wanted to call forth the expression of desire in that man's heart to be made whole. And when Christ bade him to rise, take up his bed and walk, he did just as Christ told him to do. . . . He did not stop to argue, but did just as he was bidden. He took up his bed and walked out and was healed from that time.

This is the faith that we need. But if you stop to explain everything and reason out every point, you will die in your sins, because you will never be satisfied. —*Faith and Works*, p. 68.

When Christ healed disease, He warned many of the afflicted ones, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5:14. Thus He taught that they had brought disease upon themselves by transgressing the laws of God, and that health could be preserved only by obedience.

The physician should teach his patients that they are to cooperate with God in the work of restoration. The physician has a continually increasing realization of the fact that disease is the result of sin. He knows that the laws of nature, as truly as the precepts of the Decalogue, are divine, and that only in obedience to them can health be recovered or preserved. He sees many suffering as the result of hurtful practices who might be restored to health if they would do what they might for their own restoration. They need to be taught that every practice which destroys the physical, mental, or spiritual energies is sin, and that health is to be secured through obedience to the laws that God has established for the good of all mankind. —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 113.

Wednesday, October 2

Hard Hearts

[In Christ's] days the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of God. Christ set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. Although followed with merciless hostility by the rabbis, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.

In unmistakable language He testified to His regard for the law of Jehovah. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets," He said; "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" [Matthew 5:17-18]. —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 183.

May the Lord work upon the hearts of those who have received great light, that they may depart from all iniquity. Behold the cross of Calvary. There is Jesus, who gave His life, not that men might continue in sin, not that they may have license to break the law of God, but that through this infinite sacrifice they may be saved from all sin. . . .

We have been asked why it is that there is so little power in the churches, why there is so little efficiency among our teachers. The answer is that it is because known sin in various forms is cherished among the professed followers of Christ, and the conscience becomes hardened by long violation. The answer is that men do not walk with God but separate company with Jesus, and as a result we see manifested in the church selfishness, covetousness, pride, strife, contention, hard-heartedness, licentiousness, and evil practices. —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 161, 162.

The spirit of the truth makes better men and women of those who receive it in their hearts. It works like leaven till the entire being is brought into conformity to its principles. It opens the heart that has been frozen by avarice; it opens the hand that has ever been closed to human suffering; and charity and kindness are seen as its fruits. . . .

Day by day men and women are deciding their eternal destiny. I have been shown that many are in great danger. When a man will do or say anything to gain his end, nothing but the power of God can save him. His character needs to be transformed before he can have a good conscience, void of offense toward God and man. Self must die, and Christ must take possession of the soul temple. When, by rejecting the light that God has given, men abuse and trample upon the conscience, they are in fearful danger. Their future eternal welfare is imperiled. —*Mind, Character, Personality*, vol. 1, pp. 319, 320.

Thursday, October 3

Jesus' Claims

"Jerusalem, and all Judea" had listened to the preaching of John the Baptist; and the deputation from the Sanhedrin, with the multitude, had heard his testimony concerning Jesus. In Judea, Christ had received His first disciples. Here much of His early ministry had been spent. The flashing forth of His divinity in the cleansing of the temple, His miracles of healing, and the lessons of divine truth that fell from His lips, all proclaimed that which after the healing at Bethesda He had declared before the Sanhedrin,—His Sonship to the Eternal.

If the leaders in Israel had received Christ, He would have honored them as His messengers to carry the gospel to the world. To them first was given the opportunity to become heralds of the kingdom and grace of God. But . . . jealousy and distrust of the Jewish leaders had ripened into open hatred, and the hearts of the people were turned away from Jesus.

The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ's message and was bent upon His death. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 231, 232.

Where many have erred, was in not being careful in following God's ideas, but their own. Christ Himself declared, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do" (John 5:19). So utterly was He emptied of Himself that He made no schemes and plans. He lived accepting God's plans for Him, and the Father day by day unfolded His plans. If Jesus was so wholly dependent, and declared, "Whatsoever I see the Father do, that I do," how much more should human agents depend upon God for constant instruction, so that their lives might be the simple working out of God's plans! —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 147.

The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge. We may task our imagination to the utmost, and then we shall see only dimly the outlines of a love that is unexplainable, that is as high as heaven, but that stooped to the earth to stamp the image of God on all mankind. . . .

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 129.

Friday, October 4

For Further Reading

My Life Today, "Forgiveness of Sin Brings Healing," p. 154;
The Upward Look, "Revelation of God's Will," p. 341.