

Rough Start

Sabbath Afternoon, July 12

Before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. When His purpose in the affliction is accomplished, "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:6.

There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 174, 175.

So it is with every other one of God's requirements. All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises.

But we must show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Often He delays to answer us in order to try our faith or test the genuineness of our desire. Having asked according to His word, we should believe His promise and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied.

God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearyingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks. . . .

But many have not a living faith. This is why they do not see more of the power of God. Their weakness is the result of their unbelief. They have more faith in their own working than in the working of God for them. They take themselves into their own keeping. They plan and devise, but pray little, and have little real trust in God. They think they have faith, but it is only the impulse of the moment. Failing to realize their own need, or God's willingness to give, they do not persevere in keeping their requests before the Lord.

The more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ. We shall receive increased blessings because we have increased faith. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 145, 146.

Sunday, July 13

Who Is the Lord?

When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan. There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. The apostate is never at rest, except as he obtains sympathy and support by inducing others to follow his example. For this reason, fallen angels and wicked men unite in desperate companionship. Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God. . . .

Satan's enmity against the human race is kindled, because, through Christ, they are the objects of God's love and mercy. He desires to thwart the divine plan for man's redemption, to cast dishonor upon God, by defacing and defiling his handiwork; he would cause grief in Heaven, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he points to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man. —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 505, 506.

During the forty years after the flight of Moses from Egypt, idolatry seemed to have conquered. Year by year the hopes of the Israelites grew fainter. Both king and people exulted in their power, and mocked the God of Israel. This grew until it culminated in the Pharaoh who was confronted by Moses. When the Hebrew leader came before the king with a message from "Jehovah, God of Israel," it was not ignorance of the true God, but defiance of His power, that prompted the answer, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice? . . . I know not Jehovah." From first to last, Pharaoh's opposition to the divine command was not the result of ignorance, but of hatred and defiance.

Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments. The bigotry and stubbornness of the king resulted in spreading the knowledge of God, and bringing many of the Egyptians to give themselves to His service. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 333.

Monday, July 14

A Rough Start

[The] officers supposed that their oppression came from their taskmasters, and not from the king himself; and they went to him with their grievances. Their remonstrance was met by Pharaoh with a taunt: "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord." They were ordered back to their work, with the declaration that their burdens were in no case to be lightened. Returning, they met Moses and Aaron, and cried out to them, "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us."

As Moses listened to these reproaches he was greatly distressed. The sufferings of the people had been much increased. All over the land a cry of despair went up from old and young, and all united in charging upon him the disastrous change in their condition. In bitterness of soul he went before God, with the cry, "Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all." The answer was, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." Again he was pointed back to the covenant which God had made with the fathers, and was assured that it would be fulfilled. — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 258, 259.

The Hebrew nation was taken into close relation to God, as a peculiar people, a holy nation. The Lord gave to Israel evidences of His presence, that they might fear His name and obey His voice, and that they might know that He was leading them to the promised land. The power of God, which was revealed in so remarkable a manner in their deliverance from Egypt, was seen from time to time through all their journeyings.

And in these manifestations and revelations God was uplifting Israel from a demoralized condition. Great changes were to be wrought in this disorganized people; for oppression and servitude and idolatrous association had molded their habits, their appetites, and their characters.

The Lord had promised Israel that if they would obey His commandments, He would supply their necessities by His miraculous power. But the Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They wanted their own way. They desired to follow the leadings of their own minds and be controlled by their own judgment.

The Lord heard their murmurings, and the divine presence was revealed in so remarkable a manner that they were afraid. A voice was heard from the glory, bidding Moses and Aaron draw near to the cloudy pillar where Christ was enshrouded. And the Lord talked with Moses and Aaron, and the Israelites heard His voice telling them that He had heard their murmurings. . . . In all His dealings with them, God was seeking to teach His people that it was not Moses with whom they were finding fault, but that their murmurings were directed against their divine Leader. — *Signs of the Times*, July 19, 1899, par. 1–4.

Tuesday, July 15

The Divine “I”

God delivered Israel with the mighty manifestations of His power, and with judgments upon all the gods of Egypt. “He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness: . . . that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws.” Psalm 105:43–45. He rescued them from their servile state, that He might bring them to a good land—a land which in His providence had been prepared for them as a refuge from their enemies, where they might dwell under the shadow of His wings. He would bring them to Himself, and encircle them in His everlasting arms; and in return for all His goodness and mercy to them they were required to have no other gods before Him, the living God, and to exalt His name and make it glorious in the earth. — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 334.

As the children of Israel charged all their suffering upon Moses, he was greatly distressed, and felt almost like murmuring because the Lord delayed to deliver his people. They were not yet prepared to be delivered. They had but little faith, and were unwilling to patiently suffer and perseveringly endure their afflictions, until God should work for them a glorious deliverance.

“Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant.”

Many years had the children of Israel been in servitude to the Egyptians. Only a few families went down into Egypt, but they had become a large multitude. And being surrounded with idolatry, many of them had lost the knowledge of the true God, and had forgotten his law. And they united with the Egyptians in their worship of the sun, moon, and stars, also of beasts and images, the work of men’s hands. Everything around the children of Israel was calculated to make them forget the living God. Yet there were those among the Hebrews who preserved the knowledge of the true God, the Maker of the heavens and of the earth. They were grieved to see their children daily witnessing, and even engaging in, the abominations of the idolatrous people around them, and bowing down to Egyptian deities, made of wood and stone, and offering sacrifice to these senseless objects. The faithful were grieved, and in their distress they cried unto the Lord for deliverance from the Egyptian yoke; that he would bring them out of Egypt, where they might be rid of idolatry, and the corrupting influences which surrounded them. — *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 200, 201.

Uncircumcised Lips

Many of the Hebrews were content to remain in bondage rather than to go to a new country and meet with the difficulties attending such a journey. Therefore the Lord did not deliver them by the first display of his signs and wonders before Pharaoh. He over-ruled events to more fully develop the tyrannical spirit of Pharaoh, and that he might manifest his great power to the Egyptians, and also before his people to make them anxious to leave Egypt, and choose the service of God. The task of Moses would have been much easier had not many of the Hebrews become corrupted, and were unwilling to leave Egypt. —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 201, 202.

Often the Israelites seemed unable or unwilling to understand God's purpose for the heathen. Yet it was this very purpose that had made them a separate people and had established them as an independent nation among the nations of the earth. Abraham, their father, to whom the covenant promise was first given, had been called to go forth from his kindred, to the regions beyond, that he might be a light bearer to the heathen. Although the promise to him included a posterity as numerous as the sand by the sea, yet it was for no selfish purpose that he was to become the founder of a great nation in the land of Canaan. God's covenant with him embraced all the nations of earth. "I will bless thee," Jehovah declared, "and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:2, 3.

In the renewal of the covenant shortly before the birth of Isaac, God's purpose for mankind was again made plain. "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him," was the assurance of the Lord concerning the child of promise. Genesis 18:18. And later the heavenly visitant once more declared, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18.

The all-embracing terms of this covenant were familiar to Abraham's children and to his children's children. It was in order that the Israelites might be a blessing to the nations, and that God's name might be made known "throughout all the earth" (Exodus 9:16), that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. If obedient to His requirements, they were to be placed far in advance of other peoples in wisdom and understanding; but this supremacy was to be reached and maintained only in order that through them the purpose of God for "all nations of the earth" might be fulfilled.

The marvelous providences connected with Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage and with their occupancy of the Promised Land led many of the heathen to recognize the God of Israel as the Supreme Ruler. "The Egyptians shall know," had been the promise, "that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Exodus 7:5. Even proud Pharaoh was constrained to acknowledge Jehovah's power. "Go, serve the Lord," he urged Moses and Aaron, "and bless me also." Exodus 12:31, 32. —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 367–369.

Thursday, July 17

Like God to Pharaoh

Aaron was a man of amiable disposition, whom God selected to stand with Moses and speak for him; in short, to be mouthpiece for Moses. God might have chosen Aaron as leader; but He who is acquainted with hearts, who understands character, knew that Aaron was yielding and lacked moral courage to stand in defense of the right under all circumstances, irrespective of consequences. Aaron's desire to have the good will of the people sometimes led him to commit great wrongs. He too frequently yielded to their entreaties, and in so doing dishonored God. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, 293.

The Lord said unto Moses, "Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it you for a heritage. I am the Lord. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel; but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land."

Moses was somewhat discouraged. In his despondency he inquired of the Lord, If the children of Israel, thine own circumcised people, will not hearken unto me, how then shall Pharaoh, who is uncircumcised, and an idolater, hear me? "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they."

The Lord told Moses that the signs and wonders which he should show before Pharaoh would harden his heart, because he would not receive them, and God would multiply his signs. Every punishment which the king rejected would bring the next chastisement more close and severe, until the proud heart of the king would be humbled, and he should acknowledge the Maker of the heavens and the earth as the living and all-powerful God.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 203, 204.

Friday, July 18

For Further Reading

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 293–303.
The Ministry of Healing, pp. 474–478.