

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

3.8: TEMPTED AND TRIED

1. THE VALUE OF TRIAL

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Psalm 119:71.

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Hebrews 12:5, 6.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

Trials Originated by Satan: "Trials will come upon us that are originated by the prince of evil. The enemy will contend for the life or the usefulness of the servants of God, and will seek to mar their peace as long as they remain in the world. But his power is limited. He may cause the furnace to be heated, but Jesus and holy angels watch the precious ore; and to the trusting Christian, grace will be found sufficient, and nothing but the worthless dross will be consumed. The fire kindled by the enemy can have no power to destroy the true gold." Review and Herald, April 10, 1894.

God Leads as We Would Choose: "God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah who ascended in a chariot of fire was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor." The Desire of Ages, 225.

"God ... has a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the deep shadows of affliction, we can sing it ever afterward." Review and Herald, Nov. 25, 1884.

Trials God's Workmen: "Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God "does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." When He permits trials and afflictions, it is "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him.

"The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process, it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple." Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 23, 24.

2. WORDS TO THE YOUNG

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.” Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them.” Ecclesiastes 12:1.

“Solomon's later writings reveal that as he realized more and still more the wickedness of his course, he gave special attention to warning the youth against falling into the errors that had led him to squander for naught Heaven's choicest gifts. With sorrow and shame he confessed that in the prime of manhood, when he should have found God his comfort, his support, his life, he turned from the light of Heaven and the wisdom of God, and put idolatry in the place of the worship of Jehovah. And now, having learned through sad experience the folly of such a life, his yearning desire was to save others from entering into the bitter experience through which he had passed.

“With touching pathos he wrote concerning the privileges and responsibilities before the youth in God's service. . . .

“Not only to the youth, but to those of mature years, and to those who are descending the hill of life and facing the western sun, the life of Solomon is full of warning. We see and hear of unsteadiness of youth, the young wavering between right and wrong, and the current of evil passions proving too strong for them. In those of maturer years, we do not look for this unsteadiness and unfaithfulness; we expect the character to be established, the principles firmly rooted. But this is not always so. When Solomon should have been in character as a sturdy oak, he fell from his steadfastness under the power of temptation. When his strength should have been the firmest, he was found to be the weakest.

“From such examples we should learn that in watchfulness and prayer is the only safety for both young and old. Security does not lie in exalted position and great privileges. One may for many years have enjoyed a genuine Christian experience, but he is still exposed to Satan's attacks. In the battle with inward sin and outward temptation, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His failure teaches us that, whatever a man's intellectual qualities may be, and however faithfully he may have served God in the past, he can never with safety trust in his own wisdom and integrity....

Those who heed the warning of Solomon's apostasy will shun the first approach of those sins that overcame him. Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy. God has bestowed upon man great light and many blessings; but unless this light and these blessings are accepted, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness. Their entrusted capabilities become a snare.” Prophets and Kings, pages 80-83.

3. ENDURING TEMPTATION

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” I Corinthians 10:13.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” James 1:12.

“Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may leave Him, and be overwhelmed with temptation; but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of

His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice. The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend. . . .

“Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 172, 173.

“Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God's word declares, “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.” Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life.

“Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, “Let him that thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall.” Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ.” Christ's Object Lessons, page 156.

“We should not lose courage when assailed by temptation. Often when placed in a trying situation we doubt that the Spirit of God has been leading us. But it was the Spirit's leading that brought Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. When God brings us into trial, He has a purpose to accomplish for our good. Jesus did not presume on God's promises by going unbidden into temptation, neither did He give up to despondency when temptation came upon Him. Nor should we.” The Desire of Ages, 126-129.

4. SEEK YE THE LORD

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:1-7.

“I cannot express to you the intense desire of my soul that you should all seek the Lord most earnestly while He may be found. We are in the day of God's preparation. Let nothing be regarded as of sufficient worth to draw your minds from the work of preparing for the great day of judgment. Get ready. Let not cold unbelief hold your souls away from God; but let His love burn on the altar of your hearts.” Testimonies 5, 590.

“We cannot afford, in the few days we have here on earth, to spend our time in trifling and nothingness. We need to humble our souls before God, that every heart may drink in the truth, and let it work in the life a reformation that will convince the world that this is indeed the truth of God. Let the life be hid with Christ in God. Only when we seek the Lord as little children, when we cease picking flaws in our

brethren and sisters, and in those who are seeking to carry faithfully the responsibilities of the work, and seek to get our own hearts right with God, can He use us to the glory of His name.

“We all need to come into a self-sacrificing position before God if our work is to be accepted by Him. Let us remember that profession is nothing unless we have the truth in the heart. We need the converting power of God to take hold of us, that we may understand the needs of a perishing world. The burden of my message to you is, Get ready, get ready to meet the Lord. Trim your lamps, and let the light of truth shine forth into the byways and the hedges. There is a world to be warned of the near approach of the end of all things.

“My brethren and sisters, seek the Lord while He may be found. There is a time coming when those who have wasted their time and opportunities will wish they had sought Him. God has given you reasoning faculties. He wants you to keep in the line of reason and in the line of labor.” Testimonies 9, 106, 107.

5. JACOB'S DELIVERANCE

“Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as He wrestled with him. And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince has thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou does ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel. For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Genesis 32:24-30.

“Jacob, in the great crisis of his life, turned aside to pray. He was filled with one overmastering purpose, to seek for transformation of character. But while lie was pleading with God, an enemy, as he supposed, placed His hand upon him, and all night he wrestled for his life. But the purpose of his soul was not changed by peril of life itself. When his strength was nearly spent, the Angel put forth His divine power, and at His touch, Jacob knew Him with whom he had been contending. Wounded and helpless, he fell upon the Savior's breast, pleading for a blessing. He would not be turned aside, nor cease his intercession, and Christ granted the petition of this helpless, penitent soul, according to His promise, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.”

“Jacob pleaded with determined spirit, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” This spirit of persistence was inspired by Him who wrestled with the patriarch. It was He who gave him the victory, and He changed his name from Jacob to Israel, saying, “As a prince has thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed.” That for which Jacob had vainly wrestled in his own strength, was won through self surrender and steadfast faith. “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 206, 207.

“It is a perilous thing to allow an unchristian trait to live in the heart. One cherished sin will, little by little, debase the character, bringing all its nobler powers into subjection to the evil desire. The removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the indulgence of one evil habit, one neglect of the high claims of duty, breaks down the defenses of the soul, and opens the way for Satan to come in and lead us astray. The only safe course is to let our prayers go forth daily from a sincere heart, as did David, “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.” Psalm 17:5. Patriarchs and Prophets, 452.

6. SATAN PERSONATES CHRIST

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan

with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10.

"Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belongs to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing, and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Savior's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1: 13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air, "Christ has come! Christ has come!"

"The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands, and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious heavenly truths which the Savior uttered. He heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying, This is 'the great power of God.'" Acts 8:10.

"But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out." The Great Controversy, 624, 625.

7. SATAN WILL BE DESTROYED

"The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Revelation 20:10.

"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Ezekiel 28:18, 19.

"The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are a last destroyed, root and branch,

Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

“Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe, and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. “The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing.” And a shout of praise and triumph, ascends from the whole loyal universe. “The voice of a great multitude,” “as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, is heard, saying, “Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.” The Great Controversy, 673.

“Said the angel, “Satan is the root, his children are the branches. They are now consumed root and branch. They have died an everlasting death. They are never to have a resurrection, and God will have a clean universe.” I then looked and saw the fire which had consumed the wicked, burning up the rubbish and purifying the earth. Again I looked, and saw the earth purified. There was not a single sign of the curse. The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God's entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended. Wherever we looked, everything upon which the eye rested was beautiful and holy. And all the redeemed host, old and young, great and small, cast their glittering crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him, and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever. The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.” Early Writings, 295.

WHAT SATAN FEARS MOST

What Satan fears most
Is a man on his knees;
Not vast marching armies
With great weaponry.

He knows he can stand
Against the power of men;
To engage us in battle
Is mere sport to him.
But a man on his knees
With his head bowed in prayer
Is something quite different
To the prince of the air.

For when he sees us in prayer
To our God most high,
He knows we have seen
Through his devilish lies.
That's why Satan fears most
A man on his knees;
And we'll keep him trembling
If our prayers never cease.