

Chapter 41

God's Love for the Sinner

Heaven and the Heart of Man—While Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted.—Education, 28, 29.

Each Individual Known by Jesus—Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in

a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep.

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, “Follow Me,” and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.—The Desire of Ages, 479, 480.

Rebuke of Devil Possession Seven Times—
Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled

her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.

The Transformation of Mary—When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry.

It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.

The Greater the Sin, the Greater the Need for Jesus. Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be, but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe, but He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help.

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer in the light proceeding from the throne of God. “Who shall lay

anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" [Romans 8:33, 34].—The Desire of Ages, 568.

A Never-failing Helper—The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore" [Revelation 1:18]. I have

endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:10).—The Desire of Ages, 483.

Hatred of Sin, Love for Sinners. Jesus arose, and looking at the woman said, “Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

The woman had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear. His words, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,” had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the

Saviour's face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Her heart was melted, and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins.

Beginning of a New Life—This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy.

In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of perfect righteousness. While He does not palliate sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn,

but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn, but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope. The Sinless One pities the weakness of the sinner and reaches to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounce, Jesus bids her, “Go, and sin no more.”

Christian Love Slow to Censure—It is not Christ’s follower that, with averted eyes, turns from the erring, leaving them unhindered to pursue their downward course. Those who are forward in accusing others, and zealous in bringing them to justice, are often in their own lives more guilty than they. Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein.—The Desire of Ages, 461, 462.

Jesus, Friend of Sinners—I would call your attention to the precious promises in the Word of God. Not all who are children of God have the

same powers, the same temperaments, the same confidence and boldness. I am glad indeed that our feelings are no evidence that we are not children of God. The enemy will tempt you to think that you have done things that have separated you from God and that He no longer loves you, but our Lord loves us still, and we may know by the words He has placed on record for just such cases as yours. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” [1 John 2:1]. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” [1 John 1:9].

Now, my dear sister, I have evidence that God loves you; and the precious Saviour, who gave Himself for you, will not thrust you from Him because you are tempted, and in your weakness may have been overcome. He loves you still.

Peter denied his Lord in the hour of trial, but Jesus did not forsake His poor disciple. Although Peter hated himself, the Lord loved him, and after His resurrection He called him by name and sent

him a loving message. Oh, what a kind, loving, compassionate Saviour we have! And He loves us though we err.

Sweet Promises of God—Now, do not worry yourself out of the arms of the dear Saviour, but rest trustingly in faith. He loves you; He cares for you. He is blessing you, and will give you His peace and grace. He is saying to you, “Thy sins be forgiven thee” [Matthew 9:2]. You may be depressed with bodily infirmities, but that is not evidence that the Lord is not working in your behalf every day. He will pardon you, and that abundantly. Gather to your soul the sweet promises of God. Jesus is our constant, unfailing Friend, and He wants you to trust in Him.

God is at work, and Satan also is at work. Satan would have our minds drawn away from the mighty Helper, to ponder over our degradation of soul, and feel that all its powers are being wasted and God dishonored. Look away from yourself to the perfection of Christ.

Christ's Righteousness for Us—We cannot manufacture a righteousness for ourselves. Christ has in His hands the pure robes of righteousness, and He will put them upon us. He will speak sweet words of forgiveness and promise. He presents to our thirsty souls fountains of living water whereby we may be refreshed. He bids us come unto Him with all our burdens, all our griefs, and He says we shall find rest. Therefore, if we come to Him, we must believe that He speaks pardon, and we must show our faith by resting in His love. The heart is moved by all that is tender and pure and lofty—high ambition, holy joys, ennobling motives, endearing sympathies, and needful help.

Offer of Free Pardon—Jesus sees the guilt of the past, and speaks pardon, and we must not dishonor Him by doubting His love. This feeling of guiltiness must be laid at the foot of the cross of Calvary. The sense of sinfulness has poisoned the springs of life and of true happiness. Now Jesus says, “Lay it all on Me. I will take your sins. I will give you peace. Banish no longer your self-respect, for I have bought you with the price of My own

blood. You are Mine. Your weakened will I will strengthen; your remorse for sin I will remove.”

Then turn your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, to Him and lay hold on the hope set before you. God accepts your broken, contrite heart, and extends to you free pardon. He offers to adopt you into His family, with His grace to help your weakness. And the dear Saviour will lead you on step by step, you placing your hand in His, and letting Him guide you.

Search for the precious promises of God—If Satan thrusts threatenings before your mind, turn from them, and cling to the promises, and let your soul be comforted by their brightness. The cloud is dark in itself, but when filled with the light, it is turned to the brightness of gold, for the glory of God is upon it.

May the Lord bless to your soul these few words He has prompted me to write.—Letter 99, 1896.

Objects of God's Loving Interest—The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depth of human wretchedness, and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin.

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock.—The Ministry of Healing, 161, 162.