

ZOOM AUGUST 17

TURNING POINT

The crisis of Philadelphia in 1856 and the crisis of Laodicea in 2023

October 22, 1844 to 1856 to 1863. July 18, 2020, to July 2023 to the Sunday law.

“Science and history cannot of themselves make men wise unto salvation; but through the aid of the Holy Spirit, which, in answer to prayer, will be given to guide into all truth, science and history may be made use of as a clear, definite light, blending with that of the written, inspired word. **There are lessons to be learned from the history of the past; and attention is called to these, that all may understand that God works on the same lines now that He ever has done.** His hand is seen in His work and among the nations now, just the same as it has been ever since the gospel was first proclaimed to Adam in Eden.

“There are periods which are **turning points in the history of nations and of the church.** In the providence of God, when **these different crises arrive, the light for that time is given.** If it is received, there is spiritual progress; if it is rejected, spiritual declension and shipwreck follow. **The Lord in His word has opened up the aggressive work of the gospel as it has been carried on in the past, and will be in the future, even to the closing conflict, when Satanic agencies will make their last wonderful movement.** From that word we understand that the forces are now at work that will usher in the last great conflict between good and evil—between Satan, the prince of darkness, and Christ, the Prince of life. But the coming triumph for the men who love and fear God is as sure as that His throne is established in the heavens.” *Bible Echo*, August 26, 1895.

HIS OWN CITY

“At **Capernaum** Jesus dwelt in the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as ‘**His own city.**’ It was on the shores of **the Sea of Galilee**, and near the borders of the beautiful plain of Gennesaret, if not actually upon it.” *The Desire of Ages*, 252.

The name “Capernaum” means “Village of Nahum.” and Nahum means “comfort or consolation.” Capernaum represents the city which the Lord did choose, the city He chooses to send the Comforter unto. The crisis in Galilee represented a turning point within God’s church which would produce two classes of worshippers based upon their reception or rejection of the prophetic message. The crisis typifies the purging and sifting of the Messenger of the Covenant of Malachi chapter three.

A DISAPPOINTMENT

“Unbelief was taking possession of their minds and hearts. Love of honor had blinded them. They knew that Jesus was hated by the Pharisees, and they were eager to see Him exalted as they thought He should be. To be united with a teacher who could work mighty miracles, and yet to be reviled as deceivers, was a trial they could ill endure. Were they always to be accounted followers of a false prophet? Would Christ never assert His authority as king? Why did not He who possessed such power reveal Himself in His true character, and make their way less painful? Why had He not saved John the Baptist from a violent

death? Thus the disciples reasoned until they brought upon themselves great spiritual darkness. They questioned, Could Jesus be an impostor, as the Pharisees asserted?

“The disciples had that day witnessed the wonderful works of Christ. It had seemed that heaven had come down to the earth. The memory of that precious, glorious day should have filled them with faith and hope. Had they, out of the abundance of their hearts, been conversing together in regard to these things, they would not have entered into temptation. But **their disappointment had absorbed their thoughts**. The words of Christ, ‘Gather up the fragments, ... that nothing be lost,’ **were unheeded**. Those were hours of large blessing to the disciples, but they had forgotten it all. They were in the midst of troubled waters. Their thoughts were stormy and unreasonable, and the Lord gave them something else to afflict their souls and occupy their minds. God often does this when men create burdens and troubles for themselves. The disciples had no need to make trouble. Already danger was fast approaching.’ *The Desire of Ages*, 380.

Galilee means a hinge, which is a turning point.

“Christ’s discourse in the synagogue concerning the bread of life was **the turning point in the history of Judas**. He heard the words, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.’ John 6:53. He saw that Christ was offering spiritual rather than worldly good. He regarded himself as farsighted, and thought he could see that Jesus would have no honor, and that He could bestow no high position upon His followers. He determined not to unite himself so closely to Christ but that he could draw away. He would watch. And he did watch.” *The Desire of Ages*, 719.

CHAPTER 41—THE CRISIS IN GALILEE

“When Christ forbade the people to declare Him king, He knew that **a turning point in His history was reached**. Multitudes who desired to exalt Him to the throne today would turn from Him tomorrow. The disappointment of their selfish ambition would turn their love to hatred, and their praise to curses. Yet knowing this, **He took no measures to avert the crisis**. From the first He had held out to His followers no hope of earthly rewards. To one who came desiring to become His disciple He had said, ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.’ Matthew 8:20. If men could have had the world with Christ, multitudes would have proffered Him their allegiance; but such service He could not accept. Of those now connected with Him there were many who had been attracted by the hope of a worldly kingdom. These must be undeceived. **The deep spiritual teaching in the miracle of the loaves had not been comprehended. This was to be made plain. And this new revelation would bring with it a closer test.**

“The miracle of the loaves was reported far and near, and very early next morning the people flocked to Bethsaida to see Jesus. They came in great numbers, by land and sea. Those who had left Him the preceding night returned, expecting to find Him still there; for there had been no boat by which He could pass to the other side. But their search was fruitless, and many repaired to Capernaum, still seeking Him.

“Meanwhile He had arrived at Gennesaret, after an absence of but one day. As soon as it was known that He had landed, the people ‘ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was.’ Mark 6:55.

“After a time He went to the synagogue, and there those who had come from **Bethsaida** found Him. They learned from His disciples how He had crossed the sea. The fury of the storm, and the many hours of fruitless rowing against adverse winds, the appearance of Christ walking upon the water, the fears thus aroused, His reassuring words, the adventure of Peter and its result, with the sudden stilling of the tempest and landing of the boat, were all faithfully recounted to the wondering crowd. Not content with this, however, many gathered about Jesus, questioning, ‘Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?’ They hoped to receive from His own lips a further account of the miracle.

“Jesus did not gratify their curiosity. He sadly said, ‘Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.’ They did not seek Him from any worthy motive; but as they had been fed with the loaves, they hoped still to receive temporal benefit by attaching themselves to Him. The Saviour bade them, ‘Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.’ Seek not merely for material benefit. Let it not be the chief effort to provide for the life that now is, but **seek for spiritual food**, even that wisdom which will endure unto everlasting life. This the Son of God alone can give; ‘for Him hath God the Father sealed.’

“For the moment the interest of the hearers was **awakened**. They exclaimed, ‘**What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?**’ They had been performing many and burdensome works in order to recommend themselves to God; and they were ready to hear of any new observance by which they could secure greater merit. **Their question meant, What shall we do that we may deserve heaven? What is the price we are required to pay in order to obtain the life to come?**

“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.’ The price of heaven is Jesus. The way to heaven is through faith in ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29.

“But **the people did not choose to receive this statement of divine truth. Jesus had done the very work which prophecy had foretold that the Messiah would do**; but they had not witnessed what their selfish hopes had pictured as His work. Christ had indeed once fed the multitude with barley loaves; but in the days of Moses Israel had been fed with manna forty years, and far greater blessings were expected from the Messiah. Their dissatisfied hearts queried why, if Jesus could perform so many wondrous works as they had witnessed, could He not give health, strength, and riches to all His people, free them from their oppressors, and exalt them to power and honor? The fact that He claimed to be the Sent of God, and yet refused to be Israel’s king, was a mystery which they could not fathom. His refusal was misinterpreted. Many concluded that He dared not assert His claims because He Himself doubted as to the divine character of His mission. Thus they opened their hearts to unbelief, and the seed which Satan had sown bore fruit of its kind, in misunderstanding and defection.

“Now, half mockingly, a rabbi questioned, ‘**What sign showest** Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’

“The Jews honored Moses as the giver of the manna, ascribing praise to the instrument, and losing sight of Him by whom the work had been accomplished. Their fathers had murmured against Moses, and had doubted and denied his divine mission. **Now in the same spirit the children rejected the One who bore the message of God to themselves.** ‘Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread

from heaven.” The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, is the true manna. Jesus said, ‘The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’ John 6:33, R. V.

“Still thinking that it was temporal food to which Jesus referred, some of His hearers exclaimed, ‘Lord, evermore give us this bread.’ Jesus then spoke plainly: ‘I am the bread of life.’

“The figure which Christ used was a familiar one to the Jews. Moses, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had said, ‘Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.’ And the prophet Jeremiah had written, ‘Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.’ Deuteronomy 8:3; Jeremiah 15:16. The rabbis themselves had a saying, that the eating of bread, in its spiritual significance, was the study of the law and the practice of good works; and it was often said that at the Messiah’s coming all Israel would be fed. The teaching of the prophets made plain the deep spiritual lesson in the miracle of the loaves. This lesson Christ was seeking to open to His hearers in the synagogue. Had they understood the Scriptures, they would have understood His words when He said, ‘I am the bread of life.’ Only the day before, the great multitude, when faint and weary, had been fed by the bread which He had given. As from that bread they had received physical strength and refreshment, so from Christ they might receive spiritual strength unto eternal life. ‘He that cometh to Me,’ He said, ‘shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.’ But He added, ‘Ye also have seen Me, and believe not.’

“They had seen Christ by the witness of the Holy Spirit, by the revelation of God to their souls. The living evidences of His power had been before them day after day, yet **they asked for still another sign**. Had this been given, they would have remained as unbelieving as before. If they were not convinced by what they had seen and heard, it was useless to show them more marvelous works. Unbelief will ever find excuse for doubt, and will reason away the most positive proof.

“Again Christ appealed to those stubborn hearts. ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out.’ All who received Him in faith, He said, should have eternal life. Not one could be lost. No need for Pharisees and Sadducees to dispute concerning the future life. No longer need men mourn in hopeless grief over their dead. ‘This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.’

“But the leaders of the people were offended, ‘and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?’ They tried to arouse prejudice by referring scornfully to the lowly origin of Jesus. They contemptuously alluded to His life as a Galilean laborer, and to His family as being poor and lowly. The claims of this uneducated carpenter, they said, were unworthy of their attention. And on account of His mysterious birth they insinuated that He was of doubtful parentage, thus representing the human circumstances of His birth as a blot upon His history.

“Jesus did not attempt to explain the mystery of His birth. He made no answer to the questionings in regard to His having come down from heaven, as He had made none to the questions concerning His crossing the sea. He did not call attention to the miracles that

marked His life. Voluntarily He had made Himself of no reputation, and taken upon Him the form of a servant. But His words and works revealed His character. All whose hearts were open to divine illumination would recognize in Him ‘the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ John 1:14.

“The prejudice of the Pharisees lay deeper than their questions would indicate; it had its root in the perversity of their hearts. Every word and act of Jesus aroused antagonism in them; for the spirit which they cherished could find in Him no answering chord.

“‘No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.’ None will ever come to Christ, save those who respond to the drawing of the Father’s love. But God is drawing all hearts unto Him, and **only those who resist** His drawing will refuse to come to Christ.

“In the words, ‘They shall be all taught of God,’ Jesus referred to the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.’ Isaiah 54:13. This scripture the Jews appropriated to themselves. It was their boast that God was their teacher. But Jesus showed how vain is this claim; for He said, ‘Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me.’ Only through Christ could they receive a knowledge of the Father. Humanity could not endure the vision of His glory. Those who had learned of God had been listening to the voice of His Son, and in Jesus of Nazareth they would recognize Him who through nature and revelation has declared the Father.

“‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.’ Through the beloved John, who listened to these words, the Holy Spirit declared to the churches, ‘This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life.’ 1 John 5:11, 12. And Jesus said, ‘I will raise him up at the last day.’ Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.

“The people had referred Christ to the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness, as if the furnishing of that food was a greater miracle than Jesus had performed; but He shows how meager was that gift when compared with the blessings He had come to bestow. The manna could sustain only this earthly existence; it did not prevent the approach of death, nor insure immortality; but the bread of heaven would nourish the soul unto everlasting life. The Saviour said, **‘I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.’** To this figure Christ now adds another. Only through dying could He impart life to men, and in the words that follow He points to His death as the means of salvation. He says, ‘The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’

“The Jews were about to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem, in commemoration of the night of Israel’s deliverance, when the destroying angel smote the homes of Egypt. In

the paschal lamb God desired them to behold the Lamb of God, and through the symbol receive Him who gave Himself for the life of the world. But the Jews had come to make the symbol all-important, while its significance was unnoticed. They discerned not the Lord's body. **The same truth that was symbolized in the paschal service was taught in the words of Christ. But it was still undiscerned.**

"Now the rabbis exclaimed angrily, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' **They affected to understand His words in the same literal sense as did Nicodemus** when he asked, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' John 3:4. To some extent they comprehended the meaning of Jesus, but they were not willing to acknowledge it. By misconstruing His words, they hoped to prejudice the people against Him.

"Christ did not soften down His symbolical representation. He reiterated the truth in yet stronger language: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.'

"To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.

"But even these figures fail to present the privilege of the believer's relation to Christ. Jesus said, 'As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.' As the Son of God lived by faith in the Father, so are we to live by faith in Christ. So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life. Although tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world untainted by the evil that surrounded Him. Thus we also are to overcome as Christ overcame.

"Are you a follower of Christ? Then all that is written concerning the spiritual life is written for you, and may be attained through uniting yourself to Jesus. Is your zeal languishing? has your first love grown cold? Accept again of the proffered love of Christ. Eat of His flesh, drink of His blood, and you will become one with the Father and with the Son.

"**The unbelieving Jews refused to see any except the most literal meaning in the Saviour's words.** By the ritual law they were forbidden to taste blood, and they now construed Christ's language into a sacrilegious speech, and disputed over it among themselves. Many even of the disciples said, 'This is an hard saying; who can hear it?'

"The Saviour answered them: 'Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'

"**The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word.** It was by **His word** that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by **His word** He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that **His word** was with power. **He spoke the word** of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. **The**

whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on **the word**. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, **the word** must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Matthew 4:4.

“As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know ‘what saith the Lord.’

“In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that I by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. **The experiences related in God’s word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine.** ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Galatians 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ **This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.**

“Christ had spoken a sacred, eternal truth regarding the relation between Himself and His followers. He knew the character of those who claimed to be His disciples, and **His words tested their faith**. He declared that they were to believe and act upon His teaching. All who received Him would partake of His nature, and be conformed to His character. This involved the relinquishment of their cherished ambitions. It required the complete surrender of themselves to Jesus. They were called to become self-sacrificing, meek and lowly in heart. They must walk in the narrow path traveled by the Man of Calvary, if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven.

“**The test was too great.** The enthusiasm of those who had sought to take Him by force and make Him king grew cold. **This discourse in the synagogue, they declared, had opened their eyes.** Now they were undeceived. In their minds His words were a direct confession that He was not the Messiah, and that no earthly rewards were to be realized from connection with Him. They had welcomed His miracle-working power; they were eager to be freed from disease and suffering; but they would not come into sympathy with His self-sacrificing life. They cared not for the mysterious spiritual kingdom of which He spoke. The insincere, the selfish, who had sought Him, no longer desired Him. If He would not devote

His power and influence to obtaining their freedom from the Romans, they would have nothing to do with Him.

“Jesus told them plainly, ‘There are some of you that believe not;’ adding, ‘Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father.’ He wished them to understand that if they were not drawn to Him it was because their hearts were not open to the Holy Spirit. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ 1 Corinthians 2:14. It is by faith that the soul beholds the glory of Jesus. This glory is hidden, until, through the Holy Spirit, faith is kindled in the soul.

“By **the public rebuke of their unbelief these disciples were still further alienated from Jesus.** They were greatly displeased, and wishing to wound the Saviour and gratify the malice of the Pharisees, they turned their backs upon Him, and left Him with disdain. They had made their choice,—had taken the form without the spirit, the husk without the kernel. **Their decision was never afterward reversed; for they walked no more with Jesus.**

“‘Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.’ Matthew 3:12. **This was one of the times of purging. By the words of truth, the chaff was being separated from the wheat.** Because they were too vain and self-righteous to receive reproof, too world-loving to accept a life of humility, **many turned away from Jesus.** Many are still doing the same thing. **Souls are tested today as were those disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum. When truth is brought home to the heart, they see that their lives are not in accordance with the will of God. They see the need of an entire change in themselves; but they are not willing to take up the self-denying work.** Therefore they are angry when their sins are discovered. They go away offended, even as the disciples left Jesus, murmuring, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’

“Praise and flattery would be pleasing to their ears; but the truth is unwelcome; they cannot hear it. When the crowds follow, and the multitudes are fed, and the shouts of triumph are heard, their voices are loud in praise; but when the searching of God’s Spirit reveals their sin, and bids them leave it, they turn their backs upon the truth, and walk no more with Jesus.

“As those disaffected disciples turned away from Christ, **a different spirit took control of them.** They could see nothing attractive in Him whom they had once found so interesting. They sought out His enemies, for they were in harmony with their spirit and work. They misinterpreted His words, falsified His statements, and impugned His motives. They sustained their course by gathering up every item that could be turned against Him; and such indignation was stirred up by these false reports that His life was in danger.

“The news spread swiftly that by His own confession Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah. And thus in Galilee the current of popular feeling was turned against Him, as, the year before, it had been in Judea. Alas for Israel! They rejected their Saviour, because they longed for a conqueror who would give them temporal power. They wanted the meat which perishes, and not that which endures unto everlasting life.

“With a yearning heart, Jesus saw those who had been His disciples departing from Him, the Life and the Light of men. The consciousness that His compassion was unappreciated, His love unrequited, His mercy slighted, His salvation rejected, filled Him with sorrow that was inexpressible. It was such developments as these that made Him a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

“Without attempting to hinder those who were leaving Him, Jesus turned to the twelve and said, ‘Will ye also go away?’

“Peter replied by asking, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go?’ ‘Thou hast the words of eternal life,’ he added. ‘And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.’

“‘To whom shall we go?’ The teachers of Israel were slaves to formalism. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in constant contention. To leave Jesus was to fall among sticklers for rites and ceremonies, and ambitious men who sought their own glory. The disciples had found more peace and joy since they had accepted Christ than in all their previous lives. How could they go back to those who had scorned and persecuted the Friend of sinners? They had long been looking for the Messiah; now He had come, and they could not turn from His presence to those who were hunting His life, and had persecuted them for becoming His followers.

“‘To whom shall we go?’ Not from the teaching of Christ, His lessons of love and mercy, to the darkness of unbelief, the wickedness of the world. While the Saviour was forsaken by many who had witnessed His wonderful works, Peter expressed the faith of the disciples,—‘Thou art that Christ.’ The very thought of losing this anchor of their souls filled them with fear and pain. To be destitute of a Saviour was to be adrift on a dark and stormy sea.

“Many of the words and acts of Jesus appear mysterious to finite minds, **but every word and act had its definite purpose in the work for our redemption**; each was calculated to produce its own result. If we were capable of understanding His purposes, all would appear important, complete, and in harmony with His mission.

“While we cannot now comprehend the works and ways of God, we can discern His great love, which underlies all His dealings with men. He who lives near to Jesus will understand much of the mystery of godliness. He will recognize the mercy that administers reproof, that tests the character, and brings to light the purpose of the heart.

“When Jesus presented **the testing truth that caused so many of His disciples to turn back, He knew what would be the result of His words**; but He had a purpose of mercy to fulfill. He foresaw that in **the hour of temptation** every one of His beloved disciples would be severely **tested**. His agony in Gethsemane, His betrayal and crucifixion, would be to them a most trying ordeal. **Had no previous test been given, many who were actuated by merely selfish motives would have been connected with them.** When their Lord was condemned in the judgment hall; when the multitude who had hailed Him as their king hissed at Him and reviled Him; when the jeering crowd cried, ‘Crucify Him!’—when their worldly ambitions were disappointed, these self-seeking ones would, by renouncing their allegiance to Jesus, have brought upon the disciples a bitter, heart-burdening sorrow, in addition to their grief and disappointment in the ruin of their fondest hopes. In that hour of darkness, the example of those who turned from Him might have carried others with them. But Jesus brought about this **crisis** while by His personal presence He could still strengthen the faith of His true followers.

“Compassionate Redeemer, who in the full knowledge of the doom that awaited Him, tenderly smoothed the way for the disciples, prepared them for their crowning trial, and **strengthened them for the final test!**” *The Desire of Ages*, 383–394.

A TIME OF PURGING

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to **judgment**; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I *am* the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Malachi 3:1–6.

“While I was thus weeping and mourning for my great loss and accountability, I remembered God, and earnestly prayed that He would send me help.

“Immediately the door opened, and a man entered the room, when the people all left it; and he, having a dirt brush in his hand, opened the windows, and began to brush the dirt and rubbish from the room.

“I cried to him to forbear, for there were some precious jewels scattered among the rubbish.

“He told me to ‘fear not,’ for he would ‘take care of them’.

“Then, while he brushed the dirt and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin, all rose and went out of the window like a cloud, and the wind carried them away. In the bustle I closed my eyes for a moment; when I opened them, the rubbish was all gone. The precious jewels, the diamonds, the gold and silver coins, lay scattered in profusion all over the room.

“He then placed on the table a casket, much larger and more beautiful than the former, and gathered up the jewels, the diamonds, the coins, by the handful, and cast them into the casket, till not one was left, although some of the diamonds were not bigger than the point of a pin.

“He then called upon me to ‘come and see.’

“I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand by the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout awoke me.” *Early Writings*, 83.

“No outward forms can make us clean; no ordinance, administered by the saintliest of men, can take the place of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God must do its work upon the heart. All who have not experienced its regenerating power are chaff among the wheat. Our **Lord has His fan in His hand**, and He will thoroughly **purge His floor**. In the coming day He will discern ‘between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.’” *Testimonies*, 227.

“Christ is our refuge; and it is only through faith in him that we can form characters that God can accept. We may add knowledge to knowledge, strength to strength, and virtue to virtue, and **yet fail in the soul-testing conflict just before us**, because we do not make Christ our strength and righteousness. No outward forms can make us clean; they cannot take the place of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All who have not experienced the regenerating power of the Spirit of God are chaff among the wheat. Our Lord has his fan in his hand, and he will thoroughly **purge** his floor. In the coming day he will discern ‘between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.’” *Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1887.

“Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in perils by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void his law. When God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when his law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage the most unflinching. **To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few,—this will be our test.** At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.

“The days of purification of the church are hastening on space. God will have a people pure and true. In **the mighty sifting soon to take place**, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that **his fan is in his hand**, and that he soon will thoroughly **purge** his floor.” *Review and Herald*, January 11, 1887.