

dwelling upon the truth in regard to the character of our heavenly Father, we fasten our minds upon the misrepresentations of Satan, and dishonor God by mistrusting Him and by murmuring against Him. When we act like culprits under sentence of death, we bear false witness against God. The Father gave His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die for us, and in so doing He placed great honor upon humanity; for in Christ the link that was broken through sin was reunited, and man again connected with Heaven. You who doubt the mercy of God, look at the Lamb of God, look at the Man of Sorrows, who bore your grief and suffered for your sin. He is your friend. He died on the cross because He loved you. He is touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and bears you up before the throne. In view of His unspeakable love, should not hope, love, and gratitude be cherished in your heart? Should not gladness fill your service to God?

Satan ever seeks to make the religious life one of gloom. He desires it to appear toilsome and difficult; and when the Christian presents this view of religion in his own life, he is, through his

unbelief, seconding the falsehood of Satan. We dishonor God when we think of Him only as a judge ready to pass sentence upon us, and forget that He is a loving Father. The whole spiritual life is molded by our conceptions of God; and if we cherish erroneous views of His character, our souls will sustain injury. We should see in God one who yearns toward the children of men, longing to do them good. He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. All through the Scriptures, God is represented as one who calls, woos by His tender love, the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of their children as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaty to the wanderer than does He. O shall we not love God, and show our love by humble obedience? Let us have a care for our thoughts, our experiences, our attitude toward God; for all His promises are but the breathings of unutterable love.—*Review and Herald, Jan. 14, 1890.*

The Latter Rain—No. 10

By MEADE MacGUIRE

PERHAPS you have heard the story of a little child whose parents were discussing the meaning of a text of Scripture. There seemed to be a difference of opinion. Finally the little girl said, "Well, if God did not mean what He said, why did He not say what He meant?" How important it is that we study God's word to know just what He says, and then accept it with simple, childlike faith, believing that He means just what He says.

"God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

"The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. *There is no excuse for sinning!* A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311. (Italics mine.)

"Many of us fail to improve our privileges. We make a few feeble efforts to do right, and then go back to our old life of sin. If we ever enter the kingdom of God, we must enter with perfect characters, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 105.

"God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 315.

Sometimes we meet persons who quote scrip-

tures which they think set forth a different standard. They say, "The Bible teaches that 'there is none righteous, no, not one.'" But the same passage from which they quote, Romans 3:10-18, also says that "there is none that seeketh after God," and "their feet are swift to shed blood," and "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Anyone reading this passage will see at once that it does not apply at all to God's children, but to the godless and unbelieving world. The word of God never contradicts itself, and we read in Genesis 7:1, "The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." And again we read of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke 1:6.

Whatever we may think of God's requirements for the past, there is no question about His standard for those who live to see the close of probation, the time of trouble, and the coming of the Saviour.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

Again, there are those who are conscious of their defects of character, and what are often called "little sins and imperfections." But they feel sure that when the time of trouble and perse-

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cution comes, they will arouse and seek God and obtain the victory. But the Lord has warned us against the danger of this attitude.

"Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble, or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless."—*Id.*, p. 620.

There are others who have the idea that if they "try hard" to overcome their besetments, and if they "do the best they can," whatever wrongs and imperfections of character remain will be taken care of when Jesus comes. Here again the instruction is plain and specific.

"It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change."—*Testimonies*, Vol. V, p. 466.

"We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. . . . When He comes, He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy, will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects, and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process, and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us. . . .

"We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us, and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty, and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us; here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality."—*Id.*, Vol. 11, pp. 355, 356.

God does not want this high standard to discourage us, and so He makes it very plain that He will accomplish the work if we will only co-operate with Him.

"God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will, and thus frustrate His grace."—*Mount of Blessing*, p. 116.

We have reason to be of good courage, and to press forward with hearts full of joy and confidence when we read what God has done, and will continue to do in our behalf.

"The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to co-operate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven. . . .

"The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abun-

dant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 18, 19.

"I Will Save Thy Children"

By J. S. WASHBURN

TO fathers and mothers there is in God's blessed book of comfort, among its many "exceeding great and precious promises," no greater promise than the one found in Isaiah 49:25, "I will save thy children." Our cruel enemy is too strong for us. Yet God, who fights our battles for us, is infinitely greater and stronger than Satan. Hear these glorious words: "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isa. 49:24, 25.

Every true parent has great pity for his children, because they inherit the weaknesses of their father and mother. The "terrible" enemy preys upon these inherited weaknesses. But God has in times past heard and answered parents' prayers for their children, and He is just as willing to do it today.

A father brought the wreck of his son, completely under Satan's power, to the disciples to be healed. They could not cast out the evil spirit. Why was this? After Jesus had completely healed the boy, He told the disciples why their faith was not strong enough to restore the child. "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." Matt. 17:21. This record in Matthew is a divine explanation, an illumination, of Isaiah 49:24, 25. That child was helpless, hopeless; yet restored. Surely then God can save and redeem any who are in any stage of the disease of sin. And to this end we are privileged to pray.

When Moses prayed so earnestly for the forgiveness of his great, sinful family of Israel, "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32), God forgave their sin. When we pray as earnestly for our natural children, God will certainly hear us.

What a wonderful thing to be able to say, in the great day of the gathering of the righteous, "Here am I and the children Thou hast given me." Let us, as parents, keep on praying earnestly, faithfully—laying fast hold of the promise of our loving heavenly Father, "I will save thy children."

STAND in Christ's presence and mirror His character, and you will be changed in spite of yourself, and unknown to yourself, into the same image from character to character.—*Henry Drummond*.