

Come, Let Us Reason Together

MEMORY TEXT: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

“The law of God was the basis of this [*new*] covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371. [Emphasis supplied.]

Suggested Reading: Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 45-77. (At the bottom of this page)

Sunday March 19

1. TWO COVENANTS

a. In order to be justified with God, what type of agreement is necessary on our part? Psalm 50:5.

Psalm 50:5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

b. In order to make such an agreement, what attitude are we to possess? Isaiah 1:18.

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

c. What type of covenant options are given us? Hebrews 8:6–13.

Hebrews 8:6-13 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. **7** For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **8** For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: **9** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. **10** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: **11** And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least

to the greatest. **12** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. **13** In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

“The terms of the ‘old covenant’ were, Obey and live: ‘If a man do, he shall even live in them’ (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5); but ‘cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.’ Deuteronomy 27:26. The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law. ‘This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*’ Jeremiah 31:33, 34.” — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372. [Emphasis by author.]

Monday March 20

2. WHY IS A COVENANT NECESSARY?

a. What separates us from being in fellowship with our Creator? Isaiah 59:2. What do we deserve? Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“The instant Adam yielded to Satan’s temptation, and did the very thing which God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying: ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. Give him another trial.’ Transgression placed the whole world under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, ‘I have found a ransom.’ He who knew no sin was made sin for fallen man. ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Christ laid off His royal robe and kingly crown, and gave up His command over all heaven. He clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might bear all the infirmities and endure all the temptations of humanity. He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. For our sake He became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. For us He left the adoration of the angels for the insults and execrations of a mob lashed to madness by the priests and rulers.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900.

b. What provision did God make from the very beginning to avert this death sentence? Job 33:24; compare also 1 John 4:19; Revelation 13:8.

Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.’ Romans 16:25, R.V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

Tuesday March 21

3. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

a. When that old Serpent, the Devil, deceived our first parents in Eden, what promise did God make that gives hope to the human race? Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

“Our natural tendencies, unless corrected by the Holy Spirit of God, have in them the seeds of moral death. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we cannot resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 315, 316.

b. Who is this seed of the woman? Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:8, 16; Hebrews 2:14.

Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

“Since the first gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, Christ had been uplifted as the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved. He is the way by which alone we can have access to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

c. Since Abraham trusted in none other than Christ for the forgiveness of sin (Galatians 3:6–8), what was the result of that type of faith? Genesis 26:5.

Galatians 3:6-8 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen

through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Genesis 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

“The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 5, p. 1132.

Wednesday March 22

4. RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT

a. Although this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, when could it be ratified—and hence called the new or second covenant? Hebrews 9:16.

Hebrews 9:16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

“Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a *new* covenant.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 370, 371. [Emphasis by author.]

b. If it was not ratified till the death of Jesus, how did it apply to those children of the heavenly King before the cross? Hebrews 6:13–18.

Hebrews 6:13-18 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, **14** Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. **15** And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. **16** For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. **17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: **18** That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

“The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath

of God—the ‘two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.’ Hebrews 6:18.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

“His word is pledged. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but His kindness shall not depart from His people, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed. His voice is heard, ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love’ (Jeremiah 31:3). ‘With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee’ (Isaiah 54:8). How amazing is this love, that God condescends to remove all cause for doubt and questioning from human fears and weakness and takes hold of the trembling hand reached up to Him in faith; and He helps us to trust Him by multiplied assurances and securities. He has made us a binding agreement upon condition of our obedience, and He comes to meet us in our own understanding of things. We think that a pledge or promise from our fellow men, if recorded, still needs a guarantee. Jesus has met all these peculiar fears, and He has confirmed His promise with an oath: ‘Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. . . .’ What more could our Lord do to strengthen our faith in His promises?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 262.

Thursday March 23

5. TABLES OF THE HEART

a. Because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, what opportunity do we receive? Hebrews 9:15.

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

b. What appeal does God make to each of us personally as we evaluate our responsibility before God? 2 Corinthians 6:2.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. Through the prophet He declared of Himself, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8. And when among men He said, ‘The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.’ John 8:29.

“The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and the law under the new covenant. He says: ‘Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.’ ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh’—it could not justify man, because in his sinful nature he could not keep the law—‘God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after

the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:3, 4.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 372, 373. [Emphasis by author.]

Friday March 24

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What experiences have you had in relation to making covenants with God?
2. Why was God prepared when Adam sinned?
3. What illustrations did God use to continually keep in mind the coming Messiah?
4. How do we know that Abraham was under the new covenant?
5. What kind of a covenant or agreement are you prepared to make with your Creator?

Suggested Reading: Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 45-77.

“I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”—**Matthew 5:17. 1 I**

It was Christ who, amid thunder and flame, had proclaimed the law upon Mount Sinai. The glory of God, like devouring fire, rested upon its summit, and the mountain quaked at the presence of the Lord. The hosts of Israel, lying prostrate upon the earth, had listened in awe to the sacred precepts of the law. What a contrast to the scene upon the mount of the Beatitudes! Under the summer sky, with no sound to break the stillness but the song of birds, Jesus unfolded the principles of His kingdom. Yet He who spoke to the people that day in accents of love, was opening to them the principles of the law proclaimed upon Sinai. **(MB 45.1)**

When the law was given, Israel, degraded by the long bondage in Egypt, had need to be impressed with the power and majesty of God; yet He revealed Himself to them no less as a God of love. **(MB 45.2)**

“The Lord came from Sinai,
And rose from Seir unto them;
He shined forth from Mount Paran,
And He came from the ten thousands of holy ones:
At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.
Yea, He loveth the tribes;
All their holy ones are in Thy hand:
And they sat down at Thy feet;
Everyone received of Thy words.” **(MB 45.3)**

Deuteronomy 33:2, 3 **(MB 45)**

It was to Moses that God revealed His glory in those wonderful words that have been the treasured heritage of the ages: “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. **(MB 46.1)**

The law given upon Sinai was the enunciation of the principle of love, a revelation to earth of the law of heaven. It was ordained in the hand of a Mediator—spoken by Him

through whose power the hearts of men could be brought into harmony with its principles. God had revealed the purpose of the law when He declared to Israel, “Ye shall be holy men unto Me.” Exodus 22:31. **(MB 46.2) 1 I**

But Israel had not perceived the spiritual nature of the law, and too often their professed obedience was but an observance of forms and ceremonies, rather than a surrender of the heart to the sovereignty of love. As Jesus in His character and work represented to men the holy, benevolent, and paternal attributes of God, and presented the worthlessness of mere ceremonial obedience, the Jewish leaders did not receive or understand His words. They thought that He dwelt too lightly upon the requirements of the law; and when He set before them the very truths that were the soul of their divinely appointed service, they, looking only at the external, accused Him of seeking to overthrow it. **(MB 46.3)**

The words of Christ, though calmly spoken, were uttered with an earnestness and power that stirred the hearts of the people. They listened for a repetition of the lifeless traditions and exactions of the rabbis, but in vain. They “were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” Matthew 7:29 , R.V. The Pharisees noted the vast difference between their manner of instruction and that of Christ. They saw that the majesty and purity and beauty of the truth, with its deep and gentle influence, was taking firm hold upon many minds. The Saviour’s divine love and tenderness drew the hearts of men to Him. The rabbis saw that by His teaching the whole tenor of the instruction they had given to the people was set at naught. He was tearing down the partition wall that had been so flattering to their pride and exclusiveness; and they feared that, if permitted, He would draw the people entirely away from them. Therefore they followed Him with determined hostility, hoping to find some occasion for bringing Him into disfavor with the multitudes and thus enabling the Sanhedrin to secure His condemnation and death. **(MB 46.4)**

On the mount, Jesus was closely watched by spies; and as He unfolded the principles of righteousness, the Pharisees caused it to be whispered about that His teaching was in opposition to the precepts that God had given from Sinai. The Saviour said nothing to unsettle faith in the religion and institutions that had been given through Moses; for every ray of divine light that Israel’s great leader communicated to his people was received from Christ. While many are saying in their hearts that He has come to do away with the law, Jesus in unmistakable language reveals His attitude toward the divine statutes. “Think not,” He said, “that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.” Matthew 5:17. **(MB 47.1)**

It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God’s law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes. To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

Job 38:7. The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts. **(MB 48.1)**

The beloved disciple, who listened to the words of Jesus on the mount, writing long afterward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the law as of perpetual obligation. He says that “sin is the transgression of the law” and that “whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.” 1 John 3:4. He makes it plain that the law to which he refers is “an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.” 1 John 2:7. He is speaking of the law that existed at the creation and was reiterated upon Mount Sinai. **(MB 48.2)**

Speaking of the law, Jesus said, “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17. He here used the word “fulfill” in the same sense as when He declared to John the Baptist His purpose to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15); that is, to fill up the measure of the law’s requirement, to give an example of perfect conformity to the will of God. **(MB 48.3)**

His mission was to “magnify the law, and make it honorable.” Isaiah 42:21. He was to show the spiritual nature of the law, to present its far-reaching principles, and to make plain its eternal obligation. **(MB 49.1)**

The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote, He is “the chiefest among ten thousand, ... yea, He is altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:10-16); of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (Psalm 45:2); Jesus, the express image of the Father’s person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude. **(MB 49.2)**

“Till heaven and earth pass,” said Jesus, “one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:18. By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished—all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption. He does not teach that the law is ever to be abrogated, but He fixes the eye upon the utmost verge of man’s horizon and assures us that until this point is reached the law will retain its authority so that none may suppose it was His mission to abolish the precepts of the law. So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God’s law will remain. His righteousness, “like the great mountains” (Psalm 36:6), will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth. **(MB 49.3)**

Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why Jesus came as our Redeemer. It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven. When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted. The apostle Paul

asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Romans 3:31. **(MB 50.1)**

The new-covenant promise is, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” Hebrews 10:16. While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. Not one command has been annulled, not a jot or tittle has been changed. Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun. **(MB 50.2)**

“Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.”(Psalm 119:89) “All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.”(Psalm 11:7, 8) “Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them forever.” Psalm 119:152. **(MB 51.1)**

“Whosoever ... shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”—**Matthew 5:19.**

That is, he shall have no place therein. For he who willfully breaks one commandment, does not, in spirit and truth, keep any of them. “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. **(MB 51.2) 2 I**

It is not the greatness of the act of disobedience that constitutes sin, but the fact of variance from God’s expressed will in the least particular; for this shows that there is yet communion between the soul and sin. The heart is divided in its service. There is a virtual denial of God, a rebellion against the laws of His government. **(MB 51.3)**

Were men free to depart from the Lord’s requirements and to set up a standard of duty for themselves, there would be a variety of standards to suit different minds and the government would be taken out of the Lord’s hands. The will of man would be made supreme, and the high and holy will of God—His purpose of love toward His creatures—would be dishonored, disrespected. **(MB 51.4)**

Whenever men choose their own way, they place themselves in controversy with God. They will have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they are at war with the very principles of heaven. In disregarding the will of God, they are placing themselves on the side of Satan, the enemy of God and man. Not by one word, not by many words, but by every word that God has spoken, shall man live. We cannot disregard one word, however trifling it may seem to us, and be safe. There is not a commandment of the law that is not for the good and happiness of man, both in this life and in the life to come. In obedience to God’s law, man is surrounded as with a hedge and kept from the evil. He who breaks down this divinely erected barrier at one point has destroyed its power to protect him; for he has opened a way by which the enemy can enter to waste and ruin. **(MB 52.1) 2 I**

By venturing to disregard the will of God upon one point, our first parents opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. And every individual who follows their example will

reap a similar result. The love of God underlies every precept of His law, and he who departs from the commandment is working his own unhappiness and ruin. **(MB 52.2)**

“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—**Matthew 5:20.**

The scribes and Pharisees had accused not only Christ but His disciples as sinners because of their disregard of the rabbinical rites and observances. Often the disciples had been perplexed and troubled by censure and accusation from those whom they had been accustomed to revere as religious teachers. Jesus unveiled the deception. He declared that the righteousness upon which the Pharisees set so great value was worthless. The Jewish nation had claimed to be the special, loyal people who were favored of God; but Christ represented their religion as devoid of saving faith. All their pretensions of piety, their human inventions and ceremonies, and even their boasted performance of the outward requirements of the law, could not avail to make them holy. They were not pure in heart or noble and Christlike in character. **(MB 53.1)**

A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners. They were like the salt that had lost its savor; for their influence had no power to preserve the world from corruption. The only true faith is that which “worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6) to purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character. **(MB 53.2) 2 I**

All this the Jews should have learned from the teachings of the prophets. Centuries before, the cry of the soul for justification with God had found voice and answer in the words of the prophet Micah: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? ... He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:6-8. **(MB 53.3)**

The prophet Hosea had pointed out what constitutes the very essence of Pharisaism, in the words, “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.” Hosea 10:1. In their professed service to God, the Jews were really working for self. Their righteousness was the fruit of their own efforts to keep the law according to their own ideas and for their own selfish benefit. Hence it could be no better than they were. In their endeavor to make themselves holy, they were trying to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The law of God is as holy as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect. It presents to men the righteousness of God. It is impossible for man, of himself, to keep this law; for the nature of man is depraved, deformed, and wholly unlike the character of God. The works of the selfish heart are “as an unclean thing;” and “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6. **(MB 54.1)**

While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts

fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness" (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. **(MB 54.2)**

Jesus proceeded to show His hearers what it means to keep the commandments of God—that it is a reproduction in themselves of the character of Christ. For in Him, God was daily made manifest before them. **(MB 55.1)**

"Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."—**Matthew 5:22, R. V.**

Through Moses the Lord had said, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart... Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Leviticus 19:17, 18. The truths which Christ presented were the same that had been taught by the prophets, but they had become obscured through hardness of heart and love of sin. **(MB 55.2)**

The Saviour's words revealed to His hearers the fact that, while they were condemning others as transgressors, they were themselves equally guilty; for they were cherishing malice and hatred. **(MB 55.3)**

Across the sea from the place where they were assembled was the country of Bashan, a lonely region, whose wild gorges and wooded hills had long been a favorite lurking ground for criminals of all descriptions. Reports of robbery and murder committed there were fresh in the minds of the people, and many were zealous in denouncing these evildoers. At the same time they were themselves passionate and contentious; they cherished the most bitter hatred of their Roman oppressors and felt themselves at liberty to hate and despise all other peoples, and even their own countrymen who did not in all things conform to their ideas. In all this they were violating the law which declares, "Thou shalt not kill." Exodus 20:3. **(MB 56.1)**

The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15. **(MB 56.2)**

"Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [vain fellow], shall be in danger of the council." Matthew 5:22. In the gift of His Son for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places upon every human soul, and He gives to no man liberty to speak contemptuously of another. We shall see faults and weaknesses in those about us, but God claims every soul as His property—His by creation, and doubly His as purchased by the precious blood of Christ. All were created in His image, and even the most degraded are to be treated with respect and tenderness. God will hold us accountable for even a word spoken in contempt of one soul for whom Christ laid down His life. **(MB 56.3)**

“Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.” Romans 14:4. **(MB 57.1)**

“Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” R.V. In the Old Testament the word “fool”(Matthew 5:22) is used to designate an apostate, or one who has abandoned himself to wickedness. Jesus says that whoever shall condemn his brother as an apostate or a despiser of God shows that he himself is worthy of the same condemnation. **(MB 57.2)**

Christ Himself, when contending with Satan about the body of Moses, “durst not bring against him a railing accusation.” Jude 9. Had He done this, He would have placed Himself on Satan’s ground, for accusation is the weapon of the evil one. He is called in Scripture, “the accuser of our brethren.” Revelation 12:10. Jesus would employ none of Satan’s weapons. He met him with the words, “The Lord rebuke thee.” Jude 9. **(MB 57.3)**

His example is for us. When we are brought in conflict with the enemies of Christ, we should say nothing in a spirit of retaliation or that would bear even the appearance of a railing accusation. He who stands as a mouthpiece for God should not utter words which even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with Satan. We are to leave with God the work of judging and condemning. **(MB 57.4)**

“Be reconciled to thy brother.”—**Matthew 5:24.**

The love of God is something more than a mere negation; it is a positive and active principle, a living spring, ever flowing to bless others. If the love of Christ dwells in us, we shall not only cherish no hatred toward our fellows, but we shall seek in every way to manifest love toward them. **(MB 58.1)**

Jesus said, “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23, 24. The sacrificial offerings expressed faith that through Christ the offerer had become a partaker of the mercy and love of God. But for one to express faith in God’s pardoning love, while he himself indulged an unloving spirit, would be a mere farce. **(MB 58.2)**

When one who professes to serve God wrongs or injures a brother, he misrepresents the character of God to that brother, and the wrong must be confessed, he must acknowledge it to be sin, in order to be in harmony with God. Our brother may have done us a greater wrong than we have done him, but this does not lessen our responsibility. If when we come before God we remember that another has aught against us, we are to leave our gift of prayer, of thanksgiving, of freewill offering, and go to the brother with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our own sin and ask to be forgiven. **(MB 58.3)**

If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements. **(MB 59.1)**

If matters of difficulty between brethren were not laid open before others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented! How many roots of bitterness whereby many are defiled would be destroyed, and how closely and tenderly might the followers of Christ be united in His love! **(MB 59.2)**

“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”—**Matthew 5:28.**

The Jews prided themselves on their morality and looked with horror upon the sensual practices of the heathen. The presence of the Roman officers whom the imperial rule had brought into Palestine was a continual offense to the people, for with these foreigners had come in a flood of heathen customs, lust, and dissipation. In Capernaum, Roman officials with their gay paramours haunted the parades and promenades, and often the sound of revelry broke upon the stillness of the lake as their pleasure boats glided over the quiet waters. The people expected to hear from Jesus a stern denunciation of this class, but what was their astonishment as they listened to words that laid bare the evil of their own hearts! **(MB 59.3)**

When the thought of evil is loved and cherished, however secretly, said Jesus, it shows that sin still reigns in the heart. The soul is still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. He who finds pleasure in dwelling upon scenes of impurity, who indulges the evil thought, the lustful look, may behold in the open sin, with its burden of shame and heart-breaking grief, the true nature of the evil which he has hidden in the chambers of the soul. The season of temptation, under which, it may be, one falls into grievous sin, does not create the evil that is revealed, but only develops or makes manifest that which was hidden and latent in the heart. As a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he;” for out of the heart “are the issues of life.” Proverbs 23:7; 4:23. **(MB 60.1)**

“If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee.”—**Matthew 5:30, R. V.**

To prevent disease from spreading to the body and destroying life, a man would submit to part even with his right hand. Much more should he be willing to surrender that which imperils the life of the soul. **(MB 60.2)**

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God’s purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in “the beauty of the Lord our God,”(Psalm 90:17) “conformed to the image of His Son.” (Romans 8:29) “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. **(MB 60.3)**

In order for us to reach this high ideal, that which causes the soul to stumble must be sacrificed. It is through the will that sin retains its hold upon us. The surrender of the will is represented as plucking out the eye or cutting off the hand. Often it seems to us that to surrender the will to God is to consent to go through life maimed or crippled. But it is better, says Christ, for self to be maimed, wounded, crippled, if thus you may enter into life. That which you look upon as disaster is the door to highest benefit. **(MB 61.1)**

God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us. Only by receiving His life through self-surrender is it possible, said Jesus, for these hidden sins, which I have pointed out, to be overcome. It is possible that you may bury them in your hearts and conceal them from human eyes, but how will you stand in God's presence? **(MB 61.2)**

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you. **(MB 62.1)**

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet "it is profitable for thee." Matthew 5:29, 30. **(MB 62.2)**

Not until he fell crippled and helpless upon the breast of the covenant angel did Jacob know the victory of conquering faith and receive the title of a prince with God. It was when he "halted upon his thigh" (Genesis 32:31) that the armed bands of Esau were stilled before him, and the Pharaoh, proud heir of a kingly line, stooped to crave his blessing. So the Captain of our salvation was made "perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10), and the children of faith "out of weakness were made strong," and "turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:34). So do "the lame take the prey" (Isaiah 33:23), and the weak become "as David," and "the house of David ... as the angel of the Lord" (Zechariah 12:8). **(MB 62.3)**

"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?"—**Matthew 19:3.**

Among the Jews a man was permitted to put away his wife for the most trivial offenses, and the woman was then at liberty to marry again. This practice led to great wretchedness and sin. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. "Everyone," He said, "that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of

fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.”(Matthew 5:32) R.V. **(MB 63.1)**

When the Pharisees afterward questioned Him concerning the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed His hearers back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation. “Because of the hardness of your hearts,” He said, Moses “suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” Matthew 19:8. He referred them to the blessed days of Eden, when God pronounced all things “very good.” Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one” (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man. **(MB 63.2)**

Like every other one of God’s good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. “Fear not,” He says; “thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 54:4, 5. “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” Jeremiah 3:14. In the “Song of Songs” we hear the bride’s voice saying, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Song of Solomon 2:16. And He who is to her “the chiefest among ten thousand,”(Song of Solomon 5:10) speaks to His chosen one, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” Song of Solomon 4:7. **(MB 64.1)**

In later times Paul the apostle, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Therefore he says, “As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives.” Ephesians 5:24-28. **(MB 64.2)**

The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven. **(MB 65.1)**

Now, as in Christ’s day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon heaven’s ideal of this sacred relation. Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers a solace. The patience and gentleness which His Spirit can impart will sweeten the bitter lot. The heart in which Christ dwells will be so filled, so satisfied, with His love that it will not be consumed with longing to attract sympathy and attention to itself. And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human

wisdom fails to do. Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are firmer and more enduring than those of earth—the golden bonds of a love that will bear the test of trial. **(MB 65.2)**

“Swear not at all.”—**Matthew 5:34.**

The reason for this command is given: We are not to swear “by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.” Matthew 5:34~36. R.V. **(MB 66.1)**

All things come of God. We have nothing that we have not received; and, more than this, we have nothing that has not been purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Everything we possess comes to us stamped with the cross, bought with the blood that is precious above all estimate, because it is the life of God. Hence there is nothing that we have a right to pledge, as if it were our own, for the fulfillment of our word. **(MB 66.2)**

The Jews understood the third commandment as prohibiting the profane use of the name of God; but they thought themselves at liberty to employ other oaths. Oath taking was common among them. Through Moses they had been forbidden to swear falsely, but they had many devices for freeing themselves from the obligation imposed by an oath. They did not fear to indulge in what was really profanity, nor did they shrink from perjury so long as it was veiled by some technical evasion of the law. **(MB 66.3)**

Jesus condemned their practices, declaring that their custom in oath taking was a transgression of the commandment of God. Our Saviour did not, however, forbid the use of the judicial oath, in which God is solemnly called to witness that what is said is truth and nothing but the truth. Jesus Himself, at His trial before the Sanhedrin, did not refuse to testify under oath. The high priest said unto Him, “I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answered, “Thou hast said.” Matthew 26:63, 64. Had Christ in the Sermon on the Mount condemned the judicial oath, He would at His trial have reproved the high priest and thus, for the benefit of His followers, have enforced His own teaching. **(MB 66.4)**

There are very many who do not fear to deceive their fellow men, but they have been taught, and have been impressed by the Spirit of God, that it is a fearful thing to lie to their Maker. When put under oath they are made to feel that they are not testifying merely before men, but before God; that if they bear false witness, it is to Him who reads the heart and who knows the exact truth. The knowledge of the fearful judgments that have followed this sin has a restraining influence upon them. **(MB 67.1)**

But if there is anyone who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. He lives constantly as in the presence of God, knowing that every thought is open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; and when required to do so in a lawful manner, it is right for him to appeal to God as a witness that what he says is the truth, and nothing but the truth. **(MB 67.2)**

Jesus proceeded to lay down a principle that would make oath taking needless. He teaches that the exact truth should be the law of speech. “Let your speech be, Yea, yea;

Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.” Matthew 5:37. R.V. **(MB 67.3)**

These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful. **(MB 68.1)**

If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And “whatsoever is more than” truth, “is of the evil one.” Matthew 5:37. **(MB 68.2)**

Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth. **(MB 68.3)**

Through the apostle Paul, Christ bids us, “Let your speech be alway with grace.” (Colossians 4:6) “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29. In the light of these scriptures the words of Christ upon the mount are seen to condemn jesting, trifling, and unchaste conversation. They require that our words should be not only truthful, but pure. **(MB 68.4)**

Those who have learned of Christ will “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Ephesians 5:11. In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth “was found no guile.” Revelation 14:5. **(MB 69.1)**

“Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”—**Matthew 5:39, R. V.**

Occasions of irritation to the Jews were constantly arising from their contact with the Roman soldiery. Detachments of troops were stationed at different points throughout Judea and Galilee, and their presence reminded the people of their own degradation as a nation. With bitterness of soul they heard the loud blast of the trumpet and saw the troops forming around the standard of Rome and bowing in homage to this symbol of her power. Collisions between the people and the soldiers were frequent, and these inflamed the popular hatred. Often as some Roman official with his guard of soldiers

hastened from point to point, he would seize upon the Jewish peasants who were laboring in the field and compel them to carry burdens up the mountainside or render any other service that might be needed. This was in accordance with the Roman law and custom, and resistance to such demands only called forth taunts and cruelty. Every day deepened in the hearts of the people the longing to cast off the Roman yoke. Especially among the bold, rough-handed Galileans the spirit of insurrection was rife. Capernaum, being a border town, was the seat of a Roman garrison, and even while Jesus was teaching, the sight of a company of soldiers recalled to His hearers the bitter thought of Israel's humiliation. The people looked eagerly to Christ, hoping that He was the One who was to humble the pride of Rome. **(MB 69.2)**

With sadness Jesus looks into the upturned faces before Him. He notes the spirit of revenge that has stamped its evil imprint upon them, and knows how bitterly the people long for power to crush their oppressors. Mournfully He bids them, "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:39. **(MB 70.1)**

These words were but a reiteration of the teaching of the Old Testament. It is true that the rule, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth"(Leviticus 24:20), was a provision in the laws given through Moses; but it was a civil statute. None were justified in avenging themselves, for they had the words of the Lord: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil." (Proverbs 20:22) "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me."(Proverbs 24:29) "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth."(Proverbs 24:17) "If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." Proverbs 25:21. R.V., margin. **(MB 70.2)**

The whole earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of this principle. It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting."(Isaiah 50:6) "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 53:7. And from the cross of Calvary there come down through the ages His prayer for His murderers and the message of hope to the dying thief. **(MB 71.1)**

The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and "all things" that are permitted "work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28. **(MB 71.2)**

"If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat [tunic], let him have thy cloak [mantle] also. And whosoever shall impress thee to go one mile, go with him twain." Matthew 5:40-41. R.V., margin. **(MB 71.3)**

Jesus bade His disciples, instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, to do even more than was required of them. And, so far as possible, they should discharge every obligation, even if it were beyond what the law of the land required. The law, as given through Moses, enjoined a very tender regard for the poor. When a poor man gave his garment as a pledge, or as security for a debt, the creditor was not permitted to enter the dwelling to obtain it; he must wait in the street for the pledge to be brought to him. And whatever the circumstances the pledge must be returned to its owner at nightfall. Deuteronomy 24:10-13. In the days of Christ these merciful provisions were little regarded; but Jesus taught His disciples to submit to the decision of the court, even though this should demand more than the law of Moses authorized. Though it should demand a part of their raiment, they were to yield. More than this, they were to give to the creditor his due, if necessary surrendering even more than the court gave him authority to seize. "If any man would go to law with thee," He said, "and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Matthew 5:40. R.V. And if the couriers require you to go a mile with them, go two miles. **(MB 72.1)**

Jesus added, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." The same lesson had been taught through Moses: "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." Deuteronomy 15:7, 8. This scripture makes plain the meaning of the Saviour's words. Christ does not teach us to give indiscriminately to all who ask for charity; but He says, "Thou shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need;" and this is to be a gift, rather than a loan; for we are to "lend, hoping for nothing again." Luke 6:35. **(MB 72.2)**

"Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me." **(MB 73.1)**

"Love your enemies."—**Matthew 5:44.**

The Saviour's lesson, "Resist not him that is evil," (Matthew 5:39) was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves. But Jesus now made a still stronger declaration: **(MB 73.2)**

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:43~45. **(MB 73.3)**

Such was the spirit of the law which the rabbis had misinterpreted as a cold and rigid code of exactions. They regarded themselves as better than other men, and as entitled to the special favor of God by virtue of their birth as Israelites; but Jesus pointed to the spirit of forgiving love as that which would give evidence that they were actuated by any higher motives than even the publicans and sinners, whom they despised. **(MB 73.4)**

He pointed His hearers to the Ruler of the universe, under the new name, “Our Father.” He would have them understand how tenderly the heart of God yearned over them. He teaches that God cares for every lost soul; that “like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:13. Such a conception of God was never given to the world by any religion but that of the Bible. Heathenism teaches men to look upon the Supreme Being as an object of fear rather than of love—a malign deity to be appeased by sacrifices, rather than a Father pouring upon His children the gift of His love. Even the people of Israel had become so blinded to the precious teaching of the prophets concerning God that this revelation of His paternal love was as an original subject, a new gift to the world. **(MB 74.1)**

The Jews held that God loved those who served Him,—according to their view, those who fulfilled the requirements of the rabbis,—and that all the rest of the world lay under His frown and curse. Not so, said Jesus; the whole world, the evil and the good, lies in the sunshine of His love. This truth you should have learned from nature itself; for God “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45. **(MB 74.2)**

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion round the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love. **(MB 74.3)**

While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, “hateful, and hating one another,” our heavenly Father had mercy on us. “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:3-5. His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful. **(MB 75.1)**

The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God’s Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate. **(MB 75.2)**

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—**Matthew 5:48.**

The word “therefore” implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus has been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father “is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up,

therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels. **(MB 76.1)**

The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. 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. **(MB 76.2)**

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. **(MB 76.3)**

The Jews had been wearily toiling to reach perfection by their own efforts, and they had failed. Christ had already told them that their righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven. Now He points out to them the character of the righteousness that all who enter heaven will possess. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount He describes its fruits, and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature: Be perfect as God is perfect. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government. **(MB 77.1)**

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. **(MB 77.2)**

“His glory is His children’s good;
His joy, His tender Fatherhood.” **(MB 77.3)**

He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. “In His borrowed goodness good,” we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His. **(MB 77.4)**

Jesus said, Be perfect as *your Father* is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God’s children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest “in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you

will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for “the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.” Psalm 19:7 , margin. Through love “the righteousness of the law” will be “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.
(MB 77.5)