

The 1858 Great Controversy Chapters 31-33.

Chapter 31. Covetousness.

I saw Satan and his angels consulting together. He bade his angels go and lay their snares especially for those who were looking for Christ's second appearing, and who were keeping all God's commandments. Satan told his angels that the churches were all asleep. He would increase his power and lying wonders, and he could hold them. But the sect of Sabbathkeepers we hate. They are continually working against us, and taking from us our subjects, to keep that hated law of God.

Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with cares. If you can make them place their affections upon these things, we have them yet. They may profess what they please, only make them care more for money than the success of Christ's kingdom, or the spread of the truths we hate. Present the world before them in the most attractive light, that they may love and idolize it. We must keep all the means in our ranks we can. The more means they have, the more will they injure our kingdom by getting our subjects. And as they appoint meetings in different places, then we are in danger. Be very vigilant then. Cause all the distraction you can.

Destroy love for each other. Discourage and dishearten their ministers; for we hate them. Hold up every plausible excuse to those that have means, lest they hand it out. Control the money matters if you can, and drive their ministers to want, and distress. This will weaken their courage and zeal. Battle every inch of ground. Make covetousness and love of earthly treasures the ruling traits of their character. As long as these traits rule, salvation and grace stand back. Crowd all you can around them to attract them, and they will be surely ours. Not only are we sure of them, but their hateful influence will not be exercised toward others to lead them to heaven. And those who shall attempt to give, put within them a grudging disposition, that it may be sparingly.

I saw that Satan carried out his plans well. And as the servants of God appointed meetings, Satan and his angels understood their business, and were on the ground to hinder the work of God, and he was constantly putting suggestions into the minds of God's people. Some he leads in one way, and some in another, always taking advantage of evil traits in the brethren and sisters, exciting and stirring up their natural besetments. If they are disposed to be selfish and covetous, Satan is well pleased to take his stand by their side, and then with all his power he seeks to lead them to manifest their besetting sins. If the grace of God and the light of truth melt away these covetous, selfish feelings for a little, and they do not obtain entire victory over them, when they are not under a saving influence, Satan comes in and withers up every noble, generous principle, and they think that they have to do too much. They become weary of well-doing, and forget all about the great sacrifice Jesus made for them, to redeem them from the power of Satan, and hopeless misery.

Satan took advantage of Judas' covetous, selfish disposition, and led him to murmur against the ointment Mary dedicated to Jesus. Judas looked upon it as a great waste; it might have been sold and given to the poor. He cared not for the poor, but considered the liberal offering to Jesus extravagant. Judas prized his Lord just enough to sell him for a few pieces of silver. And I saw that there were some like Judas among those who profess to be waiting for their Lord. Satan has the control over them, but they know it not. Not a particle of covetousness or selfishness can God approve. He hates it, and he despises the prayers and exhortations of those who possess it. As Satan sees his time is short, he leads

them on to be more and more selfish, more and more covetous, and then exults as he sees them wrapt up in themselves, close, penurious and selfish. If the eyes of such could be opened, they would see Satan in hellish triumph, exulting over them, and laughing at the folly of those who accept his suggestions, and enter his snares. Then he and his angels take the mean and covetous acts of these individuals, and present them to Jesus and the holy angels, and reproachfully say, These are Christ's followers! They are getting ready to be translated! Satan marks their deviating course, and then compares it with the Bible, with passages which plainly rebuke such things, and then presents it to annoy the heavenly angels, saying, These are following Christ and his word! These are the fruits of Christ's sacrifice and redemption!

Angels turn in disgust from the scene. God requires a constant doing on the part of his people, and when they become weary of well and generous doing, he becomes weary of them. I saw that God was greatly displeased with the least manifestation of selfishness on the part of his professed people, for whom Jesus has not spared his own precious life. Every selfish, covetous individual will fall out by the way. Like Judas, who sold his Lord, they will sell good principles, and a noble, generous disposition for a little of earth's gain. All such will be sifted out from God's people. Those who want heaven, must, with every energy they possess, be encouraging the principles of heaven. And instead of their soul's withering up with selfishness, they should be expanding with benevolence, and every opportunity should be improved in doing good to one another, and increasing and growing more and more into the principles of heaven. Jesus was held up to me as the perfect pattern. His life was without selfish interest, and was marked with disinterested benevolence.

Chapter 32. The Shaking.

I saw some with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety, which expressed their internal struggle. There were firmness and great earnestness expressed in their countenances, while large drops of perspiration rose upon their foreheads, and fell. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look settled upon them.

Evil angels crowded around them, pressing their darkness upon them, to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and they distrust God, and next murmur against him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels were having the charge over the people of God, and as the poisonous atmosphere from these evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the angels, which had the charge over them, were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness that surrounded them.

Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left them, and went to the aid of those earnest, praying ones. I saw the angels of God hasten to the assistance of all those who were struggling with all their energies to resist those evil angels, and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But the angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them.

As these praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, and encouraged their hearts, and lighted up their countenances. I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen. I was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the true Witness to the Laodiceans. It will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver of the

testimony, and it will lead to him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. This straight testimony some will not bear. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people.

I saw that the testimony of the true Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs, has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it, will obey it, and be purified.

Said the angel, List ye! Soon I heard a voice that sounded like many musical instruments, all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard. It seemed to be so full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, Look ye! My attention was then turned to the company I had seen before, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping, and praying with agony of spirit. I saw that the company of guardian angels around them had doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, firm like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, shone now with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy.

The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. The careless and indifferent who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to agonize, persevere, and plead for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their numbers were immediately made up by others taking hold of the truth, and coming into the ranks. Still the evil angels pressed around them, but they could have no power over them.

I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth in great power. It had effect. I saw those who had been bound; some wives had been bound by their husbands, and some children had been bound by their parents. The honest who had been held or prevented from hearing the truth, now eagerly laid hold of the truth spoken. All fear of their relatives was gone. The truth alone was exalted to them. It was dearer and more precious than life. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, It is the latter rain; the refreshing from the presence of the Lord; the loud cry of the third angel.

Great power was with these chosen ones. Said the angel, Look ye! My attention was turned to the wicked, or unbelievers. They were all astir. The zeal and power with the people of God had aroused and enraged them. Confusion, confusion, was on every side. I saw measures taken against this company, who were having the power and light of God. Darkness thickened around them, yet there they stood, approved of God, and trusting in him. I saw them perplexed. Next I heard them crying unto God earnestly. Through the day and night their cry ceased not. I heard these words, Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify thy name, make a way of escape for thy people! Deliver us from the heathen round about us! They have appointed us unto death; but thine arm can bring salvation. These are all the words I can bring to mind. They seemed to have a deep sense of their unworthiness, and manifested entire submission to the will of God. Yet every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading, and wrestling like Jacob for deliverance.

Soon after they had commenced their earnest cry, the angels, in sympathy would have gone to their deliverance. But a tall, commanding angel suffered them not. Said he, The will of God is not yet fulfilled. They must drink of the cup. They must be baptized with the baptism.

Soon I heard the voice of God, which shook the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. Buildings were shaken down, and fell on every side. I then heard a triumphant shout of victory, loud, musical and clear. I looked upon this company who, a short time before were in such distress and bondage. Their captivity was turned. A glorious light shone upon them. How beautiful they then looked. All weariness and marks of care were gone. Health and beauty were seen in every countenance.

Their enemies, the heathen around them, fell like dead men. They could not endure the light that shone upon the delivered, holy ones. This light and glory remained upon them, until Jesus was seen in the clouds of heaven, and the faithful, tried company was changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, from glory to glory. And the graves were opened and the saints came forth, clothed with immortality, crying victory over death and the grave, and together with the living saints, were caught up to meet their Lord in the air; while the rich, musical shouts of glory and victory were upon every immortal tongue, and proceeding from every sanctified, holy lip.

Chapter 33. The Sins of Babylon.

I saw the state of the different churches since the second angel proclaimed their fall. They have been growing more and more corrupt; yet they bear the name of being Christ's followers. It is impossible to distinguish them from the world. Their ministers take their text from the Word, but preach smooth things. The natural heart feels no objection to this. It is only the spirit and power of the truth, and the salvation of Christ, that is hateful to the carnal heart. There is nothing in the popular ministry that stirs the wrath of Satan, makes the sinner tremble, or applies to the heart and conscience the fearful realities of a judgment soon to come. Wicked men are generally pleased with a form without true godliness, and they will aid and support such a religion.

Said the angel, Nothing less than the whole armor of righteousness can overcome, and retain the victory over the powers of darkness. Satan has taken full possession of the churches as a body. The sayings and doings of men are dwelt upon instead of the plain cutting truths of the word of God. Said the angel, The friendship and spirit of the world are at enmity with God. When truth in its simplicity and strength, as it is in Jesus, is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, it awakens the spirit of persecution at once. Many, very many, who profess to be christians, have not known God. The character of the natural heart has not been changed, and the carnal mind remains at enmity with God. They are Satan's own faithful servants, notwithstanding they have assumed another name.

I saw that since Jesus had left the Holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary, and had entered within the second vail, the churches were left as were the Jews; and they have been filling up with every unclean and hateful bird. I saw great iniquity and vileness in the churches; yet they profess to be christians. Their profession, their prayers and their exhortations, are an abomination in the sight of God. Said the angel, God will not smell in their assemblies. Selfishness, fraud and deceit are practiced by them without the reprovings of conscience. And over all these evil traits they throw the cloak of religion. I was shown the pride of the nominal churches. God was not in their thoughts; but their carnal minds dwell upon themselves. They decorate their poor mortal bodies, and then look upon themselves with satisfaction and pleasure. Jesus and the angels looked upon them in anger.

Said the angel, Their sins and pride have reached unto heaven. Their portion is prepared. Justice and judgment have slumbered long, but will soon awake. Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord. The fearful threatenings of the third angel are to be realized, and they will drink the wrath of

God. An innumerable host of evil angels are spreading themselves over the whole land. The churches and religious bodies are crowded with them. And they look upon the religious bodies with exultation; for the cloak of religion covers the greatest crimes and iniquity.

All heaven beholds with indignation, human beings, the workmanship of God, reduced to the lowest depths of degradation, and placed on a level with the brute creation by their fellow men. And professed followers of that dear Saviour whose compassion was ever moved as he witnessed human woe, heartily engage in this enormous and grievous sin, and deal in slaves and souls of men. Angels have recorded it all. It is written in the book. The tears of the pious bond-men and bond-women, of fathers, mothers and children, brothers and sisters, are all bottled up in heaven.

Agony, human agony, is carried from place to place, and bought and sold. God will restrain his anger but a little longer. His anger burns against this nation, and especially against the religious bodies who have sanctioned, and have themselves engaged in this terrible merchandise. Such injustice, such oppression, such sufferings, many professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus can witness with heartless indifference. And many of them can inflict with hateful satisfaction, all this indescribable agony themselves, and yet dare to worship God. It is solemn mockery, and Satan exults over it, and reproaches Jesus and his angels with such inconsistency, saying, with hellish triumph, Such are Christ's followers!

These professed christians read of the sufferings of the martyrs, and tears course down their cheeks. They wonder that men could ever possess hearts so hardened as to practice such inhuman cruelties towards their fellow-men, while at the same time they hold their fellow-men in slavery. And this is not all. They sever the ties of nature, and cruelly oppress from day to day their fellow-men. They can inflict most inhuman tortures with relentless cruelty, which would well compare with the cruelty papists and heathens exercised towards Christ's followers.

Said the angel, It will be more tolerable for the heathen and for papists in the day of the execution of God's judgment than for such men. The cries and sufferings of the oppressed have reached unto heaven, and angels stand amazed at the hard-hearted, untold, agonizing, suffering, man in the image of his Maker, causes his fellow-man. Said the angel, The names of such are written in blood, crossed with stripes, and flooded with agonizing, burning tears of suffering. God's anger will not cease until he has caused the land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of his fury, and until he has rewarded unto Babylon double. Reward her even as she rewarded you, double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

I saw that the slave-master would have to answer for the soul of his slave whom he has kept in ignorance; and all the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master. God cannot take the slave to heaven, who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God, or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash, and not holding so elevated a position as his master's brute beasts. But he does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. He lets him be as though he had not been; while the master has to suffer the seven last plagues, and then come up in the second resurrection, and suffer the second, most awful death. Then the wrath of God will be appeased.