

# Cross Light



## Ten Commandments

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- IV. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

## Ten Commandments

- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his manservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Ellen White

# Cross Light

The Story of the Cross from Early Writings

Ellen White

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Devotional Readings  
for morning and evening worship

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# 1. The Betrayal of Christ

I was carried down to the time when Jesus ate the Passover supper with His disciples. Satan had deceived Judas and led him to think that he was one of Christ's true disciples; but his heart had ever been carnal. He had seen the mighty works of Jesus, he had been with Him through His ministry, and had yielded to the overpowering evidence that He was the Messiah; but Judas was close and covetous; he loved money. He complained in anger of the costly ointment poured upon Jesus. Mary loved her Lord. He had forgiven her sins, which were many, and had raised from the dead her much-loved brother, and she felt that nothing was too dear to bestow upon Jesus. The more precious the ointment, the better could she express her gratitude to her Saviour by devoting it to Him. Judas, as an excuse for his covetousness, urged that the ointment might have been sold and given to the poor. But it was not because he had any care for the poor; for he was selfish, and often appropriated to his own use that which was entrusted to his care to be given unto the poor. Judas had been inattentive to the comfort and even to the wants of Jesus, and to excuse his covetousness he often referred to the poor. This act of generosity on the part of Mary was a most cutting rebuke of his covetous disposition. The way was prepared for Satan's temptation to find a ready reception in the heart of Judas.

The priests and rulers of the Jews hated Jesus; but multitudes thronged to listen to His words of wisdom and to witness His mighty works. The people were stirred with the deepest interest and anxiously followed Jesus to hear the instructions of this wonderful teacher. Many of the rulers believed on Him, but dared not confess their faith lest they should be put out of the synagogue. The priests and elders decided that something must be done to draw the attention of the people from Jesus. They feared that all men would believe on Him. They could see no safety for themselves. They must lose their position or put Jesus to death. And after they should put Him to death, there would still be those who were living monuments of His power. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and they feared that if they should kill Jesus, Lazarus would testify of His mighty power. The people were flocking to see him who was raised from the dead, and the rulers determined to slay Lazarus also, and put down the excitement. Then they would turn the people to the

traditions and doctrines of men, to tithe mint and rue, and again have influence over them. They agreed to take Jesus when He was alone; for if they should attempt to take Him in a crowd, when the minds of the people were all interested in Him, they would be stoned.

Judas knew how anxious they were to obtain Jesus and offered to betray Him to the chief priests and elders for a few pieces of silver. His love of money led him to agree to betray his Lord into the hands of His bitterest enemies. Satan was working directly through Judas, and in the midst of the impressive scene of the last supper, the traitor was devising plans to betray his Master. Jesus sorrowfully told His disciples that all of them would be offended because of Him that night. But Peter ardently affirmed that although all others should be offended because of Him, he would not be offended. Jesus said to Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31,32.

I beheld Jesus in the garden with His disciples. In deep sorrow He bade them watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. He knew that their faith was to be tried, and their hopes disappointed, and that they would need all the strength which they could obtain by close watching and fervent prayer. With strong cries and weeping, Jesus prayed, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." The Son of God prayed in agony. Great drops of blood gathered upon His face and fell to the ground. Angels were hovering over the place, witnessing the scene, but only one was commissioned to go and strengthen the Son of God in His agony. There was no joy in heaven. The angels cast their crowns and harps from them and with the deepest interest silently watched Jesus. They wished to surround the Son of God, but the commanding angels suffered them not, lest, as they should behold His betrayal, they should deliver Him; for the plan had been laid, and it must be fulfilled. {EW 167.1}

After Jesus had prayed, He came to His disciples; but they were sleeping. In that dreadful hour He had not the sympathy and prayers of even His disciples. Peter, who was so zealous a short time before, was heavy with sleep. Jesus reminded him of his positive declarations and said to him, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Three times the Son of God prayed in

agony. Then Judas, with his band of armed men, appeared. He approached his Master as usual, to salute Him. The band surrounded Jesus; but there He manifested His divine power, as He said, "Whom seek ye?" "I am He." They fell backward to the ground. Jesus made this inquiry that they might witness His power and have evidence that He could deliver Himself from their hands if He would. {EW 167.2}

The disciples began to hope as they saw the multitude with their staves and swords fall so quickly. As they arose and again surrounded the Son of God, Peter drew his sword and smote a servant of the high priest and cut off an ear. Jesus bade him to put up the sword, saying, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" I saw that as these words were spoken, the countenances of the angels were animated with hope. They wished then and there to surround their Commander and disperse that angry mob. But again sadness settled upon them, as Jesus added, "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" The hearts of the disciples also sank in despair and bitter disappointment, as Jesus suffered Himself to be led away by His enemies.

The disciples feared for their own lives, and they all forsook Him and fled. Jesus was left alone in the hands of the murderous mob. Oh, what a triumph of Satan then! And what sadness and sorrow with the angels of God! Many companies of holy angels, each with a tall commanding angel at their head, were sent to witness the scene. They were to record every insult and cruelty imposed upon the Son of God, and to register every pang of anguish which Jesus should suffer; for the very men who joined in this dreadful scene are to see it all again in living characters.

## **2. The Trial of Christ**

The angels as they left heaven, in sadness laid off their glittering crowns. They could not wear them while their Commander was suffering and was to wear a crown of thorns. Satan and his angels were busy in the judgment hall to destroy human feeling and sympathy. The very atmosphere was heavy and

polluted by their influence. The chief priests and elders were inspired by them to insult and abuse Jesus in a manner the most difficult for human nature to bear. Satan hoped that such mockery and violence would call forth from the Son of God some complaint or murmur; or that He would manifest His divine power, and wrench Himself from the grasp of the multitude, and that thus the plan of salvation might at last fail.

Peter followed his Lord after His betrayal. He was anxious to see what would be done with Jesus. But when he was accused of being one of His disciples, fear for his own safety led him to declare that he knew not the man. The disciples were noted for the purity of their language, and Peter, to convince his accusers that he was not one of Christ's disciples, denied the charge the third time with cursing and swearing. Jesus, who was at some distance from Peter, turned a sorrowful reproving gaze upon him. Then the disciple remembered the words which Jesus had spoken to him in the upper chamber, and also his own zealous assertion, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." He had denied his Lord, even with cursing and swearing; but that look of Jesus' melted Peter's heart and saved him. He wept bitterly and repented of his great sin, and was converted, and then was prepared to strengthen his brethren.

The multitude were clamorous for the blood of Jesus. They cruelly scourged Him, and put upon Him an old purple kingly robe, and bound His sacred head with a crown of thorns. They put a reed into His hand, and bowed to Him, and mockingly saluted Him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They then took the reed from His hand and smote Him with it upon the head, causing the thorns to penetrate His temples, sending the blood trickling down His face and beard.

It was difficult for the angels to endure the sight. They would have delivered Jesus, but the commanding angels forbade them, saying that it was a great ransom which was to be paid for man; but it would be complete and would cause the death of him who had the power of death. Jesus knew that angels were witnessing the scene of His humiliation. The weakest angel could have caused that mocking throng to fall powerless and could have delivered Jesus. He knew that if He should desire it of His Father, angels would instantly

release Him. But it was necessary that He should suffer the violence of wicked men, in order to carry out the plan of salvation.

Jesus stood meek and humble before the infuriated multitude, while they offered Him the vilest abuse. They spit in His face--that face from which they will one day desire to hide, which will give light to the city of God and shine brighter than the sun. Christ did not cast upon the offenders an angry look. They covered His head with an old garment, blindfolding Him, and then struck Him in the face and cried out, "Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee?" There was commotion among the angels. They would have rescued Him instantly; but their commanding angels restrained them.

Some of the disciples had gained confidence to enter where Jesus was and witness His trial. They expected that He would manifest His divine power, and deliver Himself from the hands of His enemies, and punish them for their cruelty toward Him. Their hopes would rise and fall as the different scenes transpired. Sometimes they doubted, and feared that they had been deceived. But the voice heard at the mount of transfiguration, and the glory they there beheld, strengthened their faith that He was the Son of God. They called to mind the scenes which they had witnessed, the miracles which they had seen Jesus perform in healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the deaf ears, rebuking and casting out devils, raising the dead to life, and even calming the wind and the sea. They could not believe that He would die. They hoped that He would yet rise in power, and with His commanding voice disperse that bloodthirsty multitude, as when He entered the temple and drove out those who were making the house of God a place of merchandise, when they fled before Him as if pursued by a company of armed soldiers. The disciples hoped that Jesus would manifest His power and convince all that He was the King of Israel.

Judas was filled with bitter remorse and shame at his treacherous act in betraying Jesus. And when he witnessed the abuse which the Saviour endured, he was overcome. He had loved Jesus, but had loved money more. He had not thought that Jesus would suffer Himself to be taken by the mob which he led on. He had expected Him to work a miracle, and deliver Himself from them. But when he saw the infuriated multitude in the judgment hall, thirsting for blood, he deeply felt his guilt; and while many were vehemently



accusing Jesus, Judas rushed through the multitude, confessing that he had sinned in betraying innocent blood. He offered the priests the money which they had paid him, and entreated them to release Jesus, declaring that He was entirely innocent.

For a short time vexation and confusion kept the priests silent. They did not wish the people to know that they had hired one of the professed followers of Jesus to betray Him into their hands. Their hunting Jesus like a thief and taking Him secretly, they wished to hide. But the confession of Judas, and his haggard, guilty appearance, exposed the priests before the multitude, showing that it was hatred that had caused them to take Jesus. As Judas loudly declared Jesus to be innocent, the priests replied, "What is that to us? see thou to that." They had Jesus in their power, and were determined to make sure of Him. Judas, overwhelmed with anguish, threw the money that he now despised at the feet of those who had hired him, and, in anguish and horror, went and hanged himself.

Jesus had many sympathizers in the company about Him, and His answering nothing to the many questions put to Him amazed the throng. Under all the mockery and violence of the mob, not a frown, not a troubled expression, rested upon His features. He was dignified and composed. The spectators looked upon Him with wonder. They compared His perfect form and firm, dignified bearing with the appearance of those who sat in judgment against Him, and said to one another that He appeared more like a king than any of the rulers. He bore no marks of being a criminal. His eye was mild, clear, and undaunted, His forehead broad and high. Every feature was strongly marked with benevolence and noble principle. His patience and forbearance were so unlike man that many trembled. Even Herod and Pilate were greatly troubled at His noble, Godlike bearing.

From the first, Pilate was convicted that Jesus was no common man. He believed Him to be an excellent character, and entirely innocent of the charges brought against Him. The angels who were witnessing the scene marked the convictions of the Roman governor, and to save him from engaging in the awful act of delivering Christ to be crucified, an angel was sent to Pilate's wife, and gave her information through a dream that it was the Son of God in whose trial her husband was engaged, and that He was an

innocent sufferer. She immediately sent a message to Pilate, stating that she had suffered many things in a dream on account of Jesus and warning him to have nothing to do with that holy man. The messenger, pressing hastily through the crowd, placed the letter in the hands of Pilate. As he read, he trembled and turned pale, and at once determined to have nothing to do with putting Christ to death. If the Jews would have the blood of Jesus, he would not give his influence to it, but would labor to deliver Him.

When Pilate heard that Herod was in Jerusalem, he was greatly relieved; for he hoped to free himself from all responsibility in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. He at once sent Him, with His accusers, to Herod. This ruler had become hardened in sin. The murder of John the Baptist had left upon his conscience a stain from which he could not free himself. When he heard of Jesus and the mighty works wrought by Him, he feared and trembled, believing Him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead. When Jesus was placed in his hands by Pilate, Herod considered the act an acknowledgment of his power, authority, and judgment. This had the effect to make friends of the two rulers, who had before been enemies. Herod was pleased to see Jesus, expecting Him to work some mighty miracle for his satisfaction. But it was not the work of Jesus to gratify curiosity or to seek His own safety. His divine, miraculous power was to be exercised for the salvation of others, but not in His own behalf.

Jesus answered nothing to the many questions put to Him by Herod; neither did He reply to His enemies, who were vehemently accusing Him. Herod was enraged because Jesus did not appear to fear his power, and with his men of war he derided, mocked, and abused the Son of God. Yet he was astonished at the noble, Godlike appearance of Jesus when shamefully abused, and fearing to condemn Him, he sent Him again to Pilate.

Satan and his angels were tempting Pilate and trying to lead him on to his own ruin. They suggested to him that if he did not take part in condemning Jesus others would; the multitude were thirsting for His blood; and if he did not deliver Him to be crucified, he would lose his power and worldly honor and would be denounced as a believer on the impostor. Through fear of losing his power and authority, Pilate consented to the death of Jesus. And notwithstanding he placed the blood of Jesus upon His accusers, and the

multitude received it, crying, "His blood be on us, and on our children," yet Pilate was not clear; he was guilty of the blood of Christ. For his own selfish interest, his love of honor from the great men of earth, he delivered an innocent man to die. If Pilate had followed his own convictions, he would have had nothing to do with condemning Jesus.

The appearance and words of Jesus during His trial made a deep impression upon the minds of many who were present on that occasion. The result of the influence thus exerted was apparent after His resurrection. Among those who were then added to the church, there were many whose conviction dated from the time of Jesus' trial.

Satan's rage was great as he saw that all the cruelty which he had led the Jews to inflict on Jesus had not called forth from Him the slightest murmur. Although He had taken upon Himself man's nature, He was sustained by a Godlike fortitude, and departed not in the least from the will of His Father.

### **3. The Crucifixion of Christ**

The Son of God was delivered to the people to be crucified; with shouts of triumph they led the dear Saviour away. He was weak and faint from weariness, pain, and loss of blood by the scourging and blows which He had received; yet the heavy cross upon which He was soon to be nailed was laid upon Him. Jesus fainted beneath the burden. Three times the cross was placed upon His shoulders, and three times He fainted. One of His followers, a man who had not openly professed faith in Christ, yet believed on Him, was next seized. Upon him the cross was laid, and he bore it to the fatal spot. Companies of angels were marshaled in the air above the place. A number of Christ's disciples followed Him to Calvary, in sorrow, and with bitter weeping. They called to mind His triumphal ride into Jerusalem but a few days before, when they had followed Him, crying, "Hosanna in the highest!" and strewing their garments and the beautiful palm branches in the way. They had thought that He was then to take the kingdom and reign a temporal prince over Israel. How changed the scene! How blighted their prospects! Not with rejoicing, not with cheerful hopes, but with hearts stricken with fear and despair they now slowly, sadly followed Him who had been disgraced and humbled, and who was about to die.

The mother of Jesus was there. Her heart was pierced with anguish such as none but a fond mother can feel; yet, with the disciples, she still hoped that Christ would work some mighty miracle and deliver Himself from His murderers. She could not endure the thought that He would suffer Himself to be crucified. But the preparations were made, and Jesus was laid upon the cross. The hammer and the nails were brought. The hearts of the disciples fainted within them. The mother of Jesus was bowed with agony almost beyond endurance. Before the Saviour was nailed to the cross, the disciples bore her from the scene, that she might not hear the crashing of the spikes as they were driven through the bone and muscle of His tender hands and feet. Jesus murmured not, but groaned in agony. His face was pale, and large drops of sweat stood upon His brow. Satan exulted in the suffering through which the Son of God was passing, yet feared that his efforts to thwart the plan of salvation had been in vain, that his kingdom was lost, and that he must finally be destroyed.

After Jesus had been nailed to the cross, it was raised and with great force thrust into the place which had been prepared for it in the ground, tearing the flesh and causing the most intense suffering. To make the death of Jesus as shameful as possible, two thieves were crucified with Him, one on each side. The thieves were taken by force, and after much resistance on their part, their arms were thrust back and nailed to their crosses. But Jesus meekly submitted. He needed no one to force His arms back upon the cross. While the thieves were cursing their executioners, the Saviour in agony prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It was not merely agony of body which Christ endured; the sins of the whole world were upon Him.

As Jesus hung upon the cross, some who passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads as if bowing to a king, and said to Him, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Satan used the same words to Christ in the wilderness-- "If Thou be the Son of God." The chief priests, elders, and scribes mockingly said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." The angels who hovered over the scene of Christ's crucifixion were moved to

indignation as the rulers derided Him and said, "If He be the Son God, let Him deliver Himself". They wished there to come to the rescue of Jesus and deliver Him, but they were not suffered to do so. The object of His mission was not yet accomplished.

As Jesus hung upon the cross during those long hours of agony, He did not forget His mother. She had returned to the terrible scene, for she could not longer remain away from her Son. The last lesson of Jesus was one of compassion and humanity. He looked upon the grief-stricken face of His mother, and then upon His beloved disciple John. He said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then He said to John, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour John took her to his own house.

Jesus thirsted in His agony, and they gave Him vinegar and gall to drink; but when He tasted it, He refused it. The angels had viewed the agony of their loved Commander until they could behold no longer, and they veiled their faces from the sight. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Jesus cried with a loud voice, which struck terror to the hearts of His murderers, "It is finished." Then the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks rent. Great darkness was upon the face of the earth. The last hope of the disciples seemed swept away as Jesus died. Many of His followers witnessed the scene of His sufferings and death, and their cup of sorrow was full.

Satan did not then exult as he had done. He had hoped to break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by the death of Christ he knew that he himself must finally die, and his kingdom be given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they must increase their efforts and with their power and cunning turn to His followers. They must prevent all whom they could from receiving the salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins.

The life of Christ had ever been without worldly wealth, honor, or display. His humility and self-denial had been in striking contrast to the pride and self-indulgence of the priests and elders. His spotless purity was a continual reproof of their sins. They despised Him for His humility, holiness, and purity. But those who despised Him here will one day see Him in the grandeur of heaven and the unsurpassed glory of His Father. {EW 178.2}

In the judgment hall He was surrounded by enemies who were thirsting for His blood; but those hardened ones who cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children," will behold Him an honored King. All the heavenly host will escort Him on His way with songs of victory, majesty, and might to Him that was slain, yet lives again, a mighty conqueror.

Poor, weak, miserable man spat in the face of the King of glory, while a shout of brutal triumph arose from the mob at the degrading insult. They marred with blows and cruelty that face which filled all heaven with admiration. They will again behold that face, bright as the noonday sun, and will seek to flee from before it. Instead of that shout of brutal triumph, they will wail because of Him.

Jesus will present His hands with the marks of His crucifixion. The marks of this cruelty He will ever bear. Every print of the nails will tell the story of man's wonderful redemption and the dear price by which it was purchased. The very men who thrust the spear into the side of the Lord of life will behold the print of the spear and will lament with deep anguish the part which they acted in marring His body.

His murderers were greatly annoyed by the superscription, "The King of the Jews," placed upon the cross above His head. But then they will be obliged to see Him in all His glory and kingly power. They will behold on His vesture and on His thigh, written in living characters, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." They cried to Him mockingly, as He hung upon the cross, "Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend from the cross, that we may see and believe." They will behold Him then with kingly power and authority. They will demand no evidence of His being King of Israel; but overwhelmed with a sense of His majesty and exceeding glory, they will be compelled to acknowledge, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The shaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the darkness spread over the earth, and the loud, strong cry of Jesus, "It is finished," as He yielded up His life, troubled His enemies and made His murderers tremble. The disciples wondered at these singular manifestations; but their hopes were crushed. They were afraid that the Jews would seek to destroy them also. They felt assured that such hatred as had been manifested against the Son of God would not end with Him. Lonely hours they spent in weeping over their disappointment. They had expected that Jesus would reign a temporal Prince, but their hopes died with Him. In their sorrow and disappointment, they doubted whether He had not deceived them. Even His mother wavered in her faith in Him as the Messiah.

Notwithstanding the disciples had been disappointed in their hopes concerning Jesus, they yet loved Him and desired to give His body an honored burial, but knew not how to obtain it. Joseph of Arimathaea, a wealthy and influential councilor of the Jews and a true disciple of Jesus, went privately yet boldly to Pilate and begged from him the Saviour's body. He dared not go openly, because of the hatred of the Jews. The disciples feared that an effort would be made by them to prevent the body of Christ from having an honored resting place. Pilate granted the request, and the disciples took the lifeless form down from the cross, while in deep anguish they mourned over their blighted hopes. Carefully the body was wrapped in fine linen, and laid in Joseph's new sepulcher.

The women who had been Christ's humble followers while He lived, would not leave Him until they saw Him laid in the tomb and a stone of great weight placed before the door, lest His enemies should seek to obtain His body. But they need not have feared; for I saw that the angelic host watched with untold interest in the resting place of Jesus, earnestly waiting for the command to act their part in liberating the King of glory from His prison house.

Christ's murderers feared that He might yet come to life and escape them. They therefore asked of Pilate a watch to guard the sepulcher until the third day. This was granted, and the stone at the door was sealed, lest His disciples should steal Him away and say that He had risen from the dead.

## 4. The Resurrection of Christ

The disciples rested on the Sabbath, sorrowing for the death of their Lord, while Jesus, the King of glory, lay in the tomb. As night drew on, soldiers were stationed to guard the Saviour's resting place, while angels, unseen, hovered above the sacred spot. The night wore slowly away, and while it was yet dark, the watching angels knew that the time for the release of God's dear Son, their loved Commander, had nearly come. As they were waiting with the deepest emotion the hour of His triumph, a mighty angel came flying swiftly from heaven. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. His light dispersed the darkness from his track and caused the evil angels, who had triumphantly claimed the body of Jesus, to flee in terror from his brightness and glory. One of the angelic host who had witnessed the scene of Christ's humiliation, and was watching His resting place, joined the angel from heaven, and together they came down to the sepulcher. The earth trembled and shook as they approached, and there was a great earthquake.

Terror seized the Roman guard. Where was now their power to keep the body of Jesus? They did not think of their duty or of the disciples' stealing Him away. As the light of the angels shone around, brighter than the sun, that Roman guard fell as dead men to the ground. One of the angels laid hold of the great stone and rolled it away from the door of the sepulcher and seated himself upon it. The other entered the tomb and unbound the napkin from the head of Jesus. Then the angel from heaven, with a voice that caused the earth to quake, cried out, "Thou Son of God, Thy Father calls Thee! Come forth." Death could hold dominion over Him no longer. Jesus arose from the dead, a triumphant conqueror. In solemn awe the angelic host gazed upon the scene. And as Jesus came forth from the sepulcher, those shining angels prostrated themselves to the earth in worship, and hailed Him with songs of victory and triumph.

Satan's angels had been compelled to flee before the bright, penetrating light of the heavenly angels, and they bitterly complained to their king that their prey had been violently taken from them, and that He whom they so much hated had risen from the dead. Satan and his hosts had exulted that their power over fallen man had caused the Lord of life to be laid in the



grave, but short was their hellish triumph. For as Jesus walked forth from His prison house a majestic conqueror, Satan knew that after a season he must die, and his kingdom pass unto Him whose right it was. He lamented and raged that notwithstanding all his efforts, Jesus had not been overcome, but had opened a way of salvation for man, and whosoever would might walk in it and be saved.

The evil angels and their commander met in council to consider how they could still work against the government of God. Satan bade his servants go to the chief priests and elders. Said he, "We succeeded in deceiving them, blinding their eyes and hardening their hearts against Jesus. We made them believe that He was an impostor. That Roman guard will carry the hateful news that Christ has risen. We led the priests and elders on to hate Jesus and to murder Him. Now hold it before them that if it becomes known that Jesus is risen, they will be stoned by the people for putting to death an innocent man."

As the host of heavenly angels departed from the sepulcher and the light and glory passed away, the Roman guard ventured to raise their heads and look about them. They were filled with amazement as they saw that the great stone had been rolled from the door of the sepulcher and that the body of Jesus was gone. They hastened to the city to make known to the priests and elders what they had seen. As those murderers listened to the marvelous report, paleness sat upon every face. Horror seized them at the thought of what they had done. If the report was correct, they were lost. For a time they sat in silence, looking upon one another's faces, not knowing what to do or what to say. To accept the report would be to condemn themselves. They went aside to consult as to what should be done. They reasoned that if the report brought by the guard should be circulated among the people, those who put Christ to death would be slain as His murderers. It was decided to hire the soldiers to keep the matter secret. The priests and elders offered them a large sum of money, saying, "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept." And when the guard inquired what would be done with them for sleeping at their post, the Jewish officers promised to persuade the governor and secure their safety. For the sake of money, the

Roman guard sold their honor, and agreed to follow the counsel of the priests and elders.

When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, "It is finished," the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened. When He arose a victor over death and the grave, while the earth was reeling and the glory of heaven shone around the sacred spot, many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ. Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ's resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory.

Those risen ones differed in stature and form, some being more noble in appearance than others. I was informed that the inhabitants of earth had been degenerating, losing their strength and comeliness. Satan has the power of disease and death, and with every age the effects of the curse have been more visible, and the power of Satan more plainly seen. Those who lived in the days of Noah and Abraham resembled the angels in form, comeliness, and strength. But every succeeding generation have been growing weaker and more subject to disease, and their life has been of shorter duration. Satan has been learning how to annoy and enfeeble the race.

Those who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared to many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead; and in proof of their words they declared, "We be risen with Him." They bore testimony that it was by His mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves. Notwithstanding the lying reports circulated, the resurrection of Christ could not be concealed by Satan, his angels, or the chief priests; for this holy company, brought forth from their graves, spread the wonderful, joyful news; also Jesus showed Himself to His sorrowing, heartbroken disciples, dispelling their fears and causing them joy and gladness.

As the news spread from city to city and from town to town, the Jews in their turn feared for their lives and concealed the hatred which they cherished toward the disciples. Their only hope was to spread their lying report. And those who wished this lie to be true accepted it. Pilate trembled as he heard that Christ had risen. He could not doubt the testimony given, and from that hour peace left him forever. For the sake of worldly honor, for fear of losing his authority and his life, he had delivered Jesus to die. He was now fully convinced that it was not merely an innocent man of whose blood he was guilty, but the Son of God. Miserable to its close was the life of Pilate. Despair and anguish crushed every hopeful, joyful feeling. He refused to be comforted and died a most miserable death.

Herod's heart had grown still harder; and when he heard that Christ had risen, he was not much troubled. He took the life of James, and when he saw that this pleased the Jews, he took Peter also, intending to put him to death. But God had a work for Peter to do, and sent his angel to deliver him. Herod was visited with the judgments of God. While exalting himself in the presence of a great multitude, he was smitten by the angel of the Lord, and died a most horrible death.

Early in the morning of the first day of the week, before it was yet light, holy women came to the sepulcher, bringing sweet spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They found that the heavy stone had been rolled away from the door of the sepulcher, and the body of Jesus was not there. Their hearts sank within them, and they feared that their enemies had taken away the body. Suddenly they beheld two angels in white apparel, their faces bright and shining. These heavenly beings understood the errand of the women and immediately told them that Jesus was not there; He had risen, but they could behold the place where He had lain. They bade them go and tell His disciples that He would go before them into Galilee. With fear and great joy the women hurried back to the sorrowing disciples and told them the things which they had seen and heard.

The disciples could not believe that Christ had risen, but, with the women who had brought the report, ran hastily to the sepulcher. They found that Jesus was not there; they saw His linen clothes, but could not believe the good news that He had risen from the dead. They returned home marveling

at what they had seen, also at the report brought them by the women. But Mary chose to linger around the sepulcher, thinking of what she had seen, and distressed with the thought that she might have been deceived. She felt that new trials awaited her. Her grief was renewed, and she broke forth in bitter weeping. She stooped down to look again into the sepulcher, and beheld two angels clothed in white. One was sitting where the head of Jesus had lain, the other where His feet had been. They spoke to her tenderly, and asked her why she wept. She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

As she turned from the sepulcher, she saw Jesus standing near, but knew Him not. He spoke to her tenderly, inquiring the cause of her sorrow and asking whom she was seeking. Supposing that He was the gardener, she begged Him, if He had borne away her Lord, to tell her where he had laid Him, that she might take Him away. Jesus spoke to her with His own heavenly voice, saying, "Mary!" She was acquainted with the tones of that dear voice, and quickly answered, "Master!" and in her joy was about to embrace Him; but Jesus said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." Joyfully she hastened to the disciples with the good news. Jesus quickly ascended to His Father to hear from His lips that He accepted the sacrifice, and to receive all power in heaven and upon earth.

Angels like a cloud surrounded the Son of God and bade the everlasting gates be lifted up, that the King of glory might come in. I saw that while Jesus was with that bright heavenly host, in the presence of God, and surrounded by His glory, He did not forget His disciples upon the earth, but received power from His Father, that He might return and impart power to them. The same day He returned and showed Himself to His disciples. He suffered them then to touch Him; for He had ascended to His Father and had received power.

At this time Thomas was not present. He would not humbly receive the report of the disciples, but firmly and self-confidently affirmed that he would not believe unless he should put his fingers in the prints of the nails and his hand in the side where the cruel spear was thrust. In this he showed a lack of

confidence in his brethren. If all should require the same evidence, none would now receive Jesus and believe in His resurrection. But it was the will of God that the report of the disciples should be received by those who could not themselves see and hear the risen Saviour. God was not pleased with the unbelief of Thomas. When Jesus again met with His disciples, Thomas was with them; and when he beheld Jesus, he believed. But he had declared that he would not be satisfied without the evidence of feeling added to sight, and Jesus gave him the evidence which he had desired. Thomas cried out, "My Lord and my God!" But Jesus reproved him for his unbelief, saying, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

In like manner those who have had no experience in the first and second angels' messages must receive them from others who had an experience and followed down through the messages. As Jesus was rejected, so I saw that these messages have been rejected. And as the disciples declared that there is salvation in no other name under heaven, given among men, so also should the servants of God faithfully and fearlessly warn those who embrace but a part of the truths connected with the third message, that they must gladly receive all the messages as God has given them, or have no part in the matter.

While the holy women were carrying the report that Jesus had risen, the Roman guard were circulating the lie that had been put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders, that the disciples came by night, while they slept, and stole the body of Jesus. Satan had put this lie into the hearts and mouths of the chief priests, and the people stood ready to receive their word. But God had made this matter sure, and placed this important event, upon which our salvation depends, beyond all doubt; and it was impossible for priests and elders to cover it up. Witnesses were raised from the dead to testify to Christ's resurrection.

Jesus remained with His disciples forty days, causing them joy and gladness of heart as He opened to them more fully the realities of the kingdom of God. He commissioned them to bear testimony to the things which they had seen and heard concerning His sufferings, death, and resurrection, that He had made a sacrifice for sin, and that all who would

might come unto Him and find life. With faithful tenderness He told them that they would be persecuted and distressed; but they would find relief in recalling their experience and remembering the words which He had spoken to them. He told them that He had overcome the temptations of Satan and obtained the victory through trials and suffering. Satan could have no more power over Him, but would bring his temptations to bear more directly upon them and upon all who should believe in His name. But they could overcome as He had overcome. Jesus endowed His disciples with power to work miracles, and told them that although they should be persecuted by wicked men, He would from time to time send His angels to deliver them; their lives could not be taken until their mission should be accomplished; then they might be required to seal with their blood the testimonies which they had borne.

His anxious followers gladly listened to His teachings, eagerly feasting upon every word which fell from His holy lips. Now they certainly knew that He was the Saviour of the world. His words sank deep into their hearts, and they sorrowed that they must soon be parted from their heavenly Teacher and no longer hear comforting, gracious words from His lips. But again their hearts were warmed with love and exceeding joy, as Jesus told them that He would go and prepare mansions for them and come again and receive them, that they might be ever with Him. He promised also to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to guide them into all truth. "And He lifted up His hands, and blessed them."

## **5. The Ascension of Christ**

All heaven was waiting the hour of triumph when Jesus should ascend to His Father. Angels came to receive the King of glory and to escort Him triumphantly to heaven. After Jesus had blessed His disciples, He was parted from them and taken up. And as He led the way upward, the multitude of captives who were raised at His resurrection followed. A multitude of the heavenly host were in attendance, while in heaven an innumerable company of angels awaited His coming. As they ascended to the Holy City, the angels who escorted Jesus cried out, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift

up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The angels in the city cried out with rapture, "Who is this King of glory?" The escorting angels answered in triumph, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!" Again the waiting angels asked, "Who is this King of glory?" and the escorting angels answered in melodious strains, "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." And the heavenly train passed into the city of God. Then all the heavenly host surrounded their majestic Commander, and with the deepest adoration bowed before Him and cast their glittering crowns at His feet. And then they touched their golden harps, and in sweet, melodious strains filled all heaven with rich music and songs to the Lamb who was slain, yet lives again in majesty and glory.

As the disciples gazed sorrowfully toward heaven to catch the last glimpse of their ascending Lord, two angels clothed in white apparel stood by them and said to them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The disciples and the mother of Jesus, who with them had witnessed the ascension of the Son of God, spent the following night in talking over His wonderful acts and the strange and glorious events which had taken place within a short time.

Satan again counseled with his angels, and with bitter hatred against God's government told them that while he retained his power and authority upon earth their efforts must be tenfold stronger against the followers of Jesus. They had prevailed nothing against Christ but must overthrow His followers, if possible. In every generation they must seek to ensnare those who would believe in Jesus. He related to his angels that Jesus had given His disciples power to rebuke them and cast them out, and to heal those whom they should afflict. Then Satan's angels went forth like roaring lions, seeking to destroy the followers of Jesus.

# Cross Light

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross. *Desire of Ages* page 83.