

Study for the Month of April 2011

Field of Prophecy is the Theater of Providence-Part II

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Providence: 1. the act of providing, exercising foresight, or preparing. 2. Divine guidance or care; also, an act or instance of it. 3. Prudence; economic character, policy, or habits; thrift. 4. God, conceived of as guiding men through His prescience [omniscience], loving care, or intervention. –*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, 1942:*

Fulfillment of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Matthew 25: 5-7: The Movement of the Midnight Cry of 1844.

“In the summer of 1844, midway between the time when it had been first thought that the 2300 days would end, and the autumn of the same year [1843], to which it was afterward found that they extended, the message was proclaimed in the very words of Scripture: ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!’ That which led to the *movement* was the discovery that the decree of Artaxerxes for the restoration of Jerusalem, which formed the starting point for the period of the 2300 days, went into effect in the autumn of the year 457 B.C., and not at the beginning of the year, as has been formerly believed. Reckoning from the autumn of 457, the 2300 years terminate in the autumn of 1844 [October 22].”- *Great Controversy*, p. 398 (1911)

The impelling power of the midnight cry.-- “At the call, ‘The Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,’ the waiting ones ‘arose and trimmed their lamps;’—meaning, ‘they studied the word of God with an intensity of interest before unknown. Angels were sent from heaven to arouse those who had become discouraged and prepare them to receive the message. The work did not stand in the wisdom and learning of men, but in the power of God. . . .

The message. . . was not so much a matter of argument, though the Scripture proof was clear and conclusive. There went with it an impelling power that moved the soul. There was no doubt, no questioning. . . .

At that time there was faith that brought answers to prayer---faith that had respect to the recompense of reward. *Like showers of rain upon the thirsty earth, the Spirit of grace descended upon the earnest seekers.* Those who expected to stand face to face with their Redeemer felt a solemn joy that was *unutterable*. The softening, subduing power of the Holy Spirit melted the heart as His blessing was bestowed in rich measure upon the faithful, believing ones.

Carefully and solemnly those who received the message came up to the time when they hoped to meet their Lord. [1] Every morning they felt that it was their first duty to secure the evidence of their acceptance with God. [2] Their hearts were closely united, [3] and they prayed much with and for one another. [4] They often met together in secluded places to commune with God, and the voice of *intercession* ascended to heaven from the fields and groves. [5] The assurance of the Savior’s approval was more

necessary to them than their daily food; [6] and if a cloud of darkened their minds, they did not rest until it was swept away. [7] As they *felt* the witness of pardoning grace, they longed to behold Him whom their souls love.” . . . “But again they were destined to disappointment. The time of expectation passed, and their Savior did not appear. . . [the Great Disappointment]” – *Ibid*, pp. 402-3.

We continue this combined topic of Providence and Prophecy from last month, quoting the J.B. Cook’s article in the *Advent Review*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 12-15, August 1850, Auburn, New York:

“Then during the tarrying time, which occurred against our will, the midnight cry was raised. We echoed, ‘Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.’ From the periods, tarrying, and the types, we concluded that the ‘set time,’ was the 10th day of the 7th month. The scriptural argument was convincing that the Day of Atonement, the set time for cleansing the typical sanctuary, was *the* time, to expect the Antitypes of all those [types]. Then, those who are characterized in the promises of God as His people, those who, like servants were waiting for their Lord, who looked for and *loved* the appearing of Jesus, yielded themselves up to the scriptural argument. They found the Spirit and the Providence of God concurring most manifestly to give the midnight cry.—

Amid the signs of these last days, nothing like these occurred till after the tarrying. Nothing like it has occurred since. The cry was given at the *right time*, so far as could be ascertained by a prayerful, critical study of the word. *It came in the right place, in the series of prophetic fulfillment.* The preceding and accompanying circumstances of Providence, favored the mighty spiritual movement among believers, and the cry was borne on every breeze, till it reached and arrested every ear.

The leading events of the parable have become history, as really as any that are found in the prophetic track of Providence. I know that it is an easy matter to ‘deny’ Christ, or He would not have been denied, when He, himself was the preacher, and Providence as the expounder; but these events are certainly as important as the place of Messiah’s birth,---His going to Jerusalem in triumph, or being broken without a ‘bone broken.’ They have all the marks of God on them that you find on those, which have been witnessed, in other ages of prophetic fulfillment; and seeing a sparrow does not fall to the ground ‘*without our Father*,’ this did not transpire, but under the direction of His Providence, to fulfill His word;’ because that ‘*cannot be broken*,’ either by chance, or mesmerism, or Satan.

My brethren, let us confess Christ’s truth in the Parable, confessing Providential agency in the corresponding events, as they have transpired before our eyes. Come what may, deny who may be, let us be witnesses for our God and Savior. He ‘set in order’ and ‘declared’ this series of events. I confess a perfect fulfillment. Amen.

3. By the ‘the word of God, quick and powerful’ [Heb.4: 12, 13], in the Midnight cry, we were cut down as the harvest. True, we are in the ‘field,’ which is ‘the world,’ and the breaking up, which the varied trials about the **shut door**, may complete the threshing and winnowing,-- as taught in the figurative harvest. Astonishing! How the chaff flew!

Now, whatever Jesus meant, here is something like it. May concern is to be found among the wheat. I dare not deny the grace of our God which I have enjoyed,--dare not deny that His word, more stable than the world, means something; especially when expounded, and the expression written out, by the finger of Providence.

4. Those who deny that God has fulfilled His word in the Advent movement, might be compelled to deny His agency in the whole series of prophetic fulfillment, back to the time of Cain’s fulfilled curse, and driven off beyond infidelity, into Atheism! They would

have us not only Infidels, but absolutely Atheists. Infidels 'confess' God's Providence. These would have us deny it.

It is, however, as irrational as unscriptural, for the preaching of the hour of God's Judgment, and the midnight cry did not require the slow process of 'the societies,' sending out their salaried slave-like lazy agents. It was done naturally, spontaneously and successfully, like the entrance of the lion, the leopard and other creatures, with their mates into the Ark with Noah,--with an ease and naturalness, which has ever characterized prophetic fulfillment. Joseph's brethren did him obeisance, willingly.

We are now in our Advent experience, where Noah was after the animals entered the Ark. This divine interposition was to him *the crowning testimony!* He knew that God was with him, and this was security enough for faith. So the predicted events, occurring in the Advent movement, *prove the presence of God by a special Providence.* We 'confess' the promised presence and agency of Him, who confirmed Noah's faith, by *interposing* to fulfill His word. We know that our God, who has guided, will guide those who concur with His Providence to fulfill His word, connected with the Advent of Christ, *into the kingdom.* Doubts to the winds now. Hallelujah!

5. Some, however, object to the idea that God has any direct or determining agency in these recent events, because those who believe and concur are unknown to fame or philosophy. They seem to imagine, that it is too small business for God to meddle with. They are so ignorant so as not to know, or so infidel as not to believe, that a sparrow does not fall 'without our Father.'

Others reject the scriptural doctrine of Providence, in our recent experience because the midnight cry was so limited. They forget that the ministry of Moses---of Messiah,---of the Reformation was too limited to meet the demands of skepticism.

But the grand objection is based on our Disappointment. You were deluded. God's Providence did not produce the events of prophecy, because your expectations were not realized. I confess that we were grievously disappointed. A perfectly satisfactory explanation of the nature, as well as cause of that disappointment, may be given at any other time. The question of our Disappointment is distinct from that of prophetic fulfillment.

In Matthew 21 we have an illustration. The blessed twelve and the shouting multitude were on the tip-toe, of expectation. They thought that His entrance into Jerusalem according to prophecy, was *the* time, when He would take the throne. They were disappointed because, they misconceived, His design in fulfilling that predicted event. The prophecy was, however, just as really fulfilled, as if they had correctly conceived God's purpose, and realized, their expectations. The disciples were extremely disappointed and distressed at the crucifixion. *'They were glad,' but still disappointed,* in His visit to them after His resurrection. Those disciples were enabled to correct their mistakes by the Providence of God.

So can we, who believe. --The disciples' mistake did not destroy discipleship. It was piety in them, to desire the Kingdom and honor of Christ. Their mistake, resulting from their limited knowledge, or capacity, did not destroy their piety. Just so with us.

6. It has been said with reproachful sarcasm, you 'cannot be disappointed!' As if we held on from sheer obstinacy, or from assumption of infallibility. But no, we say that God's Providence, fulfilling His works, cannot be belied. His Providence never concurred with His people, at or near the right time, to make a false fulfillment. The idea would be a *libel on God.* It would give the lie to all He has revealed of His Providence---or promised His trusting, obedient people. We confess our mistake relative to God's design in those prophetic accomplishments. We stand corrected. Conscious of our fallibility, we cast ourselves on Divine infallibility. Amen!

Those who reflect on us, seem not to see themselves. They assume that *their* conception of the Advent must be realized; as if their theory of prophetic fulfillment was more trustworthy than the Providence of God, when fulfilling His word. This, brethren, was the sin and consequent ruin of the Jews. Instead of correcting their mistakes, as did the despised disciples, by Providence and prophecy, they stood on their 'original faith.' Messiah must come according to their conceptions. There they stood still, in a fixed position, till 'their house was left unto them desolate.' _____.

The disciples on the contrary saw scripture being fulfilled, therefore they moved on down the track of truth, with Providence. Had they stopped, they would have been left and lost. I dare not follow and example so fatal, so sinful, as that set by the Jews. I would be a 'disciple' however much despised.

7. All attempts to readjust the prophetic periods, is labor worse than lost. The idea that chronologists have erred, and have caused us to err, looks like playing into the hands of Infidels. The Infidel had common sense, in his remarks to Bro. [William] Miller. Brother Miller cannot answer him but in harmony with the Bible doctrine of Providence. The integrity of God's word is fully maintained, if it is being fulfilled. This shuts the mouth of Infidelity; but to admit that the doctrine of Divine Providence, and the promise of divine guidance, must give way to mistakes of chronologers, exposes us to its loudest laugh, or its bitterest scorn.

Brother Miller says in his letter of March 10: 'I have no guilt in proclaiming time, for the time is, by God, revealed, and wherever the mistake may be it is *not in my power to rectify it*. I must leave that with God. The mistake was of precisely the same nature of that of the Holy Twelve, and others, Matt. 21: 4. They overlooked the events which were to intervene between that prophetic fulfillment and the Kingdom. They mistook the Lord's design in that fulfillment. *It was however a fulfillment*. So in our case precisely, God's will was done.

Our experience, in this regard, harmonize with that of God's people at every epoch in our world's sad history. They have all made mistakes just like ours, notwithstanding they were honored of God to act the part assigned His people. Exo. 5: 21-23; Matt. 26:56. The disciples 'all forsook him and fled,' yet even in that they fulfilled. Zech. 13: 7. They had inadequate conceptions of God's revealed plan, Luke 18: 31-34, though being fulfilled before them

Now it would be passing strange, if believers, in this age of glory and wonder should have surpassed Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles in the accuracy of their conceptions of Jehovah's purposes, or of the *manner*, in which He would accomplish them. Then to maintain that we have been wiser in this respect than all the divinely instructed of other ages, *after God's Providence has proved us not so*, evinces that 'pride which precedes destruction, and that haughtiness which goes before a fall.'

8. After confessing the doctrine of Providence, we confess a present God. This the text teaches. We confess the supremacy of the present Deity. This plan comprehends agents voluntary and involuntary. The drama is arranged, as sketched in prophecy. The scene changes---the actors appear and perform their part, and the entire movement in the theater of earth, proceeds in harmony with the published plan; for Providence is the Master of ceremonies. The preparatory scenes having been acted, the *finale*, will soon open on our astonished or enraptured vision. 'The righteous will be saved. The wicked will be damned, and God's eternal Providence approved.' Amen and Amen.

O, Lord, give us grace and we will '*confess Thee before men*.' Be 'witnesses' for Thee---that Thou 'has set in order' from ancient time, 'and declared it!' No agency can defeat or derange the 'order' which Thou has declared. When the predicted events occur in the

prescribed 'order' we confess the truth of Jesus. It does not occur '*without [outside of] our Father.*' It does take place by the direction of Providence, a present [here and now, not past or future] God. So it will be till our Lord appears in Glory, till His people also 'appear with Him in Glory. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! We are not 'orphans,' comfortless. He is *present*, fulfilling His word. And now having passed the introductory scenes, Glory will open. All who have not 'cast away their confidence' shall be glorious like their Lord, through a blissful immortality. Amen!

My 'confession' is not an apology to the world; but a continued acknowledgement of Christ. This is the word of my testimony. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.

9. Finally, as Noah knew that God was with him, when he saw the creature coming in 'two by two unto the Ark. As Joseph knew his vision to be from God when his brethren were bowing before him. As Moses' mother and David's friends knew that God was with them by a fulfillment of His word. As the Apostles knew Jesus to be the Messiah, by events, and His works, *according to Scripture; so we know*, without doubt, that the Advent Movement is divine in its origin, Divine in its progress. Divinely glorious will it be in its results! Amen!" (end of quote).

II. Spirit of Prophecy References on God's Providence

The result of acknowledging God's Providence. -- Elisha's closing years: "It was not given to Elisha to follow his master [Elijah] in a fiery chariot. Upon him the Lord permitted to come *a lingering illness*. During the long hours of human weakness and suffering, his faith laid fast hold on the promises of God, and he beheld ever about him heavenly messengers of comfort and peace [angels]. As on the heights of Dothan he had seen the encircling hosts of heaven, the fiery chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof, so now he was conscious of the presence of sympathizing angels; and he was sustained. Throughout his life he had exercised strong faith; and as he had advanced in the knowledge of God's Providences and of His merciful kindness, faith had ripened into an abiding trust in his God; and when death called him, he was ready to rest from his labors." -- *Prophets & Kings*, pp. 263-4.

Mysteries of Providence

Few people can comprehend. -- "The wisdom that God gives will lead men to self-examination. The truth will convict them of their errors and existing wrongs. The heart must be open to see, realize, and acknowledge these wrongs, and then, through the help of Jesus, each must earnestly engage in the work of overcoming them. The knowledge gained by the wise of the world, however diligent they may be in acquiring it, is, after all, limited and comparatively inferior. *But few comprehend the ways and works of God in the mysteries of His Providence.* They advance a few steps, and then are unable to touch bottom or shore. It is the superficial thinker who deems himself wise. Men of solid worth, of high attainments, are the most ready to admit the weakness of their own understanding. God wants everyone who claims to be His disciples to be a learner, to be more inclined to learn than to teach." -- *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 361.

Does not permit men to know end from the beginning. -- "Rom. 12: 12. God in His providence does not permit us to know the end from the beginning; but He gives us the light of His Word to guide us as we pass along, and bids us to keep our minds stayed upon Jesus. Wherever we are, whatever employment, our hearts are to be uplifted to God

in prayer. We need not wait until we can bow our knees, before we pray.”- *E.G. White Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1136

Do not doubt God’s word because you cannot understand mysteries of. -- “In the natural world we are constantly surrounded with mysteries we cannot fathom. The very humblest forms of life present a problem that the wisest of philosophers are powerless to explain. Everywhere are wonders beyond our ken. Should we then be surprised to find that in the spiritual world also there are mysteries that we cannot fathom? God has given us in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine character, and we are not to doubt His Word because we cannot understand all the mysteries of His Providence.”- *Steps to Christ*, pp. 106-7.

May be solved by continual trust in God. -- “Fellow Christian, Satan knows your weakness; therefore cling to Jesus. Abiding in God’s love, you may stand every test. The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stem the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world. Bring faith into your experience. Faith lightens every burden, relieves every weariness. Providences that are now mysterious you may solve by continued trust in God. Walk by faith in the path he marks out. Trials will come; but go forward. This will strengthen your faith, and fit you for service. The records of sacred history are written, not merely that we may read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God’s servants of old may work in us. In no less marked manner will the Lord work now, wherever there are hearts of faith to channels of His power.” – *Prophets & Kings*, p. 175.

Often Misunderstood and Misinterpreted

Afflictions falsely attributed to Providence. --- Wrong course of eating and drinking.- “Of all the families I am acquainted with, none need the benefit of health reform more than yours. You groan under pains and prostrations which you cannot account for, and you try to submit with as good a grace as you can, thinking affliction is your lot and Providence has thus ordained it. If you could have your eyes opened and could see the steps taken in your lifetime to walk right into your present condition of poor health you would be astonished at your blindness for not seeing the real state of the case before. You have created unnatural appetites, and do not derive half the enjoyment from your food which you would if you had not used your appetite wrongfully. You have perverted nature, and have been suffering the consequence, and painful has it been.”- *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 69. See also *Counsels on Diet & Food*, p. 125.

Interpreted erroneously as being arbitrary and vindictive. -- “Only like can appreciate like. Unless you accept in your own life the principle of self-sacrificing love, which is the principle of His character, you cannot know God. The heart that is deceived by Satan, looks upon God as a tyrannical, relentless being; the selfish characteristics of humanity, even of Satan himself, are attributed to the loving Creator. ‘You thought that I was altogether like you.’ Ps. 50: 21, NKJV. *His providences are interpreted as the expression of an arbitrary, vindictive nature.* So with the Bible, the treasure house of the riches of His grace. The glory of its truths, that are as high as heaven and compass eternity, is undiscerned. To the great mass of mankind, Christ Himself is as ‘a root out of a dry ground’ and they see in Him ‘no beauty’ that ‘they should desire Him.’ Isa. 53: 2.”- *Mount of Blessing*, p. 25.

Many people complain of, because they suffer discomfort and inconvenience. -- “Many persons complain of Providence because of the discomfort and inconvenience which they

suffer, when this is the sure result of their own course. They seem to feel that they are ill-treated of God, when they themselves are alone responsible for the ills which they endure. Our kind and merciful heavenly Father has established laws, which, obeyed, would promote physical, mental, and moral health.”- *My Life Today*, p. 180

Babies’ suffering and death erroneously & falsely attributed to. -- “Parents manifest astonishing ignorance, indifference, and recklessness, in regard to the physical health of their children, which often results in destroying the little vitality left the abused infant, and consigns it to an early grave. You will frequently hear parents mourning over the providence of God which has torn their children from their embrace. Our heavenly Father is too wise to err, and too good to do us wrong. He has no delight in seeing His creatures suffer. Thousands have been ruined for life because parents have not acted in accordance with laws of health. They have moved from impulse, instead of following the dictates of sound judgment, constantly having in view the future well-being of their children.” - *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 426. See also *Temperance*, pp. 58-9.

“It is no strange sight in this age of the world, to view the mother lingering around the cradle of her suffering, dying infant, her heart torn with anguish, as she listens to its feeble wail, and witnesses its expiring struggles. It seems mysterious to her, that God should thus afflict her innocent child. She does not think that her wrong course has brought about the sad result. She just as surely destroyed her infant’s hold on life as though she had given it poison. Disease never comes without a cause. The way is first prepared, and disease invited by disregarding the laws of health. God does not take pleasure in the suffering and death of little children. He commits them to parents, for them to educate physically, mentally, and morally, and train them for usefulness here, and for Heaven at last.” – *Ibid*, pp. 468-9. See also *Fundamentals of Education*, pp. 20, 125, 145; *Ministry of Healing*, p. 380; *Testimonies*, vol.3, pp 135-6 (*Counsels on Health*, p. 175); *Counsels to Teachers & Parents*, p. 78; *Counsels on Diet & Foods*, p. 120.

When Mystery of Providence will be Fully Explained

All perplexities in God Providence, will be understood in life to come.---

“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service [“healing”] of the nations. . . . *There are homes for the pilgrims of earth.* There are robes for the righteous, with crowns of glory and palms of victory. *All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain.* The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. They mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall the see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We are homeward bound. He who loved as so much as to die for us *has built for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest.* There will be no sadness in the City of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith [], will shine forth with the Redeemer’s glory in the kingdom of God.” – *Adventist Home*, pp. 542-3. (See also *Steps to Christ*, p. 113; Vol. 9 *Testimonies*, p. 386).

Importance of acting promptly on Providence

“It is important to believe God’s word and act upon it promptly, while His angels are waiting to work for us. Evil angels are ready to contest every step of advance. And when God’s Providence bids His children to go forward, when He is ready to do great things for them, Satan tempts the displeasure of the Lord by hesitation and delay; he seeks to kindle a spirit of strife or to arouse murmuring and unbelief, and thus deprive them of the blessings that God desired to bestow. God’s servants should be minute men, ever ready to move as fast as His Providence opens the way. Any delay on their part gives time for Satan to work to defeat them.” – *Patriarchs & Prophets*, p. 423. This is based on the example of Israel’s failure to trust God in the time of trial at Edom. “The Israelites did not act promptly upon God’s word, and while they were complaining and murmuring, the golden opportunity passed.” – Ibid. We should be ever ready to go wherever Providence leads us (*Evangelism*, p. 159). We must be willing to bear patiently and cheerfully whatever suffering we may be called to bear under God’s Providence.

Each person given page in the book of Providence

“All who have chosen God’s service are to rest in His care. Christ pointed to the birds flying in the heavens, to the flowers of the field, and bade His hearers consider these objects of God’s creation. ‘Are not ye of much more value than they?’ He said. Matt. 6: 26, R.V. The measure of divine attention bestowed on any object is proportionate to its rank in the scale of being. The little brown sparrow is watched over by Providence. The flowers of the field, the grass that carpets the earth, share the notice and care of the heavenly Father. The great Master Artist has taken thought for the lilies, making them so beautiful that they outshine the glory of Solomon. How much more does He care for man, who is the image and glory of God. He longs to see His children reveal the character after His similitude. As the sunbeam imparts to the flowers their varied and delicate tints, so does God impart to the soul the beauty of His own character.

All who choose Christ’s kingdom of love and righteousness and peace, making its interest paramount to all other, are linked to the world above, and every blessing needed for this life is theirs. In the book of God’s Providence, the volume of life, we are each given a page. That page contains every particular of our history; even the hairs of our head are numbered. God’s children are never absent from His mind.” – *Desire of Ages*, p. 313.

Divine Purpose

God orders, as He sees best. -- “The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are opened to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His Providence sees best.” – *Ministry of Healing*, p. 417.

God speaks to men through His Providence. -- “Through nature and revelation, through His Providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds must be drawn toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

Great object in working out, is to try men. - “God’s great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God’s love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments.”- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 283.

Brings men into different positions and varied circumstances to reveal hidden defects of character. -- “Faults are revealed of which they [those who sincerely consecrate their lives to God’s service] which they did not even suspect the existence. Like Israel of old they question, ‘If God is leading us, why do all these things come upon us?’ It is because God is leading them that these things come upon them. Trials and obstacles are the Lord’s chosen method of discipline and His appointed condition of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have powers and susceptibilities which, rightly directed, might be used in the advancement of His work. In *His Providence* He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to assail them that they may be purified.

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is precious ore that He refines.” - *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 470-1.

Study Providence

Christ studied, in His youth. -- “Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God’s ambassador, to show us how to live as to secure life’s best results. What were the conditions chosen by the Infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother’s side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and Providence; and the soul’s communion with God---these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus.” -*Adventist Home*, pp. 132-3. See also *Ministry of Healing*, p. 366.

John the Baptist studied lessons of. -- “As a prophet, John was to ‘turn the hearts of the fathers the children, and to the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ In preparing the way for Christ’s first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord’s second coming. The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan’s snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God [2 Cor. 7: 1] must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God’s word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ’s second coming. . . . It was a lonely region where he found

his home, in the midst of barren hills, wild ravines, and rocky caves. But it was his choice to forgo the enjoyments and luxuries of life for the stern discipline of the wilderness. Here his surroundings were favorable to habits of simplicity and self-denial. Uninterrupted by the clamor of the world, he could here study the lessons of nature, of revelation, and of Providence. . . .John found in the wilderness his school and his sanctuary. Like Moses amid the mountains of Midian, he was shut in by God's presence, and surrounded by the evidences of His power." - *Desire of Ages*, pp. 101-2.

Christ taught men to behold God manifested by His Providence, - "In all His teaching [through parables], Christ brought the mind in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men's theories about God, His word, or His works. He taught them to behold Him as manifested in His works, in His words, and by His Providences." - *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 23.

Christ would not force Providence to come to His rescue. -- The temptation of presumption. See Matthew 4: 5-11. "When Satan quoted the promise, 'He shall give His angels charge over Thee,' he omitted the words, 'to keep thee in all Thy ways;' that is, in all the ways of God's choosing. Jesus refused to go outside the path of obedience. While He manifested perfect trust in His Father, He would not place Himself, unbidden, in a position that would necessitate the interposition of His Father to save Him from death. He would not force Providence to come to His rescue, and thus fail of giving man an example of trust and submission." - *Desire of Ages*, p. 125.

Providential Intervention

Providence controlled Festus's decision regarding Paul (Acts of the Apostles, p. 429). David was brought by Providence to King Saul's palace (Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 643); he was preserved by, against plottings of his enemies (Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 723). Manifested in the decree of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (Prophets & Kings p. 612).

Movements of nations directed by Providence. -- "But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste or delay. Through the symbols of the great darkness and the smoking furnace, God had revealed to Abraham the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and had declared that the time of their sojourning would be 400 years. 'Afterward,' He said, 'shall they come out with great substance.' Gen. 15:14. Against that word all the power of Pharaoh's proud empire battled in vain. On 'the self-same day' appointed in the divine promise, 'it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.' Exo. 12: 41. . . .When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son.' Providence had directed the movement of nations, and the tide of human impulse and influence, until the time was ripe for the coming of the Deliverer." - *Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

So it is now till the coming of Christ. We must know and be assured that it is Providence, not the power and wisdom of man, that is directing the movements of the nations of world until the time is ripe for the harvest of earth at the close of human probation. Then Christ shall come to deliver His people and give them their reward of eternal life!

