

Chap. 55 - Slavery and the War

God is punishing this nation for the high crime of slavery. He has the destiny of the nation in His hands. He will punish the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for so long suffering its overreaching and overbearing influence. {1T 264.1}

At the Conference at Roosevelt, New York, August 3, 1861, when the brethren and sisters were assembled on the day set apart for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon us, and I was taken off in vision and shown the sin of slavery, which has so long been a curse to this nation. The fugitive slave law was calculated to crush out of man every noble, generous feeling of sympathy that should arise in his heart for the oppressed and suffering slave. It was in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ. God's scourge is now upon the North, because they have so long submitted to the advances of the slave power. The sin of Northern proslavery men is great. They have strengthened the South in their sin by sanctioning the extension of slavery; they have acted a prominent part in bringing the nation into its present distressed condition. {1T 264.2}

I was shown that many do not realize the extent of the evil which has come upon us. They have flattered themselves that the national difficulties would soon be settled and confusion and war end, but all will be convinced that there is more reality in the matter than was anticipated. Many have looked for the North to strike a blow and end the controversy. {1T 264.3}

I was pointed back to ancient Israel, held in bondage by the Egyptians. The Lord wrought by Moses and Aaron to deliver them. Miracles were performed before Pharaoh to

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convince him that these men were especially sent of God to bid him let Israel go. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened against the messengers of God, and he reasoned away the miracles performed by them. Then the Egyptians were made to feel God's judgments. They were visited with plagues, and while suffering under the effect of them, Pharaoh consented to let Israel go. But as soon as the cause of their suffering was removed, his heart was hardened. His counselors and mighty men strengthened themselves against God and endeavored to explain the plagues as the result of natural causes. Each visitation from God was more severe than the preceding one, yet they would not release the children of Israel until the angel of the Lord slew the first-born of the Egyptians. From the king upon the throne down to the most humble and lowly, there was wailing and mourning. Then Pharaoh commanded to let Israel go; but after the Egyptians had buried their dead, he repented that he had let Israel go. His counselors and mighty men tried to account for their bereavement. They would not admit that the visitation or judgment was from God, and therefore they pursued after the children of Israel. {1T 264.4}

When the Israelites beheld the Egyptian host in pursuit, some upon horses and some in chariots, and equipped for war, their hearts failed them. The Red Sea was before, the Egyptian host behind. They could see no way of escape. A shout of triumph burst from the Egyptians to find Israel completely in their power. The Israelites were greatly terrified. But the Lord commanded Moses to bid them go forward, and to lift up the rod and stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it. He did so, and lo, the sea parted, and the children of Israel passed over dry shod. Pharaoh had so long withstood God, and hardened his heart against His mighty, wondrous works, that he in blindness rushed into the path which God had miraculously prepared for His people. Again Moses was commanded to stretch forth his hand over the sea,

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"and the sea returned to his strength," and the waters covered the Egyptian host, and they were drowned. {1T 265.1}

This scene was presented before me to illustrate the selfish love of slavery, and the desperate measures which the South would adopt to cherish the institution, and the dreadful lengths to which they

would go before they would yield. The system of slavery has reduced and degraded human beings to the level of the brutes, and the majority of slave masters regard them as such. The consciences of these masters have become seared and hardened, as was Pharaoh's; and if compelled to release their slaves, their principles remain unchanged, and they would make the slave feel their oppressive power if possible. It looked to me like an impossibility now for slavery to be done away. God alone can wrench the slave from the hand of his desperate, relentless oppressor. All the abuse and cruelty exercised toward the slave is justly chargeable to the upholders of the slave system, whether they be Southern or Northern men. {1T 266.1}

The North and the South were presented before me. The North have been deceived in regard to the South. They are better prepared for war than has been represented. Most of their men are well skilled in the use of arms, some of them from experience in battle, others from habitual sporting. They have the advantage of the North in this respect, but have not, as a general thing, the valor and the power of endurance that Northern men have. {1T 266.2}

I had a view of the disastrous battle at Manassas, Virginia. It was a most exciting, distressing scene. The Southern army had everything in their favor and were prepared for a dreadful contest. The Northern army was moving on with triumph, not doubting but that they would be victorious. Many were reckless and marched forward boastfully, as though victory were already theirs. As they neared the battlefield, many were almost fainting through weariness and want of refreshment. They did not expect so fierce an encounter. They

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rushed into battle and fought bravely, desperately. The dead and dying were on every side. Both the North and the South suffered severely. The Southern men felt the battle, and in a little while would have been driven back still further. The Northern men were rushing on, although their destruction was very great. Just then an angel descended and waved his hand backward. Instantly there was confusion in the ranks. It appeared to the Northern men that their troops were retreating, when it was not so in reality, and a precipitate retreat commenced. This seemed wonderful to me. {1T 266.3}

Then it was explained that God had this nation in His own hand, and would not suffer victories to be gained faster than He ordained, and would permit no more losses to the Northern men than in His wisdom He saw fit, to punish them for their sins. And had the Northern army at this time pushed the battle still further in their fainting, exhausted condition, the far greater struggle and destruction which awaited them would have caused great triumph in the South. God would not permit this, and sent an angel to interfere. The sudden falling back of the Northern troops is a mystery to all. They know not that God's hand was in the matter. {1T 267.1}

The destruction of the Southern army was so great that they had no heart to boast. The sight of the dead, the dying, and the wounded gave them but little courage to triumph. This destruction, occurring when they had every advantage, and the North great disadvantage, caused them much perplexity. They know that if the North have an equal chance with them, victory is certain for the North. Their only hope is to occupy positions difficult of approach, and then have formidable arrangements to hurl destruction on every hand. {1T 267.2}

The South have strengthened themselves greatly since their rebellion first commenced. If active measures had then been taken by the North, this rebellion would have been speedily crushed out. But that which was small at first has increased in strength and numbers until it has become most

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powerful. Other nations are intently watching this nation, for what purpose I was not informed, and are making great preparations for some event. The greatest perplexity and anxiety now exists among our national men. Proslavery men and traitors are in the very midst of them; and while these are professedly in favor of the Union, they have an influence in making decisions, some of which even favor the South. {1T 267.3}

I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God's people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties. Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep

humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom. {1T 268.1}

My attention was then called from the scene. There seemed to be a little time of peace. Once more the inhabitants of the earth were presented before me; and again everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere. Other nations were engaged in this war and confusion. War caused famine. Want and bloodshed caused pestilence. And then men's hearts failed them for fear, "and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."